SMALL CITY NEIGHBORS: RACE, SPACE, AND CLASS IN MANSFIELD, OHIO

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates social relations in a small deindustrializing city to analyze the socio-spatial specificity of class, “race relations,” and small city “cityness” within the United States. I base my arguments on research conducted over five years (2005-2010) in Mansfield, Ohio—a multiracial, class stratified city of about 50,000 residents. The central aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate that small cities—and how they cope with race, class, and space—offer anthropologists and cultural theorists a rich and necessary perspective on sociocultural processes within the United States. I make the case that comprehensively acknowledging urban variation strengthens our analyses and understandings of social phenomena that occur in urban settings and elsewhere.

This research project is indebted to, and engages with, anthropological studies of class, race, and the city. My arguments are grounded in an “ordinary cities approach” (Robinson 2006), which refuses to hold conventionally named “global” and “world” cities as the unmarked category against which all other forms of urbanity are measured and, instead, broadens understandings of cityness to embrace a multitude of difference. I utilize discourse analysis to do fine-grain analyses of informants' speech while simultaneously situating, in relation to one another, national processes of middle class white privilege, the lived practices of race, class, gender, and space under global capitalism, and Mansfielders’ subjective interpretations of middle class whiteness.

I use ethnography, history and Census analyses to nuance dominant narratives of deindustrialization and to highlight the socio-spatial particularities of global and neoliberal capitalism. I conclude that Mansfield's small size and industrial history has made it particularly susceptible to the destabilizing effects of current economic restructuring processes, but that new opportunities for select residents have arisen also from the city's specific socio-spatial histories of space, race, and class.
My research in Mansfield contributes to studies of whiteness and U.S. race relations by examining from multiple angles, the ways whiteness hierarchically structures social relationships among neighbors. In analyzing how whiteness, especially middle class white dominance, responds to pressures that seek to undermine its privileges, my dissertation offered a small city-specific view of U.S. race relations. While my dissertation captures ordinary, idiosyncratic particularities of the fieldsite, it also recounts consequences of global neoliberal capitalism and white racial privilege that are common throughout the United States.

Two themes dominated my research findings: neighborly relations and notions of trust (which shape encounters between neighbors) appear frequently in the text because these discourses were central to the ways residents created and understood interpersonal interactions. Moreover, these twin frames—neighborliness and trust—conditioned the ways residents interpreted, navigated, and, at times, reproduced larger structural processes like class inequalities, racial hierarchies, and the spatialization of difference. By ethnographically analyzing small city neighborly relations and notions of trust, this dissertation complicates and expands dominant representations and theorizations of “the city,” capitalism, and U.S. racial formations.

By examining how Mansfield's socio-spatial dialectics of cityness, class, and whiteness simultaneously produce projects that reinforce social disparities and moments that resist hierarchies of privilege, my dissertation argues that small cities provide critical insight into some of the most pressing concerns in American society: whiteness and racial hierarchies, class stratification under neoliberal capitalism, issues of neighborliness and trust, and how these processes become spatialized.
For my grandparents: LaVera Nelson, Eugene Andereck, Louis Goebel and Audree Goebel
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Chapter 1: Mapping the Terrains of Mansfield

This dissertation investigates social relations in a small deindustrializing city to analyze the socio-spatial specificity of class, “race relations,” and small city “cityness” within the United States. I base my arguments on research conducted over five years (2005-2010) in Mansfield, Ohio—a multiracial, class stratified city of about 50,000 residents. Like so many cities in the United States midwest and central Canada that have lost heavy manufacturing in the 1980s-2000s, Mansfield has struggled with declining community wealth, shifting class relations, diversifying race relations, and a physically and psychically changing landscape. While my dissertation captures idiosyncratic particularities of the fieldsite, it also recounts consequences of global neoliberal capitalism and white racial privilege that are common throughout the United States.

Three questions guided my ethnographic and historical research. One, how are small city relations of middle class whiteness being reconfigured in the context of global capitalism? Two, what are the structural and lived consequences of these cultural changes for whites and people of color? And Three, how does city space organize the intersections of race, class, and gender under neoliberal capitalism? To answer these questions and to understand the social processes I observed and participated in during fieldwork, I used discourse analysis to make sense of my ethnographic and historical data. In this way, this dissertation charts how Mansfielders differently experience shifting worldviews of middle class and white racial respectability and what the consequences of these recalibrations are for individuals.

As I discursively analyzed data to understand how changes in the unmarked social norm—middle class whiteness—affect space and social relationships, two intertwined themes repeatedly emerged. I found that neighborly relations and notions of trust (which shape encounters between neighbors) were central to the ways residents created and understood interpersonal interactions. Moreover, these twin discourses—neighborliness and trust—conditioned the ways residents
interpreted, navigated, and, at times, reproduced larger structural processes like class inequalities, racial hierarchies, and the spatialization of difference. While trust and neighborliness inflect social relations in many different settings, they were especially pronounced in the small city.

To understand how trust and neighborly relations, as framing worldviews, came to hold such important roles in mediating race, class, and space, I realized that I had to situate these processes in a web of historically constituted projects. In reconstructing chains of events, tracing genealogies of power, recovering long forgotten actors, and uncovering moments of instability and contestation, particular contours and quirks of small city urbanity began to emerge. Mansfield in many ways did, and still continues to feel very familiar, very predictable; events that might occur there are ones that I have experienced or participated in in other cities or are not place specific. But other moments caught me off guard and not just because I was in an unfamiliar place and will always carry an outsider-insider identity.¹ I was not sure how to read consecutive moments of extreme cosmopolitanism and hyper parochialism; how to reconcile the sense I had that Mansfield seemed both ahead of and behind the curve in U.S. race relations. Why did it seem like everybody knew each other's business, but also knew nothing about their neighbors? My attention was caught by these situations and countless more, some recounted in this dissertation, which felt specific to the small city.

In writing about sociocultural life in Mansfield, my analyses of, and arguments about, the small city address significant gaps in the literature of urban studies, critical studies of race, and critical studies of capitalism and class. Because although several publications have come out in the last few years which explicitly address the specificity of small city urbanity (Bell and Jayne, eds. 2006; Connolly, ed. 2008, 2010; Garrett-Petts, ed. 2005), very little qualitative, social, human-based small city research exists.² In the fields of anthropology, geography, sociology, history, and area studies, so

¹ I address my identity as a “native” anthropologist later in this chapter.
² For economic views of the small city see: Brennan and Hoene 2003; for political science interpretations of the small city, see: Ereciek and McKinney 2004, Mayer and Greenberg 2001.
many analyses of race, capitalism and class, and the “urban” take cities with international recognition and global prestige as their research sites, ignoring a vast array of urban formations (see for example, Bridge and Watson, eds. 2002; Brenner and Keil, eds. 2006). I have come to realize that documenting the existence and effects of small city cityness—that blend of what we imagine a city is (and what it might become) combined with the physical, cultural, geographical, economic, political, religious, architectural, historical, and social features tied to a place3—challenges many received notions in urban studies, studies of capitalism and class, and studies of race and whiteness. In analyzing sociocultural life in Mansfield, I found that the lens of small city urbanity refracted national structures of racial privilege and class stratification in ways that both clarified and called into question the ways these processes shape everyday lives.

Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate the potential small cities offer to the anthropological analysis of contemporary cityness. Indeed, the overarching argument of this dissertation is that small cities—and how they cope with race, class, and space—offer theorists a rich and necessary perspective on sociocultural life processes within the United States.

The Small City as an Ordinary City

In the fall of 2005, as I began to process my first summer of field research, I sought resources which would help me understand the small city and the political economic and social processes found within it. Many ethnographers of race and economic restructuring use cities as case studies or as background to their analyses (ex. Anderson 1990, Goldstein 2003, Hirsch 1998), and stress the importance of theorizing the social space of cities (Low 1996). Like most urbanists who presume that both social relations and the built environment produce “the city,” (Lefebvre 1991, Low, ed. 1999, Smith 2001, Soja 1980), I realized my research should follow urban anthropology in understanding urban space and the city as an active player in the production and maintenance of social relationships.

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3 My explanation of cityness derives from Robinson 2006 and is further discussed later in this chapter.
Instead of a backdrop, urban anthropology understands the city as a morphing force that can dramatically affect all realms of human life and which emerges from the socio-spatial dialectics of race, class, gender, and political economic processes (Caldiera 2000, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, LaGuerre 1999, Massey and Denton 1993, Soja 1980).

Yet the focus within urban anthropology has, of late, been on “global” cities, cities like Tokyo, New York, Paris (Sassen 2001, cf. Smith 2001), or notable neighborhoods within these cities (ex. Gregory 1998, Holston, ed. 1999). Such research is incredibly necessary and informative; as the world changes and economies continue to intensify under capitalist processes and reorganize towards neoliberal configurations, cities are expanding and becoming a permanent element in so many people's lives. However, research in global cities and mega cities (Abu-Lughod 1999; Mayaram, ed. 2009; Amen, Archer and Bosman, eds. 2006) is often received as representative of the entire field of urban anthropology. This stance leads to a synecdochic slippage, with “the city” actually represented by a “global” or “world” city in literature. Additionally, as critical geographers Ash Amin and Stephen Graham point out, recent studies of “the ‘city’ tend to abstract specific urban sites from their broader interrelationship within larger metropolitan areas” (1997: 418). Focus on only certain elements of a city (ex. banking and financial services, political influence) misses the complexity of all cities. For sites like Mansfield and other urban formations, their contributions and places in a “world of cities” (Robinson 2006) frequently drop out of sight for urbanists and are rarely incorporated in theoretical discussions of the city or urbanity (cf. Smith 2001).

In contrast to much of the urban research being conducted (i.e. Sassen 2001, Davis 2007), Jennifer Robinson outlines an “ordinary cities approach” which refuses to hold conventionally named “global” and “world” cities as the unmarked category against which all other forms of urbanity are measured and ranked. She writes:
all cities are best understood as 'ordinary'. Rather than categorising and labelling cities, as for example, Western, Third World, developed, developing, world or global, I propose that we think about a world of ordinary cities, which are all dynamic and diverse, if conflicted, arenas for social and economic life.... an ordinary-city approach takes the world of cities as its starting point and attends to the diversity and complexity of all cities (2006: 1).

An ordinary city theory provides a way out of the myopic focus on global cities (aka, “western,” “developed,” “big”), by calling into question the ways urban studies often implicitly categorizes and ranks cities (Oswalt, ed. 2005). An ordinary city approach does not flatten the definition of the city or cityness to mean an undifferentiated, vague, or generically shared aura of urbanity. Instead, an ordinary cities theory recognizes the specificities of each city and broadens understandings of cityness to embrace a multitude of difference.

Robinson's theory comes out of a postcolonial critique of urban studies and focuses heavily on the pervasive and detrimental discourses of modernity and development that root many studies of the city. Suggesting that theories, as well as planning and policy approaches found within cities across the globe, would benefit from an ordinary city approach, Robinson contends that in accepting one's place as is in the world of cities, new horizons open up of what a city is and what a city might imagine itself becoming. Robinson's argument comes out of the observation that non-western, “developing” cities often fall outside the attention of leading urbanists, in some cases, literally becoming erased from maps (Robinson 2002). Her text provides the theoretical scaffolding needed to bring “third world” cities and cities beyond the usual handful into discussions of what “the city” is. Robinson argues that “theorising about cities should be more cosmopolitan, should be resourced by a greater diversity of urban experiences” (2006: 6). Robinson's theory offers much to our understanding of small cities, just as small cities have much to offer to an ordinary cities approach.

Let me state at the outset that I do not presume that small Rustbelt cities in the United States and Canada are the same as postcolonial or so-called “developing” cities. No two cities are alike, and there are clear historical and contemporary differences in power, access, and control between western
metropolises—no matter their size—and cities which existed and exist under colonial and neocolonial control. But the critiques developed by postcolonial scholars like Robinson (2006) and Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) are extremely helpful in thinking through my own uncomfortableness and dissatisfaction with dominant trends in anthropology. I believe Robinson's ordinary city approach applies to studies and theories of small cities. She writes that “it is my contention that urban theory should be encouraged to search for alternative formulations of cityness which don't privilege only certain cities, placed at the top of a hierarchy. Ideas about what cities are and what they might become need to draw their inspiration from a much wider range of urban contexts” (2006: 112). One of these contexts might be small cities.

While I am reluctant to talk about small cities as a type, I do believe it is necessary work to document and recognize this distinctive urban formation which is often elided and forgotten in urban analyses, as well as in critical studies of class and race. Not every community can provide medical, educational, economic, or political opportunities. Conversely, one does not need to reside in or travel to a so-called global city to access these possibilities and services. So, for example, small cities often provide to their residents and surrounding rural and small town neighbors critical health care services (particularly emergency medicine, as well as a range of medical specialists, and a variety of surgical and cancer treatments), higher education facilities, fine arts, cultural, and athletic institutions, non-dominant and alternative sites of religious worship (ex. the Islamic Society of the Mansfield Area serves Muslims in the surrounding six, extremely Christian counties) “vice” industries (ex. gambling facilities, straight- and gay-oriented bars and dance clubs, strip clubs, “adult” stores, prostitution), and retail districts containing a range of independent stores and multi-national chains.4

Jobs come with these services and industries, and thus these locations are sites where economic

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4 I include this list in order to head off questions of “why isn’t every small town then a small city”. An ordinary cities theory does not extend cityness and urbanity to every collection of homes and industries. There is still something distinctly urban and citylike about ordinary cities.
Restructuring can be keenly felt “on the ground.” Most small cities, especially in the industrial midwest, are multiracial but perhaps not as diverse as a major city like Los Angeles or New York, but not as monoracial as many of the small towns and villages which still dot the United States (Loewen 2005). Although certainly not all small cities fit into this category, 18% of all the U.S. population lives in a city between 25,000 and 250,000 people. It is surprising (and telling) that almost a fifth of the U.S. population likely lives in a small city and that social phenomena in this setting have been under studied and analyzed.

In marking a city as “small” I simply want to acknowledge the web of “contestation and uneven power relations” a small city sits in (Robinson 2006: 110). Positioned by and positioning themselves based on their resources and geographical and population sizes, small cities benefit from, and are disadvantaged by, these dynamic webs (Benson 2002, Connolly, ed. 2010, Garrett-Petts, ed. 2005, Waitt, Hewitt and Kraly 2006). Small cities scholars argue that “smallness is as much about reach and influence as it is about population size” (Bell and Jayne 2006: 5). In arguing for the real inclusion of small cities in anthropology, my goal is not to just add another entry to the ever expanding list of urban formations (ex. Bridge and Watson, eds. 1999, Low, ed. 1999). Instead, I see small cities broadening the scope of urban studies, and enriching theories on race, whiteness, class and global capitalism. Perhaps most importantly, what counts as urbanity and cityness can be expanded from current conceptions.

Rooting each chapter of this dissertation, then, is the contention that comprehensively acknowledging urban variation strengthens our analyses and understandings of social phenomena which occur in urban settings and elsewhere. More to the point, I argue throughout this text that small cities provide critical insight into some of the most pressing concerns in American society: race, class, trust, and how these processes become spatialized.
Ethnographically Studying the Class Stratified, Multiracial, City

Since the 19th century, social theorists have grappled to understand “the city.” By the early 20th century, urban studies, as a disciplinary conversation, had developed. Theorists of multiple scholarly perspectives saw the city both as a portal into understanding race (Drake and Cayton 1945) and economic change (Thompson 1966), and a dynamic process itself (Mumford 1996 [1937]). Yet for the variety of research conducted in a multitude of settings and on a range of topics, within the West consensus of “what a city is” formed around one basic platform. Solidified by the 1930s, Lewis Mumford's famously titled 1937 article, “What is a City?” argued that social relationships and cultural requirements drove the physical construction and cultural and social production of cities: “the physical organization of a city, its industries and its markets, its lines of communication and traffic, must be subservient to its social needs” (1996 [1937]: 185). Louis Wirth, writing a year later in the American Journal of Sociology took a more dialectic view, claiming that cities shaped social interactions as much as social life shaped the city. These texts, along with the work of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess at the University of Chicago, were, and continue to be the foundational texts of (U.S. based Western) urban studies. For the most part, researchers assumed that the denseness and intensification of contact among a large number of ethnoracial and class diverse people produced the distinctiveness of the city and its heterogeneous, but impersonal, social interactions, and that these relationships were reflected in the landscape and milieu of the city.

Mumford, urban ecological theorists like Park, and others of the Chicago School including Wirth, generally fell into the Boasian tradition of seeking the motivations for people's behavior in the social milieu, as opposed to attributing human action to biologically-driven urges or physiologically-rooted rationales. Their concern was how this social milieu was produced. In particular, urban ecological studies were concerned with how intensifying industrial capitalism brought people with a variety of racial, ethnic, class, language, and religious backgrounds together and how they interacted
with each other. Yet these early urbanists and theorists still relied on dichotomies of modernity/primitivism, urban/rural, complexity/simplicity, innovation/regression, as well as evolutionary stages of changing complexity. They frequently defined the city by what it was not. Despite claims of developing a theory of the city robust enough to be applicable to a variety of urban formations, urban theories developed by Mumford, Wirth and the Chicago School urban ecologists, were still fixed in notions that size does matter, and that plenty of approximations of urbanism and urbanization (and thus cityness) exist, but not all places with these characteristics are really cities.⁵

Urbanists' focus on the “rural/urban transition” and the changes that resulted from this shift in social organization was in keeping with dominant trends in anthropological and sociological studies of the time (ex. Redfield and Singer 1954). From the start, modern ethnography and cultural anthropology (which were more or less contemporaneous with Wirth, Mumford, Park, et al) have been concerned with urban life and the role of the city in shaping social relationships. Interestingly, the first modern urban ethnographies conducted within the United States were located in smaller cities and cities which were not usually considered world or global cities. For example, W.E.B. DuBois's research in Philadelphia (1967) [1899] and Robert and Helen Lynd's analysis of Middletown (Muncie, Indiana) (1956) [1929] interrogated the place of city life and urbanity in social relationships. Let me further underscore that these early urban ethnographies were concerned with many of the issues that continue to interest anthropologists: race relations, class inequality, social change.

Outside the U.S., French, British, and U.S. anthropologists were often the primary documenters and researchers of colonial and postcolonial cities and similarly raised questions about social inequality, cultural change, and trends of global influence (Robinson 2006: 45-64). Indigenous urban anthropologists, like Manuel Gamio in Mexico (1916), also worked on questions of the city. Through

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⁵ Although Wirth and others noticed the multidirectional exchange of cultural phenomena between “the city” and “rural areas,” they never acknowledged the diversity of formations that incorporated elements from both “the city” and “the country.” Wirth and the Chicago School, instead, positioned the city as modern and diametrically opposed to the “primitive” hinterlands. See Robinson 2006: 25-28 for more on this point.
much of the 20th century, anthropologists and other ethnographers have conducted research within smaller and larger cities. However, the city usually figured as a neutral, or at least uninterrogated, backdrop to the researcher's interests in kinship (Stack 1974), ethnicity and gender (di Leonardo 1984), or class (Willis 1981).

By the mid-1980s, U.S.-trained anthropologists began returning to older precedents and started to do anthropology “of” the city, in contrast to postwar studies “in” the city (see Gulick 1989 for more on this distinction and historical trajectory). This turn to the city as a variable and not a backdrop led researchers to theorize the construction and production of space. Drawing on critical geographers like Edward Soja (1980) and French cultural theorists like Michel Foucault (1975) and Henri Lefebvre (1991), urban anthropologists utilized ethnographic methodologies and centered their analyses on the socio-spatial dialectics that make urban space (Low 1996). Less interested than earlier scholars in developing a unified account of the city's culture, anthropologists “theorizing the city” excavated how cites, through macro and micro processes, become sites where power, discipline, and opportunity converge (Low, ed. 1999). In many ways, contemporary urban anthropologists' analyses of race, ethnicity, class, inequality and instability, and social change echo Wirth and Mumford's primary concerns with how cities are derivative of their social and political economic relationships.

Concurrent to the study of cities has been the study of capitalism and class reconfigurations. This is not surprising as urbanists have often treated the city as a site where capitalistic processes coalesce and culture change is most intense (Holston, ed. 1999, Low 1999). To understand socioeconomic changes in the small city I have relied on anthropological studies of economic change, capitalism, and class to make sense of the liberated flows of capital and the disconnecting abjection of capital’s global reorganization (Appadurai 1996, Comaroff and Comaroff, eds. 2001, Ferguson 1999, Harvey 2005).
Studies of Global Capitalism and Class

Recent work on global capitalism has sought to outline worldwide processes of economic restructuring. These studies are part of a longer history of Marxist anthropology which has long considered how capital changes social structures (Mintz 1960, Wolf 1982) and how societies shape capitalism in culturally specific ways (Ong 1991). In a Western context, the study of class was often left to historians and sociologists before the 1970s (Thompson 1967), but in the late 1970s and 1980s ethnographers began to examine the lived effects of capitalism and class change in the lives of U.S urbanites and other “western” societies (Erhenreich 1989, Foley 1989).

In the 1970s and 1980s, researchers' interest in global capitalism in a United States context was stimulated as industrial reorganization, plant closure, and mobile capital stunned formerly prosperous communities in the U.S. industrial northeast and midwest and left them with a deeply bruised economic base. This process, coined “deindustrialization” in a 1982 popular book by radical economists Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, received much analytical attention as researchers sought not only to understand the process, but to also halt it. Journalists, scholars, and policymakers during the 1980s and later noted the regional specificity of deindustrialization and pointed out that economic restructuring processes within the midwest and northeast U.S. differed from elsewhere in the country due to the predominant industry types, regional prevalence and strength of unions, the reliance of urban sites and their surrounding areas on factory work, and high population densities within these areas (Bluestone and Harrison 1982, Cowie and Heathcott, eds. 2003, High 2003, Serrin 1992).

Accompanying this major economic reorganization was a “falling from grace” (Newman 1988) among working class and middle class people. My analysis of Mansfield's sociocultural history during the 1980s and 1990s is indebted to studies of North American deindustrialization which have elucidated the political, economic, and social effects of capital flight. These studies focus less on the economic histories of companies and more on theorizing industrial readjustment as a historical process that

However, analysts of economic restructuring have tended to limit their studies to the immediate aftermath of a deindustrializing event and often focus narrowly on the experiences of white men and unionized workers (Nash 1989, Sugrue 1996). Scholars of class have only recently addressed the long-term effects of industrial decline on women, people of color, and non-unionized workers of all backgrounds (Linkon and Russo 2002, Simon 2003, Weis 2004). Feminist Marxist anthropologists in particular, have long held an interest in the ways gender intersect with power, and specifically political economic processes which produce class inequalities (Lamphere and Rosaldo, eds. 1974, Nash and Fernandez Kelly 1983, Nash and Safa 1976, Rapp 1978, Rubin 1975).

Feminist ethnographers like Aihwa Ong (1991), Alejandro Lugo (1990 and 2008), and Karen Brodkin (1998) have argued, from a variety of geographical perspectives, that “capitalism is causally and systemically linked to the construction of race and racism” (Brodkin 2000: 239) and that “race in the United States has historically been a key relationship to the means of capitalist production, and gender constructions are what has made race corporeal, material, and visible” (Brodkin 2000: 239). Although recent discourses of free market individuality suggest structurally-informed identities (ex. race or gender) have little bearing on a person’s ability to participate in the marketplace, contemporary scholars like those found in Comaroff and Comaroff, ed. 2001 extend earlier critiques established by 1970s anthropologists, and detail how policies and practices of millenial capitalism continue to rely on racialized, ethnicized, class-based and gendered understandings of individuals and cultures. While some theorists debate the alleged newness of economic restructuring (Johnson 2002, Tsing 2000), scholars mostly agree that since the 1970s, significant shifts in economic policy and practice have occurred, resulting in re-calibrated social structures and relations of power (Edelman and Haugerud,
To historically and globally contextualize Mansfield's economic, political and social organization I have relied on studies of neoliberal capitalism which highlight recent state policies that replace former logics of economic, political and social responsibility with an ethic of free markets and trade, and individual decision making (Harvey 2005, Abelmann 2003). Even in the supposedly free-market logics of neoliberalism, capital continues to rely on enduring racist ideologies to justify the exploitation, consumption, and fetishization of racialized peoples and cultures (Dávila 2004). Whiteness, as a racial identity and as a differentiated system of racialized power in the United States, continues to be central to naturalizing and perpetuating neoliberal logics (McDermott 2006).

As corporations and the state abdicate their responsibilities to workers and consumers in the United States (and elsewhere), former mechanisms that protected or at least maintained class standing—as based on income, control over work, and property holdings—disappear (Collins 2003, Mathew 2005). Yet scholars investigating the cultural experiences and class contours of global capitalism have primarily focus on working class experiences (Collins 2003, Cowie 1999, Foley 1989, Lugo 2008, Ong 1991). This downplays the consequences of deindustrializing and neoliberal capitalist processes on the middle class and ignores its relational connections to working class culture (Doukas 2003, Hartigan 1999). My research contributes to ethnographic studies of class by analyzing the effect of capital change on the middle class (Newman 1992, Ortner 2003, Weis 2004). For example, as I delineate in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, private contractors, cultural privatization, and enduring discourses of the American Dream often continue to insulate the middle class and elite at the expense of working class and poor residents.

Capitalism has failed millions through job loss, housing foreclosures, and the destruction of retirement and investment funds, not just in the last two years, but in the last two decades. The insights developed by studies of deindustrialization and neoliberalism provide tools for investigating the
synchronous and diachronic reverberations of economic restructuring. This dissertation draws on those studies which demonstrate how deindustrialization and neoliberalism reconfigure social relations and matrices of racialized, class-based, and gendered power. Also important for this dissertation is the ways these studies detail how capitalism depends upon these interconnected matrices for actualization. Ethnographically documenting the unanticipated effects of neoliberal capitalism processes on the middle class provides a cultural analysis of the ways lived experiences and structural reconfigurations prompt alterations to middle class formations and thus other intersecting cultural formations, like whiteness.

**Race, Racialization, and Racism**

As researchers of the city and analysts of class have long noted, capitalism has brought ethnically and racially diverse people together into the same geographic space. This has been the case in Mansfield with the similar result of national racial projects and local racial worldviews simultaneously shaping race relations, racialization, and racism within the city. The social scientific and historical literature on racial formation and white structural privilege have been equally pivotal to my project.

Like all reputable social scientific studies, I take for granted that race is a social construct that has no biological basis (Boas 1911; see Visweswaran 1998 for a critique of anthropology's modern concept of culture and its inability to adequately counter the persistent biologization of race). Although it is not biologically "real," I assume, like other critical scholars of race, that the effects of racial categories, racialization, and racism are quite real with results that can be objectively measured politically, economically, socially, and psychologically (DuBois 1995, Omi and Winant 1994). Theorists of race note that more than just phenotype establishes racial categories or actualizes racial domination; in concert with diachronically changing criteria, the intersections of ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, culture, and origin fundamentally contribute to racial projects (Baker 1998, Brodkin
Work on racial formations in the United States has established the role of whiteness—as an ideological and identity-based racial project, in the making of racialized hierarchies (Dominguez 1986, Roediger 1991, Lipsitz 1998). As I am interested in the ways whites think about race and how these worldviews influence “race relations,” I approached the study of race and racial domination in Mansfield from the theoretical orientation of critical studies of whiteness. I enclose “race relations” in quotes because although it is a non-jargon term, it can mean so many different things to so many different people. These meanings are often racially-informed (Frankenberg 1993). What I mean here is how racial subjects interact with each other in intragroup and intergroup settings.

At the moment, critical studies of whiteness has, loosely, two major theoretical constellations: (1) whiteness as wage and (2) whiteness as cultural dimension. In general, the whiteness as wage cluster tends towards a social analysis, using a “top-down” approach, whereas the whiteness as cultural dimension does a cultural analysis using a “bottom-up” approach. Most critical scholars of whiteness take into simultaneous consideration—to greater and lesser degrees—the pervasive power of white racial supremacy and the specifics of the lived material and symbolic supports of this social structure. Although many scholars in this school of thought are often white, their work is indebted to the broader body of “race” literature that has long been produced by scholars of color and/or which analyzes how people of color view whiteness (Anzaldúa 1987, Baldwin 1995, Chun 2001, DuBois 1995, hooks 1992, Hurston 1990, Ramos-Zayas 2001, Roediger 1998, Trechter 2001, Urciuoli 1996).

For authors who primarily understand whiteness as a wage (i.e. an unearned psychological, economic, political, or social advantage), whiteness is usually synonymous with white supremacy.

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6 My discussion in this section focuses primarily on historical and social scientific studies of whiteness. I do not include substantial discussions about film, literary, media, and philosophical studies of whiteness for brevity, and for the relatively peripheral importance of these specific subjects in my own work.
racial domination, and race-based (or skin color) privilege. In these studies, whiteness is taken as a social structure that has persisted over generational time to the accumulating benefit of whites (Lipsitz 1998). For example, legal theorists, coming from the critical race theory tradition, see whiteness as an assemblage of economic, political, and social advantages conferred upon light-skinned, European-descent people (see Delgado and Stephanie, eds. 2001 for a representation of legal scholars, including Cheryl Harris and Ian Haney-Lopez). Like many scholars who focus on the societal implications of whiteness’s wages, education and psychology scholars (among others) emphasize the invisibility of white privilege and white domination to whites (see Fine, Weis, Powell, Wong, eds. 1997 for representative works from these fields).

The ideological discourse most often reported by education and psychology scholars is what American studies scholar Ruth Frankenberg called, a color-evasive, power-evasive discourse. In this framework, whites actively seek “blindness” to phenotypic differences that, through an easy slippage of terms and concepts, becomes a blindness to power inequities (1993: 14). While Frankenberg revised her diagnosis of U.S. white society as color-conscious, but power-evasive (2001: 91), she and other authors still believe the general question of whiteness’s role in power hierarchies and racialization remains mostly unchallenged by whites.

Like Frankenberg, American studies scholar George Lipsitz (1998) has shown that whites not only constantly benefit from the status quo, but that they maintain a “possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz 1998). Whiteness, as “a location of structural advantage, of racial privilege” (Frankenberg 1993:1) generates economic advantages, and thus life advantages, which whites actively invest in and jealously maintain. Many authors who focus on the development of whiteness as wage assume that there is, at the heart of it all, some fundamental, essential whiteness. Moreover, this kind of whiteness is often seen as empty, lacking in cultural attributes, parasitic, and invisible to whites (Segrest 2001, Duster 2001, Ware 1992). Treating whiteness as an empty, but enduring essence of
power, often prevents us from exploring possible departures from the hegemonic narrative: the
whiteness that some whites live and experience may contradict, complicate, or refute notions of race-

In relative contrast, the “whiteness as cultural dimension” vision often focuses on how
racialization, racism, and white-skin privilege are instantiated in everyday interactions through
meaningful symbols and objects. Critical histories of whiteness often utilize histories of (white ethnic)
immigration and/or the working class to persuasively show that the definitions of white racial propriety
have diachronically shifted to variously accommodate or exclude certain ethnoracial groups and
racially-mediated relations. (Barrett and Roediger 1997, Guigliemo 2001, Ignatiev 1997). These
histories demonstrate how categories of whiteness as an identity and as a viable social structure have
never been foregone conclusions. Without attention to cultural praxis, the symbolic matters, and the
historical strands that make whiteness significant in everyday cultural interactions, it is difficult to
understand how white hegemony materializes and gets operationalized (Rasmussen et al 2001: 12,

Ethnographers also provide a close examination of the instantiation of social structures in a
everyday lived experiences of whiteness and examining the cultural processes that ground and animate
the ideological and social structure of whiteness leads scholars to investigate identity formation,
markers of white culture, and the cultural processes involved in “identif[y]ing] with the meanings
attached to one’s social location” (Perry 2002: 73). They find that not all whites equally access the
“wages of whiteness” (Hartigan 1999, Roediger 1991, Wray and Newitz, eds. 1997). Whiteness has a
plurality of identities and cultural expressions; the most unmarked, and thus “profitable,” are predicated
upon other unmarked markers and attributes (Hartigan 1999, McDermott 2006). In the case of the
United States, unmarked white racial identities are usually middle class—the least marked class

In many cultural analyses, the focus of whiteness on “local,” site-bound spaces is placed in conversation with regional, national, or global generalizations. Many authors emphasize the scale of analysis in their research, pointing out that local cultural currents and trends differently shape local meanings and the impacts of white identity, white privilege, and race relations. A focus on whiteness as a cultural dimension, then, shifts the analysis slightly to analyzing the creation and negotiation of racial identities and examining the sociocultural elements that contribute to cultural actors’ worldviews regarding whiteness and thus race. In other words, a bottom-up approach yields an analysis that documents how ideologies get built from, and are expressed through, lived cultural life.

For example, my ethnographic research among Mansfield’s 50,000 residents indicates that despite historical and contemporary segregational practices, small city space produces a daily physical and social closeness between whites and people of color; and elite middle class people and residents living in poverty; that is markedly more sustained, and consequently more complex, than what many scholars of the (global) city suggest. Yet despite claims of a post-racial society, my research found that while many whites are able to identify and challenge overt racist acts, they still have great difficulty recognizing their privileged place in U.S. racial hierarchies. As racial privileges becomes less assured through class privilege, or when people of color highlight the continued sway whiteness has in U.S. society, many whites respond in ambivalent, and often contradictory and defensive ways.

Some authors like Hartigan and Perry suggest that these moments of ambiguity and contradiction might be nascent formations of alternative racial worldviews. This view counters the general conclusion many whiteness as wage scholars make about such situations (ex. Frankenberg 1993, Roediger 1992, McIntyre 1997). Most whiteness as wage scholars see contradictions in racial identities and whites’ racial worldviews as proof of the privilege whites have in not thinking systematically about race, racial power, or racism, and the parasitic and predatory nature of whiteness
towards blackness and brownness (Frankenberg 1992, Dyer 1997). Determining which process may be occurring in any one situation may be better addressed by tacking between “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches which are attuned to, but do not presuppose, the predatory forces of whiteness (Cowlishaw 1999).

But to understand any “on the ground” interaction requires an understanding beyond structural conditions of class difference and racialization. In Mansfield, social relations are rooted in notions of neighborliness and organized by assessments of trust. As the central organizing principle in Mansfield's social relations, feelings of trust and distrust regularly influence how residents assess their neighborly relations.

**Neighborly Relations**

In cultural studies, theorists often consider neighborliness and neighborly relations as ways into understanding ethics and choices. Regularly drawing from Freud's discussion of the biblical passage “love one's neighbor as one's self” in *Civilization and its Discontents*, theorists such as Slavoj Žižek use “neighbor-love” and neighborliness to consider the ramifications of simultaneous alterity and sameness (Žižek, Santer, Reinhard 2006). Examining the “neighborly relations” between Jews and Nazi Germans, as well as the implications of neighborliness in light of wealth disparities—obvious in the exponential growth of shantytowns, tent cities, favellas, and barrios next to wealthy neighborhoods the world over—Žižek and other cultural theorists analyze the responsibilities, expectations, and spatiality of a neighborly ethic.

Other cultural theorists such as Dana Cuff are less concerned with the ethical lessons neighborliness might hold than the political possibilities inherent to shared semi-domestic space. In considering the built environment and the neighbor, particularly in suburban and urban contexts, Cuff argues that “neighbor relations are proto-political, growing from imposed, inescapable, and open-ended confrontation between self and other. Sociality located beyond the household and before the city forms
a grain of sand around which participatory democracy or civil society can begin to take shape” (2005: paragraph 7). For cultural theorists, neighborly relations clarify the most fundamental issues at stake in social relations—alterity, sameness, ally, foe.

Although rarely explicit in discussion of neighborliness, many theorists assume trust is a central mediating element in place-based social relations. While my dissertation draws on Žižek’s and Cuff’s explorations of the neighbor as a manifestation of otherness and sameness, I use this observation to explicitly explore how the intimate relations between neighbors are predicated on and made through assessments of trust. This dissertation is centrally concerned with investigating trust and neighborliness because I found during research that these concepts provide avenues into understanding how structural intersections of race, class, gender, origin, and space play out in lived life among residents who are racially, classed, gendered differently from one another. Neighborliness, in particular, reveals unpredictable social interactions and unexpected moments of intimacy that are predicated on the sharing of physical space. As key components to the creation of and understanding of cityness, neighborly relations and trust become important mechanisms to understanding social relations in the small city. Throughout my dissertation I elevate and value the particularities of neighborliness and trust, and the meanings they hold for small city social actors. Chapter 4, especially, explores what a “neighbor” is and what neighborliness means in Mansfield, however it is worth introducing the concepts here, as neighborly relations are highlighted in every chapter.

Within this text, I use an ordinary cities approach towards neighborly relations which allows me to highlight the complexity and contributions small cities makes to the “world of cities” while also exploring how small cities complicate and expand disciplinary conversations about white racial privilege, capitalism and class, and place-based social relationships. By using trust, neighborliness, and an ordinary cities approach to dissect the dominating power of whiteness and destabilizing effects of current economic restructuring processes among small city residents, my dissertation highlights the
socio-spatial particularities of urban space, global capitalism, and racial projects within a U.S. context.

I turn now to the fieldsite.

**Fieldsite in Context**

My interest in small cities is quite accidental, actually. My scholarly interest has been more about racialization and racism, and specifically the ways that whiteness shapes social and cultural relations. As whiteness is much more than phenotype, but also intersecting regimes of class, ethnicity, “legality,” and speech community, among others, I decided to study race in an economically changing environment. Having a research question in mind, I then looked for a site in which to locate my research. As I developed this project, the 2004 presidential elections were winding down and Ohio was in the limelight as a significant swing state. In interesting ways, the elections and media coverage of the election refracted many of the issues which I sought to explore. I had done my undergraduate degree at a mid-sized public university in Ohio and was familiar with Ohio's changing economic dynamics and decided to return to the state. But I realized that if I located my study in a large city, like Cleveland, my research would not be so much a study about the entire community, but a neighborhood study. I then chose to find a smaller city, somewhat removed from the state's largest metros (Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Akron, Dayton, and Youngstown).

As I have told countless Ohioans who have expressed interest in my research, I found Mansfield through the internet. Growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, I had never even heard of Mansfield before developing my first fieldwork funding application in 2005. In googling, days before my first research funding application was due, I stumbled upon a website that listed all the General Motors plants in Ohio and their location. I figured the presence of a GM plant and thus the United Auto Workers union was a good indicator of a blue collared, middle class community. Pulling out my atlas and confirming that it was a racially diverse city through the Census and with a few phone calls to its local history center to determine the extent of deindustrialization in the city, I decided Mansfield
was the place where I would do my research.

When I began my project in 2005, the American Community Survey (a selected interim estimate between decennial Censuses) reported that of the 50,000 or so residents in the city, 76.8% self-identified as white, 19.6% identified as black or African American, 2.1% identify as two or more races and less than 2% identify as any other racial category on the census. By the end of my intense research period in early 2009, these numbers had shifted slightly. In 2008, with the population still just barely over 50,000 people, the American Community Survey estimated that 72.7% of residents identified as white, 22.9% African American or black, 3.1% as two or more races, and about 3% as Asian, Latino, or American Indian. Unfortunately, I write this Introduction as the 2010 Census is being complied; in future versions of this project, I will incorporate those more comprehensive numbers.

Based on my experiential familiarity with, and scholarly knowledge of, other small Rustbelt cities, I am fairly confident that my research could have been conducted in any small Rustbelt city and probably would have generated similar results. However, despite the similarities Mansfield may have to other small cities, it is still unique and the findings I derived from my research are very much inflected by the time period I was there. I conducted eight week and six week research sessions during the summer of 2005 and summer of 2006, respectively. The bulk of my dissertation is based on research I conducted between January 2008 and January 2009, although the earlier sessions were invaluable in helping me understand processes I observed during my year-long field research. During the periods I was not living in Mansfield, I maintained correspondence with informants and friends and monitored the local newspaper online. I continue to email and occasionally visit friends and a few key informants, and I still read the paper online, 22 months after “leaving the field.”

Doing long-term research during 2008 was, in a word, intense. Although the Great Recession

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7 The 2008 estimates for the country as a whole were 74.3% white, 12.3% black or African American, 2.2% two or more races, 4.4% Asian, 15.1% Latino and 0.08% American Indian and Alaska Native.
was not widely acknowledged until the summer, Mansfielders were well aware of its effects months before major indicators, like escalating numbers of foreclosures and the collapse of the subprime mortgage market, were nationally recognized. As early as February 2008, informants were telling me, “we’ve been in a recession for at least the past 18 months. It's only a matter of time before everyone else in the world is affected.” They were absolutely right. This experience points to one of the many double edged assets of small cities: they can predict economic downturns earlier and with more insight on the consequences of these changes, than larger cities.

Except for the end of Chapter 3, I spend little time explicitly addressing and analyzing the 2008 and 2009 recession. I do not put much energy into the Great Recession because for me it is part of a larger trend of deindustrialization and capital reorganization within the Rustbelt. The way that news articles initially reported on the Recession made it sound like hardship, financial insecurity, and the sudden draining of community wealth were new phenomena, the world over. They are not. Even for middle class and elite Mansfielders, such swings in fortune were not new. Informants talked about the Recession, but obsessions about collapsing stock portfolios were of little concern to many Mansfielders. While they felt and talked about the effects of the Recession, they mainly saw it as a fact of life in the Rustbelt which is why I avoid fetishizing the 2008-09 Recession as something extraordinary or remarkable. It was a backdrop to my fieldwork, but not a major, or unexpected variable which significantly reworked my research or hypotheses.8

What was upsetting, although again, a not-so-extraordinary Rustbelt event, was the announcement in June 2009 that General Motors would be closing the Mansfield plant in June 2010. Although I was not actively conducting fieldwork at the time of that decision, rumors of GM's closure had swirled throughout all my research periods. GM was the largest and most consistently open

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8 Despite my skepticism of overblown media accounts of the Recession, it is clear that it will have long last effects on the country, and especially severe consequences within the Rustbelt. This is a topic ripe for analyses by anthropologists and is an issue I hope to further research in my next scholarly project.
unionized employer in Mansfield during my field research; I have no doubt that its closure will further exacerbate the issues I document in this dissertation. While the steel mill is still unionized, it is often on shut-down and its workers hustling for other jobs or barely subsisting on unemployment benefits. The two state prisons located in Mansfield continue to offer unionized employment, but with a state budget in major deficit, there have been few hires and no raises in those workplaces. Analysts are projecting an $8 billion deficit for the 2011-13 state budget (Ingles 2010).

With the Great Recession and its reverberating effects in the background, the 2008 Presidential Elections also made my research time in Ohio intense. In general, my experience in Ohio is that Ohioans are extremely politically attuned (certainly more so than in Illinois, and specifically Chicagoland where Republican candidates rarely bother to throw campaign ad money at the Daley machine which consistently delivers Illinois's Democratic electoral votes). Ohioans are generally quite knowledgeable of the issues and of candidates' platforms at all levels of government. However, Mansfielders (and I would say Ohioans in general) find the Presidential election cycle infuriating and exhausting. Being a swing state and Rustbelt state facing immense challenges, Ohioans are understandably bitter to be under the media magnifying glass one year, the target of incessant presidential campaigning and false promises, and then systemically ignored for the other three years.

As another indicator of the harbingers-power of small cities, many Mansfielders in 2008 voiced extreme dissatisfaction with the two-party system and incumbent candidates. During my fieldwork, many informants expressed adamant desire for third party candidates and made known their deep skepticism and suspicion about the entire political process. The national 2010 anti-incumbency trend, most clearly expressed in the Tea Party Movement, are manifestations of that early sense of alienation and disaffection. As a point of reference, Bromfield County⁹ went Republican in the 2004 presidential elections and narrowly went Republican again in 2008.

⁹ I address my use of pseudonyms later in this chapter.
However, the city has been run by a Democratic mayor since 1993. During the 2007 mayoral elections, the city just barely elected another Democrat, as the previously one had been term limited. The new mayor is Mansfield's first African American mayor, who was in office while I conducted my 2008-2009 fieldwork session. Although the mayor, the Mansfield City Schools superintendent, and the state representative for the Mansfield area were all men of color during my 2008-09 research session, racism is still present throughout the city, as this dissertation explores. As several informants put it to me during fieldwork, looking beyond the officials to who is really wielding power in the city, it did not seem that these men of color in public office had all that much sway on local matters. Despite sometimes quite vocal fears that the mayor or the superintendent would privilege African American residents and students at the expense of white Mansfielders, (unsurprisingly) that never happened. While I am heartened by the election and appointment of men of color to positions of power, I do not see these individual seats as foretelling a new, post-racial order. I agree with informants' readings of the city: in practice, sociopolitical and economic power was still very white in the city.

Like the Great Recession, I address the 2008 Elections only obliquely in this dissertation. While the presidential primaries and campaign often provided easy entrée into conversations about race, class, gender, propriety, and privilege, the dissertation analyzes longer trends. The national elections also remain in the background because I do not want to represent the Elections as the most significant event in Mansfield. It was not. Residents were excited about the Election, but it did not consume their entire lives the whole time I was doing research in 2008. As we experience the national swing to the right in 2011 and beyond, anthropologists will have much work to do in sorting out the role of the 2008 Elections and specifically the place of President Obama as a touchstone in these processes.

Lastly, 2008 was an intense time to do long term fieldwork because that year was the city's 200\(^{th}\) anniversary. Of all the unique events of 2008, this was probably the most influential, in terms of studying Mansfield cultural life. Being a participant observer during the bicentennial year provided me
with many opportunities to better understand how the city thought about itself. There was an overt engagement with the past and present and explicit discussions about how uncertain the future looked in light of past and present events. Not everyone participated in the celebrations and certainly events and activities were targeted to particular individuals, with specific goals. Again, the bicentennial was more often a backdrop to the daily rhythms of life in the small city, but the year long celebrations regularly provided key moments which rallied the city to communally reflect on its history and its future. Here I should acknowledge my participation on the Bicentennial SubCommittee for African American History where I assisted with the production a 168 page book that compiled biographies of local, notable African American Mansfielders. Being a part of this group was an amazing opportunity where I learned about Mansfield's daily life, often in a historical context.

One major lacuna to this work is that I do not address or consider the Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities that surround Mansfield. (Ohio is ranked second in terms of Amish population size [Amish Population 2010]). Members of these Anabaptist communities were often more present in the small towns and villages to the north and east of Mansfield, although I sometimes saw Old Order Mennonites and occasionally Amish shopping in Linden, a town that is immediately adjacent to Mansfield and the current home of much of the county's big box retail. Both groups are distinguished by their plain dress, with men's hats and the color of women's dresses being main ways to visually differentiate between community members. I can only recall two separate times I actually saw an Amish buggy in Mansfield city proper, but I did see buggies and Amish bicyclists with some regularity on the rural roads surrounding Mansfield. The Old Order Mennonites who live near Mansfield drive automobiles; passing a Mennonite school and worship hall one weekday winter morning, a row of four identical black minivans sat in stark contrast to the surrounding snow covered agricultural fields. The whiteness of Amish and Mennonite communities vis-a-vis the racial dynamics of the small city brings up an entirely different set of concerns; in the interest of keeping the rest of my analysis crystallized, I
do not take up the Amish and Mennonite communities in this work.

For now, let me note that like white Appalachians in Mansfield (see Chapter 5), the whiteness of the Amish and Mennonites is marked—sometimes revered and sometimes denigrated. (Conversely, Amish and Old Order Mennonite mark difference, the most immediate way is by calling non-Anabaptists “English.”) There is a definite anti-Amish sentiment in the Mansfield area. Rural residents, especially, complain that the Amish treat their animals poorly, their iron wheeled buggies tear up county roads, they don't speak English well, and they do not pay taxes but access public services (this last point is a widespread misconception, both Anabaptist communities do pay taxes [Kraybill, ed. 2003]). The parallels between anti-Amish discourses and current anti-immigration discourses are quite striking and point to the security some residents derive from inspecting their neighbors (I address inspections, a concept fleshed out by Lugo 2000, in chapters 2 and 5).10

But as I explore in Chapter 5 regarding white Appalachians, the Amish and Mennonite are often revered for their woodworking and craftwork, their cooking, and their gardening. Many Mansfielders (mostly white, but also some African Americans and Latinas/os) travel to “Amish Country” on daytrips and buy Amish furniture or Amish cheese during these excursions. Quilters and farmers in and around Mansfield shop in several Mennonite stores to the north of Mansfield. These Anabaptist communities are a small, but important player in the larger Mansfield metro, and I intend to explore their significance in small city race relations with later research.

Generally, Mansfielders were glad that I would be writing about their city. After years of doom and gloom, as well as superficial sensationalist news stories on the city, my willingness to come back year after year meant a lot to residents. (Sensationalist news includes, just from 2008-09, a full Oprah episode on meth abuse, a 5 minute segment on a Tea Party breakaway group by the Daily Show, and a 10 page investigative article by Playboy on a corrupt DEA agent whose erroneous testimony and shady

10 My thanks to Professor Alejandro Lugo for bringing this point to my attention.
witnesses put eight innocent people behind bars). However, it is likely that this dissertation will be met with resistance; it was clear to me as people told me how happy they were that I was writing about their city that they were projecting their dreams and aspirations onto the project. In particular, my criticalness of whiteness may easily be misread as being critical of white Mansfielders. That is not my intention, and I repeatedly stressed to informants and other Mansfielders I met that my dissertation is about social processes that occur in small cities. This dissertation is not actually intended to be solely about Mansfield itself.

Still I use pseudonyms throughout this dissertation, per usual anthropological practice, and to give privacy to the informants who so graciously shared their lives with me. For the name of places, like the steel mill, I utilize the names Louis Bromfield used in *The Green Bay Tree*. Louis Bromfield was a mid-20th century novelist and naturalist writer who grew up in and around Mansfield. His book, *The Green Bay Tree* is situated in a place he calls “the Town” but which is obviously Mansfield to those who are familiar with the city or his life. Using Bromfield's names is a wink to some of my most helpful informants and friends who originally introduced me to the book. I use Bromfield's place names because they are obvious to Mansfielders, but not to outsiders. The county Mansfield sits in, street names, and surrounding town names are pseudonymous. But because I feel that small cities are important, but overlooked, formations, I retain Mansfield's true name—a pseudonym would further obscure small cities from the core of urban studies.

In addition to place names, I use character names out of *The Green Bay Tree* and other novels by Bromfield for the pseudonyms of white informants and nonblack informants of color. However, because African Americans rarely appear in his novels, except as the occasional generically named servant, I use the names of famous African Americans for black Mansfielders' pseudonyms. I only use pseudonyms with living people or recently deceased persons, the early history covered in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 retains actual names so that others interested in Mansfield's history can find the same
information I used.

Although I am white and middle class, like many of my informants, I would never consider myself a cultural insider or native anthropologist. My educational and economic privileges—obvious in my apparent lack of a job but access to capital through research funds, and the ability to leave and come back to Mansfield at will—all impacted how informants viewed me and how I did ethnography (Gallagher 2000, Narayan 1993). However, to suggest “the field” was not also “home” to me is disingenuous. While in Mansfield (and beyond) I constantly benefitted from the exclusionary racial and class structures that shape U.S. social relations (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Kenny 2000, McIntosh 1989, Visweswaran 1994). I explore the terms of white racial engagement more fully in chapter 5 and my own place in these structures, but I want to flag here that as much as I tried to keep these structures of racial supremacy visible to myself, I failed at times.

As a young white woman I was granted tremendous leeway in asking uncomfortable and racially or class inappropriate questions. However, I also had difficulty conducting research because I was regularly sexualized, hit on, and propositioned by strangers and informants. In some cases I chose not to pursue research leads because I did not want to expose myself to uncomfortable situations, or circumstance which felt potentially unsafe. Because I wanted to maintain long term research relationships in Mansfield, and because everyone in the city seemed to know each other (I discuss this phenomenon in greater detail in chapter 4), I was never as forceful as I wanted to be or should have been about telling men, in particular, that I was not interested in their advances. This aspect of ethnography, which is rarely written about, but regularly discussed among fellow researching women, was extremely stressful for me. The best way I found to manage this source of frustration and stress was to leave “the field” every three weeks or so for the afternoon or weekend. I mention this dynamic because it influenced the way I approached interviews and participant observations, and undoubtedly colored the ways informants interpolated me and my research.
Researching Small City Life

The bulk of my data consists of the everyday talk Mansfielders engage in and I logged countless hours doing participant observation, meaning I closely observed social interactions while I participated in daily life. I accepted most every invitation offered, attending festivals, high school sporting events, and club meetings. I hung out in bars and coffeeshops, played poker in people’s homes, and went to church weekly. In the course of daily life, even when I was hoping to “turn off” my research, I often ended up in conversations about race, space, and the economy in Mansfield. I always told people that I was a student and doing research in Mansfield for a book-length paper I was writing on race relations. Indeed, because I was an outsider without familial ties to the city, residents often asked me why I was in the small city before I had a chance to inform them of my research purposes.

In addition to participant observation, I recorded semi-structured interviews with residents from various age cohorts, racial backgrounds, and class backgrounds to formalize discussions and responses to middle class whiteness in Mansfield. Over two summers and a full year of fieldwork, I conducted 73 recorded interviews and 5 unrecorded interviews with a total of 78 informants. All together I did 7 group interviews and on average, interviews ran about a hour and forty five minutes (many were closer to three hours). I interviewed significantly more whites than people of color: 63 whites, 12 African Americans and 3 nonblack, people of color. This extreme lopsidedness partially reflects my ability to recruit whites more easily than people of color and the networks interviewees existed in (much of my interviewee recruitment was done through snowball sampling). But these disparities also reflect my intention to study how whites thought of race relations and their own racial privileges.

In the end I formally interviewed 36 women and 42 men. In 2006 and 2008 I purposefully sought older informants, in order to gather life history interviews. In 2008 I tried to have an even distribution over three different age cohorts in order to generate a better sense of generational differences. In total I spoke with 24 interviewees between the ages of 18-44, 34 interviewees between
the ages of 45-64 and 20 interviewees who were 65 or older. The larger informant pool I learned from was more racially equitable and skewed towards the retiree set (not surprising, as I often felt like I was living the retiree lifestyle since my full time “job” in Mansfield was to socialize and study social relationships). My personal, non-research, social network within the city was extremely diverse in terms of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, political persuasion, and religious affiliation.

Lastly, during each fieldwork session I researched local history archives and complied historical census data to track business mergers, industrial growth and decline, shifting neighborhood profiles, and individuals' life trajectories. To document historical changes in small city space and life, and to elicit informants’ analyses of place and space, informants took me on tours of Mansfield and narrativized their mental maps of the city for me. I did mapping exercises with 22 informants; informants used a large map of the city to delineate boundaries, tell stories about different places around the city, and indicate personally significant sites. After my intensive fieldwork sessions, I used statistics from the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics to assist my historical and contemporary documentation of citywide trends.

To interpret my data, I utilize discourse analysis, "a process that examines aspects of the structure and function of language in use" (Johnstone 2002: 4), throughout this dissertation to understand informants' talk. I work from the premise, shared by many linguistic anthropologists, that everyday language-in-use, or talk, reveals macro Discourses, or Foucaultian ‘common sense’ ideologies ‘behind’ the talk (Foucault 1972, Conley and O’Barr 1998, Fairclough 2001, Silverstein and Urban, eds. 1996). As linguist James Paul Gee has put it, “it is sometimes helpful to think about social and political issues as if it is not just us humans who are talking and interacting with each other, but rather, the Discourses we represent and enact, and for which we are ‘carriers’” (1999: 18). However, talk is not just a verbal transmitter of societal ideas and assumptions, it also actively shapes and modifies ideologies. Macro Discourses can be ‘given life’ only through the meaning-making and talking that
humans do and thus, cultural actors dynamically and inventively use macro Discourses that interact, contradict, and reinforce each other (Gal 1989, Irvine 1989).

Discourse analysis equips me with the tools to connect communication to its sociocultural context and to examine how informants use talk as a dynamic, culturally-informed resource and not simply as a platform for messages transmission. In other words, through discourse analysis, I do a fine-grain analysis of informants' speech while simultaneously situating, in relation to one another, national processes of middle class white privilege, the lived practices of race, class, gender, and space under global capitalism, and Mansfielders’ subjective interpretations of middle class whiteness (Bucholtz and Trechter, eds 2001, Hill 1998, Lindquist 2002, Urciuoli 1996). My most sustained discursive analyses are of ethnographic moments and interview vignettes, primarily found in Chapters 4-6, and I focus on the ways informants' worldviews of racial propriety, class respectability, trust, and assessments of neighborliness are indexed through their talk (Silverstein 1976).

In learning local idioms to understand the macro Discourse being represented and enacted, my dissertation contributes to anthropological discussions by demonstrating how complex meanings and worldviews are entextualized in simple talk. Specifically, discourse analysis enables me to practice an ordinary cities approach by valuing everyday utterances and events of the small city and understanding these expressions as manifestations of “cityness” writ large. By utilizing discourse analysis to understand the small city, I argue for the importance of discourse analysis in urban studies. Relatedly, my use of discourse analysis to understand small city social processes points to the contributions linguistic anthropology makes to studies of race, class, and space. For example, I demonstrate the possibilities linguistic anthropology holds for theorizing U.S. society by using discourse analysis to investigate how trust and neighborliness shape race relations, class relations, and the spatialization of these processes. Linguistic anthropology untangles the sociocultural context, providing insight into U.S. discursive strategies and what they mean in the lives of U.S. inhabitants.
An Explanation of Terms

One of the most obvious ways that discourse analysis helped me understand social processes in Mansfield is in the variety of categories used to describe the subjectivities of social actors. These categories, for example “working class,” “middle class elite,” “nonblack people of color,” reflect the heterogeneity of identities historically constituted over time.

Terms such as “white” and “African American” are terms that both reflect census categories and “on the ground” talk. Other terms, however, entirely reflect ethnographically derived categories. These are the categories which Mansfielders use in everyday talk, but are not necessarily part of a national speech community. For example, “import,” “transplant,” and “local” are terms which name residents' place of origin (i.e. born and raised in Mansfield or elsewhere). As I describe in chapter 3, Mansfielders often use origin to index one's allegiance to the small city. Terms like “mixed” or “hillbilly” are also ethnographically derived categories—these terms are overwhelmingly preferred to the more academic-sounding “multiracial” or “white Appalachian.” I use ethnographically-relevant terms, with explained caveats, throughout the text.

Additionally, I use many terms which are not found in the census or in Mansfielders' speech. I have developed these terms in order to capture the complexities of subjectivity that may not be immediately obvious in census or ethnographic terms. These terms also often name ideas, discourses, and subjectivities that are purposefully submerged or silenced. For example, “nonblack people of color” is how I name people who are not African American but are racialized as not-white within the Mansfield imaginary. They face discrimination and racialization which is similar to, but not the same as black-specific discrimination, racialized assumptions or harassment.

The ways I name class positions also reflect specific meanings which, while often unnamed in Mansfielders' discourse, index how social relationships are created and what these class positions mean to small city life. These terms often voice a set of cultural practices which residents clearly identify as
indexing particular kinds of people; my terms are attempts to succinctly sum up the assumptions and interpolations that surround these subjectivities. For example, doctors and highly trained health professionals are glossed as “medical elites” in this dissertation. Mansfielders consider them elite because of their profession, high level of wages, and the respect they garner by working in a prestigious occupation. But medical elites are also different from “local elites” in that medical elites came to Mansfield as adults for their employment—local elites grew up in Mansfield and are high income, high prestige, and usually from families who have lived in Mansfield for more than two generations.

“Blue collared middle class” and “white collared professionals” refer to Mansfielders who have the economic resources to live next to each other (usually in predominantly owner-occupied neighborhoods which are perceived to be among the safest in the city), but whose careers and “tastes” (Bourdieu 1987) often differ significantly or are assumed to differ significantly. “Middle class elites” and white collard professionals often have similar levels of financial security and insulation from the 2008-09 Recession, but “middle class elites” tend to be new power brokers while white collared professionals often are not as keenly invested in local affairs.

I use “working class” to refer to occupation and to indicate some financial security. Today, working class Mansfielders are often non-unionized, lower-level, health care workers, non-unionized factory workers, or higher-paid workers in the service industry. These small city residents make enough money to pay their rent or modest mortgage payment and other bills, but they are vulnerable to economic changes and face some workplace-related risks and injuries. Job loss is devastating among Mansfield's working class. “Working poor” and “poor” refer to individuals and families who barely scrap by, even when they are employed full time as servers and bartenders, shelf stockers, nurses’ aides, or sales clerks. They are extraordinarily vulnerable to being laid off from their jobs and often receive some kind of governmental assistance (food stamps, housing vouchers, free lunches at school, etc.), even when working.
Lastly, throughout the dissertation I refer to “marked” and “unmarked” identities and language. The linguistic anthropological concept of “unmarked” refers to “the norm;” however the norm is culturally and structurally constructed. “Unmarked” identities or language are often biased, bestowing “normal” status on particular people or terms. In contrast, “marked” is often culturally understood as a departure from the “norm.” So for example, in Mansfield (and elsewhere) romantic relationships between racially dissimilar people are often marked and named as a “mixed relationship.” Monoracial relationships are almost never named as such and are treated as the standard against which all “deviations” from the norm are measured. Marked and unmarked are created through contrast, just as all the terms above that delineate class, racial, origin differences are defined in relation to each other. In other words, subjectivities do not exist in a vacuum but are created out of structures of difference and interpersonal interactions.

The terms used here reflect the particularities of Mansfield's small city cityness, but they also suggest that current anthropological categories may inadequately capture the dynamism and heterogeneity of social relations. In giving names to the variation and texture of Mansfield's structures and subjectivities, I hope this dissertation pushes theorists to more closely consider the richness of U.S. society and the implications and possibilities for these differences.

**Overview of Chapters**

In this dissertation, I recount Mansfield's ordinary history and contemporary cultural relations, to document how small cities have always been agents in intertwining economic, cultural, political, spatial, temporal relationships. Approaching Mansfield on its own terms through its particular modes and expressions of cityness disarms the tendency to position small cities as analogous to, or derivative of, global and world cities. Mansfielders themselves see themselves as laterally, not hierarchically, connected in a web of urban formations. In practicing an ordinary-cities approach, they often think of themselves and their city as capable of being equal players in the urban field, but who are
disadvantaged by global economic political trends, federal negligences, and state dictated policies which inappropriately address their small city specific issues. In theorizing the small city and disrupting the prominence of so-called “global cities,” “world cities,” and “large cities” in urban studies, studies of race and whiteness, and studies of capitalism and class, I hope to show the possibilities small cities have for understanding our past and and future. An ordinary cities theory allows me to access the stories of average city residents and to treat these stories as rigorous of data as quantitative measures of exports, imports and gross national product can be treated.

In Chapter 2, I utilize Mansfield's history to demonstrate the specificity of small city urban experiences. Contrary to many accounts which suggest small cities are monoracial or highly segregated, this chapter uses Mansfield as an example to show that small city social and physical spaces have long prompted racially different people to live in mixed-income neighborhoods, learn in integrated schools and labor in multiracial workplaces. In exploring the unique space, power, history, and culturally-mediated interactions of Mansfield, I examine what it means to be a small city and the cityness of Mansfield itself. Excavating the racial, class, ethnic layers to Mansfield's urbaniy, this chapter works to show how small city space—the geographically constrained city, the socially produced city, the socially constructed city—shaped Mansfield's social relationships. I combine urban anthropology's attention to the making of space with Robinson's ordinary cities approach and use oral history interviews conducted in 2006 and 2008 and local and regional archival research to show how small cities can enrich urban studies.

Without recounting the history that so many Mansfielders know and draw on for their own interpretations of the present, my ethnography and analyses in the rest of the dissertation would have been limited. Events, cultural configurations, and moments of contestation and instability today come out of, and are spatially-temporally situated, in Mansfielders' intimate knowledge of their own and their city's history.

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Chapter 3 tracks how contemporary neoliberal economic policies that led to factory closure in Mansfield, simultaneously encouraged the local health care industry and social services sector to expand. I argue that the influx of international doctors, domestic professionals from other parts of the country, and the continuation of low-waged jobs for most local Mansfielders, reproduce and exacerbate long-standing class disparities. I examine how Mansfielders creatively cope with neoliberal changes and how these coping strategies are variably successful. I also discuss how significant social lines are drawn by race, as well as occupation, class status, neighborhood location, length of city residency, and access to local power through generational and familial relations. Racial and class categories are being reworked as Mansfield become increasingly multiracial, with international and domestic people of color holding high status jobs. This chapter begs the questions: does anthropology have enough categories to capture the heterogeneity of identities? Are the categories we often use adequate? In this chapter, I conclude that the threat of or actual revocation of middle class status is transforming individuals, but not necessarily diminishing, middle class dominance and its privileges in the United States.

Chapter 4 examines how trust is the scaffolding upon which racial worldviews are made. I examine “relational space” and storytelling as two vectors which can build or undo trust. Drawing on participant observations, mapping exercises, and semi-structured interviews from 2006 and 2008-09, I show how Mansfielders’ individual experiences with their neighbors create “relational space” or feelings of interpersonal closeness or distance. I suggest that in a city where everyone is a neighbor, “relational space” and the feelings of trust that undergird relational space heavily influence Mansfielders’ beliefs about race. I then examine the ways that storytelling also relies on relational space and trust and the significance of storytelling in solidifying racial worldviews. Storytelling is one important way humans attempt to make sense of their worlds; in Mansfield, stories of race are frequently used to make sense of the small city’s racial terrain. This chapter shows how stories of race
—like all stories—are always open to the question of trust: whether we trust the storyteller and if we trust the story he or she tells. Storytelling reinforces, depends upon, and interprets relational space and thus, trust. This chapter argues the importance of understanding neighborliness and trust analyzing race, class, and space, particularly in cities. Through this chapter I show how relational space and trust are two important dimensions of racial relations.

Chapter 5 looks at the ways that whiteness, particularly the supremacy of middle class whiteness, operates in small city life. This chapter contributes to critical studies of whiteness and race by explicitly examining how the baseline of U.S. racial projects—middle class whiteness—continues to operate in the face of economic instability and challenges by people of color and anti-racist whites. I trace constellations of practices that maintain, but also undermine whiteness, in order to map significant points in the field of race relations, from the perspective of the small city. I examine how distinctions are made between whites who enact and embody white racial propriety and racial respectability and those who can not or will not. In inspecting and self-monitoring whiteness, whites constantly adjust to changing realities. I examine the strategies used to keep whiteness active, especially how white “terms of racial engagement” and the use of brownness and blackness for whiteness's ends are the strongest, most present iterations of whiteness in Mansfield. Moreover, my analysis of Mansfield's middle class whiteness and its reconfigurations detail the constant labor that is required to cover over the hairline fractures in middle class white dominance.

In Chapter 6 I examine interracial friendships and romantic relationships. Because “everyone is a neighbor” in Mansfield and race worldviews and relational space are so closely linked, the relational space of “mixed” relationships is an important dynamic that is closely monitored in the small city. I begin this final chapter by briefly reviewing historically significant and notable interracial relationships in Mansfield. The historical introduction in this chapter harkens back to historical interventions made in Chapter 2 and suggests that small city space has been especially conducive for
“mixed” relationships and the making of close, relational space. The rest of the chapter utilizes excerpts from focus group interviews and individual interviews conducted from 2005-2009 to examine what “mixed” friendships, romantic relationships, and kin relations mean to ongoing beliefs about race. I analyze how Mansfielders, both white and nonwhite, talk about interracial relationships (especially romantic relationships between white women and black men). I examine how those comments also reveal prevalent ideas of gender expectations and racially proper and improper behavior. In particular, I focus on how ideas of racially egregious behavior (i.e. “dating outside the race”) is both condemned, but also desired. My chapter ends by reflecting on the possibilities and limits contemporary mixed relationships have for future race relations.

I close the dissertation with a brief conclusion where I highlight the key findings and interventions in each chapter and discuss how this dissertation contributes to current discussions in sociocultural anthropology. The conclusion also provides a brief summary of key events that have occurred in Mansfield and in Ohio since 2009 when my intensive fieldwork period ended. I suggest how the lessons learned from research and analysis in Mansfield can help anthropologists and other interpret the present.
Chapter 2: Social Histories of a Small City, 1808-1990s

Nestled in the rolling agricultural foothills of north central Ohio, Mansfield is located halfway between Chicago and New York, and on a more local scale, midway between Ohio’s capital, Columbus, and its most populated city through much of the 20th century, Cleveland. Within fifty years of its 1808 “founding” by Anglo settlers, Mansfield had become a critical node in expanding imperialist and capitalist desires, mediating between the extraction and cultivation of raw goods, and the refinement, processing, distribution, and sale of these goods. Like many small cities, Mansfield was historically, and continues to be, both a destination and origin in crisscrossing webs of capital, labor, and culture (see map 2.1 regional map and map 2.2 city map).

At first, Mansfield served as a frontier outpost for Anglo and Anglo American settlers with Wyandot peoples living outside the platted city; those few Native Americans who were not decimated or relocated during imperialist expansion became absorbed into the town (Graham [1880] 1972; Levison 2000, 2008). As early as the 1820 Census, Mansfield's rolls recorded free whites, free “colored” persons, and people who now would identify as Melungeon (Williams 1999, Williams personal communication 2008). Melungeon is a multiracial identity of African, European, and Native American ancestry; today, Melungeons claim Appalachia as their primary place of origin (see Puckett 2001 for more on the Melungeon racial identity). Like the Native Americans who inhabited the region, arriving settlers prized the area's accessible and abundant water, mineral deposits, lumber, and rich soil (Graham [1880] 1972). These natural resources literally became the building blocks on which Mansfield’s first white industrialists established their businesses and which continued to draw business owners and corporate representatives to Mansfield into the late 20th century.

In 1828, a quarter century after Ohio joined the Union, the state legislature incorporated Mansfield as a village. The first railroad line came through Mansfield in 1836, and during the 1840s enterprising individuals began producing machinery for watermills, and later reapers and mowing
equipment for farming. Prior to the American Civil War (1861-1865), free African Americans came from the east and former slaves from the south and owned their own barbershops, worked as farmers and day laborers, laundered and cooked at one of the hotels, or were hired out as domestic workers for Mansfield’s burgeoning white elite class (Hilliard 1999a, 2008, Mansfield City Directory 1868, Williams 2008). Arriving from the eastern United States during the late 1860s, Mansfield’s white elites developed many of the family-owned and -operated businesses that established Mansfield as an industrial city by the late nineteenth century. These companies relied on the labor of first and second generation Italians, Slavs, Germans, and other white ethnics to manufacture farming equipment and tires, cast and refine brass and tin, pour steel, create electric lights, develop and produce electrical appliances, and build stoves (Brinkerhoff 1993, Early History of Mansfield 2001).

Workers arrived from everywhere, a fact which newspapers regularly broadcasted for the benefit of their neighbors, employers, and the state. A typical notice from 1917 in Mansfield's leading local English-language newspaper announced local men who were about to take the citizenship naturalization test and their nationality: this particular list included eighteen German Hungarians, two Poles, three Italians, one Englishman, one Irishman, two Turks, and one Macedonian.11 Women were never listed, as was the practice of the day. German, Italian, and Slavic language newspapers from Cleveland and Akron circulated through Mansfield and were available through the public library and in local shops. These newspapers often reported on news from the Great Lakes region, including, on occasion, Mansfield (personal communication with Mansfield Public Library staff member 2008).

Workers from all over the world came to the small city looking for employment in the growing industrial economy and to ply trades and services typically found in urban hubs: banking, law, medicine, restaurants, grocery, dry goods retail, seamstress and tailor work, gambling, and prostitution

11 February 5, the 1917 Immigration Act passed. The 1917 Immigration Act extended the Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882 and 1892 to bar all nonwhite immigration from Asia. It also instituted a literacy test for all immigrants. Immigrants over the age of 16 could not enter if they could not read any language. The Quota Acts which limited the number of immigrants by country were first passed in 1924 (Shanks 2001: 32-37).
(Looking Back 2003). In 1902 or before, a Chinese man, Sing Lee, established a laundry which would change ownership among several different Chinese families until the 1970s (Mansfield City Directory 1902; cf. Ling 2004). Jews, a religious and cultural group whose ethnoracial assignment has changed from “nonwhite” to “white” during the 20th century (Brodkin 1998), came to Mansfield during the late 1800s. Some worked in industrial plants, others owned clothing stores and corner stores. In 1916, local Jews established a Mansfield branch of B'nai B'rith, the oldest Jewish service organization in the United States (B'nai B'rith Unit Here 42 Years Old 1958). In 1920, Kernan Pak, a Korean national who came to the U.S. in 1915, was learning correspondence at the Mansfield Business School (United States Census Bureau 1920a).

In the 1920s, young Filipino and Mexican men were incarcerated next to “negroes” and “whites” at the Ohio State Reformatory (Census Bureau 1920b, 1920c, 1920d), which opened in 1894 to rehabilitate adolescent thieves, con artists, masturbators, and other young delinquents. Although inmates, who were from all over the state, did not interact with the rest of the city, Mansfielders were well aware of happenings at the Reformatory, two miles north of Mansfield's downtown square. Family members who staffed the prison carried regular reports back to the city, as did newspaper reports of the occasional prison break (Desperate 1908). The first African American church, Greater Mitchell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, was formally established in 1894 and by the early 1910s, four black churches (two Baptist, one AME, one COGIC) ministered Mansfield's growing African American community (Bicentennial Celebration Subcommittee 2008). Small numbers of whites from coal-mining Appalachia began arriving in the late 1800s, often finding employment as laborers in the growing manufacturing plants and on farms which surrounded the city.

In contrast to the working class “negroes,” white ethnic “foreigners,” and few Asian-descent residents living in Mansfield, bourgeois and elite whites were usually named in the Census, in newspapers, and in everyday conversation as “native” or simply “white”. Their unmarked racial status
had as much to do with country of origin, as it did with class standing, occupation, place of birth, and social status (Guglielmo 2003, Lipsitz 1998, Roediger 1991). In popular imaginaries from the nineteenth century on, unmarked whites in Mansfield (and elsewhere) were intraracially differentiated from European immigrants and West Virginia and Kentucky “hillbillies” by their class statuses, cultural practices, and supposed biological differences (Wray 2006).

By the early 20th century, Mansfield was economically, culturally, and infrastructurally tied into regional and global markets. People who originated from all over the world churned out products that were indispensable in the intensifying national and international economies. These goods travelled along three different national railroads\(^\text{12}\) to trading and production centers like Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, and Windsor (port cities), Akron and Canton (major rubber and tire producing cities in North America), and Chicago, Pittsburgh, and New York. Though smaller than other state and regional cities in terms of importance in shipping routes and population gains (Contosta 1999, Taylor 1993, Trotter 1998,\(^\text{,}\) by all accounts, Mansfield was a city by 1900.

In his foundational work, Louis Wirth described the city as “the relationship between a) numbers of population, b) density of settlement, c) heterogeneity of inhabitants and group life” (1938:10). (See Robinson 2006, chapter two, for critiques of Wirth and other founders of Western urban studies.) Amin and Graham, recent critical urbanists, further Wirth's description by suggestions that “the 'urban' is both a concentrated complex and a process of diverse relational webs” which is situated in spatial and temporal networks (1997: 418). Mansfield was heterogeneously tied to Europe, U.S. cities, and the U.S. frontier\(^\text{13}\) through its residents. For some people, Mansfield was a new place,

\(^{12}\) Pennsylvania Railroad, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the Erie Railroad.

\(^{13}\) The “frontier” has always been seen as a unpeopled space of unlimited resources and raw products. To access these resources, the land—and its people—had to be “tamed.” “In moving west American pioneers were perceived, both in Europe and America, as continuing a movement of civilization that had been continuous since the earliest times” (Horsemann 1981: 83). The “frontier” was as much of an imagined place of uncontrolled and ancient wilderness, as an actual space where claims by whites, Native Americans, African descent people, Mexican descent people, and immigrants from Asia and Europe were contested. See Lugo 2008 for a historical and contemporary study of these issues from the perspective of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and Southwest.
the beginning of a new life. It was the terminus in a long travel. For others, especially those born and raised in Mansfield, the city was tied to a different temporal web that grew out of its “frontier” landscape and stretched forward into its industrializing future. For “homegrown” Mansfielders, Mansfield was a starting point, a place to “modernize” or from which to leave. Although photographs and written accounts from this era make it clear how dense and linked Mansfield was by the turn of the century (see image 2.1—Presidential hopeful Teddy Roosevelt stumping in Mansfield in 1912), it was still home to only 0.4% of the state's population, and did not produce nearly the number of goods as were made in Cincinnati, Youngstown, Cleveland, Toledo, Akron-Canton.

Despite its small population, Mansfield was still a city with a heterogenous population and a varied portfolio of economic contributions to the global market. Yet, in much of the urban studies literature, the moniker and subject of study is restricted to larger and global cities. Even historical studies of cities and “the urban” almost exclusively focus on big cities. There are plenty of histories and ethnographies based in small cities, but the city is most often background, instead of a vector of analysis in these works.

As I outlined in Chapter 1, Jennifer Robinson offers an alternative way to think about urban formations through her ordinary cities approach. She explains, “ordinary cities can be understood as unique assemblages of wider processes —they are all distinctive, in a category of one. Of course there are differences among cities, but I have suggested that these are best thought of as distributed promiscuously across cities, rather than neatly allocated according to pregiven categories” (2006: 109). When all cities are ordinarily unique, their very variety and multiplicity all have something to offer to discussions about urbanity. Although I am reluctant to talk about small cities as a class, I do believe that the uniqueness of Mansfield and other small cities does more than simply add another category to a typological list of urban formations (ex. Bridge and Watson, eds. 2002, Low, ed. 1999). Instead, as Robinson suggests with her ordinary cities approach, small cities can fruitfully broaden the scope of
urban studies.

I hesitate to enumerate a checklist of characteristics of the small city because, as James Connolly, a prominent historian of the small city notes, “small' represent[s] a moving target” (2008:5); moreover, the designation is context specific since urban formations rise and fall in prominence, significance, and size (Connolly, ed. 2010, Oswalt, ed. 2004). Still, despite my reservations about the qualifier “small,” I believe it is necessary work to document and recognize small cities as a distinctive urban formation. Therefore, I follow other scholars in using “small” as a heuristic device to understand sociohistorical processes which occur in a place which is not usually the urban center in their country or national sub-region. Often however, the small city is the prominent urban locale for the towns and villages surrounding it (Bell and Jayne, eds. 2006; Garrett-Petts, ed. 2005; Connolly, ed. 2008). These sites are not linked in subordinating orders of importance or influence, but as Amin and Graham suggest, cities of any size operate as nodes positioned in ongoing, mutually imbricating, relationships within networks of time and space.

For all of Mansfield's unique space, time, and relations, its experiences are very common throughout the industrial United States and Canada. More to the point of this chapter, the majority of U.S. residents did not live in world and global U.S. cities until the late 20th century (Gardner 2001, Durkin Keating 2004). The percentage of U.S. residents residing in a small city was much greater in 1900 when Mansfield was one of many sites with infrastructural, economic, political, and social ties across the country. Although often elided and forgotten in historical and contemporary analysis, small cities further our understandings of the urban and socioeconomic and political relations which coalesce globally over time.

**Mansfield's Racial, Ethnic, Class, and Spatial Histories**

In the early twentieth century, Mansfield's burgeoning cityness—its character and human, natural, economic, and political resources—left the small city well positioned to solicit and acquire

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several large national companies. In 1914, Westinghouse, a national conglomerate of electrical products and home appliances, established a factory in Mansfield. No doubt, Westinghouse’s board of directors in Pittsburgh chose Mansfield, in part, because two locally owned businesses (i.e. Tappan Stoves and Ohio Brass) had been manufacturing light bulbs, stoves, and other electrical products since 1885. Such practical and technical expertise already in place enabled Westinghouse to quickly and profitably develop and build new products. The steel mill was another outside venture that recognized the infrastructural, geographical, and human capacity already present in Mansfield. As a major employer through the 20th century and a quintessential industry in the U.S., the steel mill influenced migration patterns, contributed to the making of Mansfield's community wealth, and was a source of pride for the city and its residents. Industry, no matter what kind, often plays this role in creating a site's cityness and its sense of an urban self. But the steel mill and its human experiences also demonstrate the specificities of small city cityness and how small city life, like in Mansfield, vary from more common accounts of the urban United States.

In 1908, after heavy courting by Mansfield's chamber of commerce, capitalists with experience in Pittsburgh and Canton's steel industries chartered an independent mill, National Steel Sheet Company (Large Steel Plant 1908). In addition to financial and legal incentives from Mansfield's movers and shakers, the board of directors for the National Steel Sheet Company likely selected Mansfield for its location on major transportation lines and its close proximity to sandstone quarries and numerous freshwater streams that provided essential materials for molding and cooling steel products. National Steel Sheet Company began operations in 1912 and was bought two years later by an entrepreneur originally from Massillon, a small city in northwestern Ohio (History of Mansfield's Steel Plant 1999). It gained its most commonly used name, Cyclops Steel, 14 in the late 1920s through a series of mergers and kept that name until Armco, a multinational holding corporation, bought the mill.

14 See chapter 1 for more on my use of pseudonyms.
in the mid-1990s. Now officially called ARM Steel, many current day Mansfielders still call the mill Cyclops Steel. In following local knowledge and nomenclature, and for simplicity's sake, I only use Cyclops Steel in this dissertation.\textsuperscript{15}

In a departure from usual labor history within the industrial urban north, Cyclops Steel in Mansfield employed African Americans and Latinos from the start (Census Bureau 1920e, 1920g). While many industries prior to World War II often hired people of color only to break strikes (Jones 1998, Whatley 1993, Trotter 2007), Mansfield was too small to exclude particular ethnoracial groups.\textsuperscript{16} To run the mill, Cyclops Steel hired all available laborers.

Eight years after the mill had opened, Albert Louis, a 44 year old black man, worked as a pickler in the mill; his fellow lodgers, Ellis Hill, Will Higgins, and Will H. Moss, were employed as laborers. Most African American steel mill workers were single men in their twenties and thirties and often from southern states like Georgia or Alabama. They boarded with African American couples who rented a rooming house; sometimes there would be as many as seventeen lodgers in one home (Census Bureau 1920f). Black lodgers like Hill, Higgins, and Moss often lived next door to Romanians, Italians, Hungarians, Germans, and other white ethnics who had emigrated to the United States in the 1910s. They all rented rooms or houses, or owned their own homes in the Flats, a neighborhood north of downtown and about a two mile walk from the steel mill (see map 2.3 of north Mansfield neighborhoods).

Many African Americans also lived outside the city limits, keeping with segregationist practices

\textsuperscript{15} In 1908 the National Steel Sheet Company committed to building the plant. It began operations in 1912 under the name National Rolling Mills Co. In 1914 it was bought by William Davey and renamed Mansfield Sheet and Tin Plate Co. (History of Mansfield's Steel Plant 1999). In 1928, the plant merged with several other steel mills and became part of Cyclops Steel Corp. In 1933 it was reorganized under the name Cyclops Sheet and Tin Plant Co; in 1944 the name switched to Cyclops Steel Corp. In 1949, it merged with Reeves Steel, but retained the name Cyclops Steel Corp. In 1958 Universal Empire Steel Corp. bought the mill and renamed it Empire Reeves Steel Corp. In 1970 Empire Reeves and Detroit Steel were consolidated by Cyclops; Mansfield's plant was then named Cyclops Detroit Steel. In 1993 Armco bought Cyclops Industries and renamed the plant Armco's Mansfield Operations in 1995. ARM Steel shareholders acquired ARM Steel and Armco, resulting in a name change to ARM Steel in 1999. (Large Steel Plant 1908, History of Mansfield's Steel Plant. 1999)

\textsuperscript{16} My thanks to Tim McKee for this point.
of the time. The Camps, one of the oldest African American neighborhoods in Mansfield, formed in the 1910s and was located west of Cyclops Steel and north of the county fairgrounds. (Bromfield County's fairgrounds were relocated in 1947 to its current location, west of the city.) While originally the Camps was little more than a collection of temporary houses put up by the steel mill for its workers of color, residents quickly established permanent housing, water wells, drainage systems, and a recreational area. Company Line, another black neighborhood, formed in the mid-1910s and, like the Camps, was also north of the county fairgrounds just outside the city limits, to the east of the mill. Company Line residents worked at Cyclops Steel as well as in the hotels around the business district, in laundry facilities, as private help for white families, and for the railroads, usually as porters.

Even for places that were not de jure “sun-down,” it was common in the Midwest for 19th and early 20th century neighborhoods of color to be located around fairground sites (Loewen 2005). County fairgrounds were often established outside city limits so that traveling shows and circuses, which employed people of color, had a place to stay while respecting laws which prohibited African Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese from living in town or being within the city after dark. While the Company Line was established when a black family voluntarily moved into an old farmhouse, the Camps were purposefully established outside the city limits by the the steel mill. I was told by an informant, a white man in his 70s, that the Camps originally had a fence around it; when I repeated this claim to Mansfield's leading local African American historians, they were skeptical, but did not rule out the possibility that the neighborhood may have been contained at one point.

Despite two African American neighborhoods being located outside the city limits, Mansfield's long history of African American residents and employees prevented the city from becoming sun-down in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the time when many multiracial villages and towns became monoracial. (However, Magnolia, a village north of Mansfield, is notorious for still informally enforcing a sun-down policy.) For example, the Watchworks neighborhood is another historically black
neighborhood and has always been located within the city limits, in the eastern section of the city (see map 2.3). The Watchworks was three blocks that mostly housed domestic, service, and factory workers. And black families had been living singly in the city since the 1820s. Still, while Mansfield has never been sun-down, racial hostilities and segregationist policing have existed throughout its history. During the early 20th century, in the eastern part of the city, no African Americans lived outside of the Watchworks.

When a “colored” resident attempted to buy residential property north of the city in 1917, his housing bid “precipitated an agitation on the part of some of the residents in that section” (Cleveland Advocate 1917). Local Mansfield newspapers did not record this race riot, although Cleveland's African American paper at the time, the Cleveland Advocate, wrote a brief notice of the fracas and ensuing “indignation meeting” held by the Colored Knights of Pythais, a black secret society (cf. Ortiz 2005). Unfortunately, the article does not give an exact address of the disputed property. While it is possible that African American families “chose” not to live in the southern or eastern sections of the city, this incident suggests that, more likely, they were prevented from moving to the areas where bourgeois and elite whites lived.

Despite the agitated racists' limited success in some areas of the city, 1920 Census records show that they were not effective in enforcing segregated neighborhoods in the northern section of the city. Albert Louis, Ellis Hill, Will Higgins, Will H. Moss and other black steelworker boarders all lived in the Flats and Northend neighborhoods (Census Bureau 1920f). By 1930, African Americans, like Albert Louis, were not just renting, but also owning homes in the Flats and Northend. Moreover, the Camps had been incorporated into the city to collect property tax revenue and to bring the area under the public health department's jurisdiction.

Residential racial segregation may have been easing, but African Americans also were earning more money at the steel mill, which enabled them to purchase their houses outright, even if they were
outrageously priced to discourage black buyers and many of the white European migrants coming to the city. No longer limited to just laborers and pickler jobs, William Ferguson worked as a shearman and bought his own home with these higher wages. His house was worth $30, which was on par for his block located on the edge of the Flats. Other African Americans, including Ferguson's neighbor John Robinson and Robinson's roomers, worked as loaders, as well as picklers and laborers (Census Bureau 1930b). In 1933, the city's first African American doctor joined the staff at the city hospital and took up residence in a multiracial middle class neighborhood close to the public square (Bicentennial Celebration 2008: 70; personal communication with Hilliard 2008). His neighbors included black ministers and teachers as well as whites who worked as clerks and middle management for the railroads and local factories. By the Great Depression, there were defined African American neighborhoods outside the city, like the Company Line, and defined black neighborhoods within the city, like the Camps. Elite African Americans lived in mostly white neighborhoods and there were many multiracial blocks within the Flats and the Northend that were made up of working class residents who worked in the steel mill, at the brass foundry, in the tire plant, and in one of the dozens of small manufacturing operations within the city.

Mansfield's multiracial working class neighborhoods included African Americans and white ethnics, but they also included Mexicans. Mexicans, and Latinos more generally, are virtually absent in Mansfielders' contemporary renderings of their city's past, and are usually erased in official city histories. Some elderly residents vaguely remember migrant farm workers coming in the 1930s to a temporary canning facility that was set up on the edge of town during August and September. I have been unable to find any supporting documentation of the processing camp, though it was likely there because the rich agricultural land surrounding Mansfield has produced corn, wheat, soybeans, celery, tomatoes, peaches, apples, sugar beets and other crops since the 1900s. Despite claims by several different informants who thought they were the first Latino family in the area, Bromfield County has
had permanent Mexican, Mexican-descent, and Latino residents since at least 1920. To ensure local historians and others interested in Mansfield can find more information beyond the original materials I cite here, I retain the spellings and order of personal names as used by the newspaper and Census.17

In 1920, Paul Esperza worked as a laborer in the steel mill and lived in Magnolia, the infamous sundown town north of Mansfield, with Ida, his white wife from Tennessee, and their young son and daughter. Chavez Pedro roomed with the Esperzás and worked as a laborer for an independent contractor. Both Pedro and Esperza were bilingual (Census Bureau 1920g). Puerto Rican Edward Morris, who was racially classified as black, also worked as a laborer at Cyclops (Census Bureau 1920h). Four Mexican-origin men were incarcerated at the Ohio State Reformatory in 1920 (Census Bureau 1920b, 1920c). In 1926, Frank Gonzales and his wife lived just south of the steel mill in the Northend neighborhood which housed Hungarian, Austrian, Italian, German and Romanian factory laborers (see map 2.3). Gonzales and Migell Hinogosos, another Mexican-descent man, were charged with the murder of Pedro Rodaragas, a 21 year old Mexican man (Mexican Dies, Two Will Face Murder Charge 1926). Gonzales's residential proximity to the steel mill makes it likely that he worked there, probably alongside Rodaragas and Hinogosos. The newspaper account did not specify Hinogosos's or Rodaragas' local addresses.

According to a 1927 newspaper article, Raefel Saurez, a 35 year old Mexican man, was hired as a day laborer at the steel mill and worked as a sweeper in the south plant (Raefel Saurez Murder Victim Coroner Finds 1927). His roommate Belfina Pulido, and Pulido's friends Jose Salas and Frank Reivz, were also Mexican. Saurez and Pulido lived on the edge of the Camps neighborhood, above the Glad Hand restaurant (it is unclear if the restaurant was owned or operated by African Americans, white ethnics, or bourgeois white landlords). Based on their residences and the work history of Mexicans in

17 The erroneous spellings and reversed order of names are a variation of “Mock Spanish” in which the intentional and inadvertent incorrect use of Spanish by monolingual whites elevates or affirms their own racial dominance through the denigration of Spanish and its speakers. (Hill 1998).
Mansfield, Saurez, Pulido, Salas and Reivz all likely worked at the mill as well.\footnote{\(\text{[Page 52]}\)}

In 1930, the Chavez family lived in the Northend, several blocks over from where Saurez and Pulido rented their room. In 1930, the Northend housed white ethnic factory laborers, as well as African American workers. Genaco and Ugaldi Chavez, Ugaldi's mother Maria Garrido, and three male boarders Sastenio Daldez, Salbador Gutierrez, and Daniel Peña were all born in Mexico and immigrated in the mid 1920s (the Chavezes and Daldez were bilingual). The two young Chavez daughters were born in Ohio, likely in Mansfield. Genaco Chavez, Daldez, Gutierrez, and Peña worked at the steel mill as laborers or pressers. The census taker, Mrs. Ernest R. Quinby, a white 33 year old woman, was unsure if the Chavezes owned or rented their home (see image 2.2 for the page on which the Chavezes in the census; Census Bureau 1930a).

In 1931, Catherine Gongales, “whose spirited fight against [tuberculosis] ha[d] attracted more than passive interest of many Mansfield residents, died at her home” (Death Claims Mexican Girl 1931). The newspaper reported that she “was born in Mexico and came to this country at the age of two years. For the past eight years she has resided in this city.” She too lived on the edge of the Camps, just doors down from where Saurez and Pulido had roomed. Mansfield's location on three national rail lines and on the way to Detroit where there has been historically a Mexican community since the early twentieth century make it unsurprising that Latinos have been living in Mansfield since the 1900s (Vargas 1993). Moreover, in the wake of WWI, U.S. immigration policies encouraged Mexican and Tejano migration to the midwest industrial centers (Taylor 1970).

Mansfield's early twentieth century working class neighborhoods were incredibly diverse, but also very similar. Like so many laborers who came from around the world to work in an U.S. industrial city, almost everyone in the Northend and the Flats worked for a factory or production shop. African

\footnote{It is hard to confirm much of the early history of workers in the mill. Because of all the mergers, it is difficult to know who currently holds and controls the company's records. Additionally, I know anecdotally that many early records were trashed in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, the images found in the McKee 2009 CD-ROM were rescued from the dumpster by a quick-thinking service worker in the 1980s.}
Americans who did not work in the factories worked in private homes and local hotels, as did women from England and Ireland. Eastern European men and African American men also found jobs on the railroads. As was happening in other major cities across the country, workers often rented rooms and apartments and later bought houses within these multiracial working class neighborhoods. There, neighbors walked by each others' homes every day on their way to and from work, school, and local stores on the block and around the city square. Children gathered together in the streets: two elderly white informants recalled learning key words in Italian, Polish, German, and Czech from playmates. Black informants recounted stories of their parents sharing gardening tips over the fence with “foreigners.” As Mansfield was too small to develop class specific or ethnoracially specific commercial districts, Mansfielders of all backgrounds rubbed shoulders in the same banks, department stores, and hospitals. Blacks, whites, white ethnics, and at least one Chinese student received their high school diplomas from Mansfield Senior High in 1936 (Mansfield City Directory 1936).

Yet, despite shared employers, shared neighborhoods, and shared classrooms, neighbors did not necessarily interact with each other in the meaningful ways Wirth and others suggest happens in “the city”. The residential closeness found in the Northend and the Flats was sometimes replicated on the factory floor, but other times it was actively discouraged through racist hiring practices. Factory floor tasks and pay were often racially, ethnically, and linguistically segregated, leading to racialized class stratifications over time. The neighborly closeness generated by the small city and its neighborhoods and workplaces enabled residents to develop intimate knowledges of race, class, and culture based in lived experiences and observations, yet people's knowledge of the “other” may be based also on impersonal relationships or from simply watching the “strange” neighbors across the alleyway.

For example, Mr. Barr, a white man born in 1931, recalled growing up in the Northend during the 1930s. His father had risen through the ranks at the brass foundry after immigrating from western Europe in the 1920s; his mother was from Tennessee. When I asked Mr. Barr about his neighbors
while growing up, he recounted various pals whose parents were first generation Italian, Romanian, and German. When I asked him about living near African Americans, he told me about families who lived several streets down. In recounting his African American neighbors he specified that black families living on Peony Street “were good black families” but that the next block over, Iris Avenue, was “rough” and that many of the black families who lived there were “trashy”. When I asked him what made these two blocks so different, he said that classmates on Peony Street usually graduated from high school, their parents were married to each other, and that his classmates' fathers were all employed. The kids of Iris Street came from “broken homes” and often did not finish school. A well known brothel with black workers who served white patrons sat at one end of Iris Street. Mr. Barr even pulled out his high school year books and went through them with me; he told me where in the city each student lived and if they were from a good family.

Mr. Barr's memories from the Great Depression and World War II of Mansfield were incredibly rich and demonstrated how important mundane life events were in mapping out the terrain of race, class, respectability and prestige. Explaining the low graduation rate of African Americans in his class, he pointed to the disorderly neighborhood and “dysfunctional” environment in which black Iris Street residents grew up. While Mr. Barr was able to distinguish differences and variety among his African American neighbors, he still, at times, relied on racist explanations for these differences and often metonymically generalized one or two families to represent the entire black population in Mansfield. In using contemporary discourse (“trashy,” “dysfunctional”) to describe his black neighbors, he was interpreting his memories and contemporary “racial” encounters through each other.

With workplace segregation further confirming, seemingly, that particular ethnoracial groups were skilled only at certain, wage-stratified, jobs, Mansfielders received multiple, often contradicting, messages, about race. In these multiracial settings, Mansfielders simultaneously maintained racist and race-neutral ideas about their neighbors.
Small Cities Advantages during the Depression

As workers transformed Mansfield into a multiracial, multiethnic working class city in the 20th century, city boosters were heavily investing in infrastructure and transportation lines (including a trolley system) and generally tailoring the built landscape for heavy manufacturing. When the Great Depression hit, many of the locally owned service and industrial businesses took crippling hits (Simon 1999b). But, despite the numerous layoffs and business closures, Mansfield did fare decently well. In post-World War II corporate recruitment literature and in local histories, civic leaders and chamber of commerce members boasted that the city recovered more quickly from the Depression than the rest of the nation due to its varied economy (Simon 1999a). Certainly, the diversity of industry types and sizes distributed the Depression’s economic hardship, but I believe Mansfield industries and their workers likely recovered quickly because the city was a small urban center surrounded by agricultural land unaffected by the 1933 Dustbowl. Many older informants told me about their home gardens, or repeated stories their parents told them, and emphasized how the ability to raise chickens and small gardens in their backyards or outside the city helped stave off hunger and poverty among families who were laid off from factories and service jobs. Many of these working class families had agricultural experience from living in the southern United States or from growing up as farmers in their home countries. The proximity to fields and nearby rurally produced food and fuel, as well as access to urban amenities such as hospitals and welfare leagues were a more likely cause for Mansfield’s success. Its location on major transportation and trading routes certainly sped its recovery as well. In other words, the specificity of Mansfield’s small city cityness as a varied industrial central insulated corporate revenues, but its location within rural and urban networks protected residents from the long term impact of the Depression. (For a contemporary thought piece on the advantages of small city space for sustainable and green economies see Tumber 2009. See Greater Ohio Policy Center 2010 for a policy report that makes recommendations which capitalize on the physical closeness of Ohio's urban and
rural areas.)

By the beginning of World War II, companies and workers within Mansfield had over seventy five years of manufacturing experience in a variety of industries. This decades-long configuration of space, technology, resources and the presence of knowledgeable workers prompted war contractors and industrialists to come to Mansfield. Having on hand technical and practical expertise and infrastructural support enabled Mansfield’s factories to rapidly convert manufacturing lines to produce war goods like jeep seatbelts, canteens, parachutes, and electrical products, including the first microwave.19 As a result of expanding industries, people continued arriving in Mansfield to fill the consistent need for more workers. During the war, Westinghouse employed 8,000 people—one third of the city's workforce (McKee 2003: 65). Mansfield experienced population increases on par with pre-war migration trends.20

As World War II raged, first, second, and third generation Italian, Romanian, Hungarian, Polish, and German women moved themselves and their children from Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Detroit to Mansfield.21 Frequently resettling to be closer to other relatives and friends whose menfolk were fighting in the war or laboring in wartime factories, these women were also initiating their family’s journey towards achieving “the American Dream” by moving out of the dense working class ethnic enclaves of the country's larger cities. While their husbands or brothers were deployed, these women worked in Mansfield’s industrial and service economies and moved in with cousins, sisters, aunts, and older male relatives for help with childcare and emotional and financial support. The move from

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19 My thanks to the Mansfield Memorial Museum for its excellent 2006 exhibit on wartime goods produced in Mansfield.
20 From this point on in my chapter, my historical recounting of Mansfield is based on personal and oral histories I collected during fieldwork, especially during summer 2006.
21 German-descent residents experienced suspicion and xenophobia during the world wars, despite their service to the U.S. military and war effort. Older residents told me of schoolyard fights and racializing slurs they experienced during the wars. Many families instituted English-only rules with their children, for their protection. However, in a 2010 biographic newspaper article, a 89-year old German American U.S. veteran of WWII described how his bilingual skills were often tapped while in the battlefield. Still, he told the reporter, “some people would ask me what would happen if I had to shoot some of my own [German] relatives. I just said that would depend on how they acted.” (Simon 2010). Not until the 1950s did most of the anti-German sentiment dissipate in Mansfield.
Cleveland and elsewhere was often initially viewed as a temporary arrangement. However, after returning from their military service, young men and their families found the possibilities of steady, high income employment in Mansfield’s companies. Once the war ended, Mansfield's manufacturing facilities sought workers as they began churning out consumer goods emblematic of the new middle class.

Working class white ethnic families frequently moved out of Cleveland's “Little Italy” or Detroit's “Germantown” into Mansfield's Flats and Northend multiracial neighborhoods or the “Syndicate,” a loose federation of working class white ethnically clustered blocks (see map 2.3). Although these neighborhoods were still ethnoracially marked to some extent after WWII, these migrating families were moving towards middle class respectability. High wages from the intensifying postwar manufacturing economy in Mansfield allowed young families to save money, send their children to college and afford single-family housing: all significant cultural indices of middle class and white racial respectability (Sugrue 1996, Guglielmo 2003, Hewitt 2003). As new families flooded into Mansfield and obtained union jobs at these plants, a blue collared middle class was developing (Bruno 1999).

During the war, racially unmarked white women and white ethnic women did not labor at the steel mill, although they worked on manufacturing lines at Westinghouse, Mansfield Seating, and other plants in town. African American women did work in the steel mill in the cafeteria, on the manufacturing line, and even in the main office and salary office (Cyclops 1940s Employee ID CD, McKee 2009). Those African American men who were not in combat (in segregated units) also worked at the mill, other local factories, and the nearby military depot. African Americans had been migrating to Mansfield prior to the war, but the number of new arrivals from Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas increased Mansfield's postwar black population fivefold by 1960. Many families came from towns and small cities along the Alabama-Mississippi border. Columbus, Mississippi, a small town 60 miles west
of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was one major sending city. Like the many whites who moved to Mansfield to find work, blacks found the hard dangerous work worth the wages paid by factories and service industries. But jobs weren't the only reason so many African Americans came to north to Mansfield and other small cities; many moved to escape the racial terrorism endemic to much of the southern United States.

*The City and its Residents in the Post-War Golden Years*

**Mr. Chestnut: Small City Transitions**

The youngest of seven siblings, Mr. Chestnut moved to Mansfield with his parents and a sister in 1945 at the age of seven from outside Columbus, Mississippi. Leaving behind his two oldest sisters to take care of their grandmother living in Columbus, Mr. Chestnut, his older sister Betsy, and his parents came to Mansfield to join his brothers who had come to Mansfield during the war.

Mr. Chestnut: My two oldest brothers had left Mississippi in 1940 or 1941 when they were teenagers. They jumped on the train in Mississippi and were headed to Cleveland. But when they were on the train, they got to talking with other people who told them about the jobs in Mansfield and so they jumped off at Mansfield. The rest of us were still working on my daddy’s plot. I was too little to be of much help, but I remember watching my parents pick cotton. They were sharecroppers and my brothers had left because the boss didn’t like how fast they picked. They were so efficient that my family might have actually broke even. The boss threatened them and so my brothers left for their own safety.

They worked odd jobs around Mansfield for several years and found they were making more money up here and that the racism was much less. My middle brother joined them a couple years later and took over the delivery routes my older brothers did when they first got here. When we came up in 1945, four years after my brothers, my mama got a job cooking for a white family and Daddy got in at the steel mill through my oldest brothers.

ADG: You said the racism was less?

Mr. Chestnut: Yeah, I was shocked at how different it was from the South. There was lots of racism here. Of course. But the racism and segregation was different.

ADG: How so?

Mr. Chesnutt: Well, for one my mother enrolled me and Betsy in school right away. We came to
Mansfield September 3rd and started right away at George Washington Elementary School\textsuperscript{22} which was about a third black at the time. There were a lot of immigrant kids, but all the same I was in school the whole school year and I was in the same building as white kids.\textsuperscript{23}

And all the kids in my neighborhood, black and white, went to Welcome House [[a racially and ethnically integrated community center established in 1913]] for arts and crafts and to learn how to swim. Then the really obvious things like bathrooms and stuff. I mean, we couldn’t use the facilities in the department stores around the Square and a lot of restaurants outside the Northend wouldn’t sit us, but public bathrooms weren’t segregated. We could shop at Sweed’s and the other department stores [[on the Square]], but we couldn't try on the clothing there. And we could order food for take out at a lot of restaurants. We were too poor to eat out anyway, but occasionally my brothers would go buy a bucket of beer from a bar near Uptown. It had a side window where blacks would order at, you’d order your food there too if you wanted some.

ADG: So there was a lot of discrimination going on here too.

Mr. Chestnutt: Yes, but it was a different type of racism than where I was born. My brothers left because my parents felt that their lives were in danger. They got jobs up here. Jobs which were the grimmest, most dangerous, cheapest jobs at the plant, but they were hired. That wasn’t happening in the South at that time.

Mr. Chestnutt’s life history is extremely typical of African American families in Mansfield. He moved into the Northend after family members had gone before him to find jobs and establish connections. Redlining practice by banks, insurance companies, and realty companies during the 1940s-1960s prevent African American homeowners from moving into the southern half of the city.

However, even predominantly black postwar neighborhoods like the Camps, Company Line, and the Watchworks (see Everson 2009 for artistic renderings of these neighborhoods), were never totally black, as Mr. Chestnutt's recollection of his school indicates. Restaurants in the Northend and the Flats served working class African Americans and whites, particularly white ethnics and rural whites. Stores there carried foods, reading materials, and home supplies for European and domestic migrants.

Compared to the vigilante sharecropping society many African Americans were coming from,

\textsuperscript{22} This and all school names are pseudonyms. Street and individuals' names are also pseudonyms. Neighborhood names are real.

\textsuperscript{23} Under pressure from several local civil rights activists (Rev. Jack Middlebrook, Samuel H. Belcher, James R. Corley, and others) the state forced this particular school to end racially segregated classrooms and recesses at the end of the 1945-1946 school year. This was the only segregated school in the school district; there were small numbers of African Americans and nonblack students of color in the four other elementary schools who learned in integrated classrooms. The junior and senior high schools were always integrated, although they did little to academically support students of color.
Mansfield felt like it had some opportunities for African Americans.

White Appalachians, especially from Olive Hill, Kentucky, were another domestic migrant group moving to Mansfield after 1940. By some people's estimates, more than two-thirds of Olive Hill's population relocated to Mansfield from the 1940s through the 1960s. Although white Appalachians came from elsewhere in Kentucky and from West Virginia, in local imaginaries Olive Hill continues to operate as the assumed familial home of white Appalachian Mansfielders. At first, white Appalachians moved into the Northend or occasionally into the Company Line (Hilliard 1999a). But by the late 1940s, whites from Kentucky and West Virginia had begun establishing a neighborhood on the edge of town, north of the Camps, and close to the steel mill where many worked (see map 2.3). On old maps and housing deeds the neighborhood is officially named Roseland, but it is most often called “Little Kentucky,” a place name residents variously embrace, reject, or ambivalently accept. According to many neighborhood residents Little Kentucky and Roseland are actually two different neighborhoods within the area, with Roseland being the more upstanding of the two. Interestingly, the boundaries between these two neighborhoods varied depended on who I talked to. Although some residents will likely dispute my use of Little Kentucky to describe the entire neighborhood, in the city's imaginary, Little Kentucky usually encompasses the whole area. To strike a compromise between the multiple names and meanings for this area, I use Little Kentucky and Roseland interchangeably. I have been told that Roseland residents were sometimes called “millbillies” (a wordplay on “hillbilly”). Like “Little Kentucky,” the offensiveness of this name (like hillbilly) did, and continues to, depend on who is saying it and for what reason. Chapter 5 explores variations of whiteness and how “hillbilly” works to affirm and marginal geocultural difference.

Like the Camps, Roseland was originally built with little attention from the city. However, after a diarrhea epidemic killed nine infants in 1949, the city unilaterally annexed part of the area. Incorporating Little Kentucky enabled the city to run sewage lines to residents, but it also brought the
neighborhood into the jurisdiction of Mansfield's public health district and city government. Residents in Roseland have always had a vexing relationship with the city and its agents—for many, the annexation was just the most egregious assault in a long list. Because residents are often seen as “hillbillies” and all the accompanying negative assumptions about “hilljacks” (Wray 2006), the area was often raided by police and faced much scrutiny from the schools, and surveillance from governmental agencies like children and family services. The contentious nature of the neighborhood's relationship with the city and other Mansfielders continues today.

**Mrs. Shane: Small City Ambivalences**

One warm July morning in 2006, I went to visit Mrs. Shane to hear about her childhood growing up in Olive Hill, Kentucky, and what it was like moving to Mansfield as an adult. She and her daughter, Sissy, welcomed me in to the house where Sissy had spent most of her childhood, and in which Mrs. Shane still lived, by herself, at the age of 74. Located on the western edge of Roseland, the neighborhood remains close-knit. After chatting for a while about various family members and neighbors I knew, Mrs. Shane, with the occasional correction and addition from Sissy, told me about migrating to Mansfield (some details have been changed to protect the anonymity of my informants).

Mrs. Shane: We moved to Mansfield August 1955, when I was 23. Sissy was 2. I have two other children who were born here: Junior and my youngest, Louie. Junior died in 2001, but Louie still lives here in Mansfield and helps me take care of the house. Charlie [Mrs. Shane’s deceased husband] worked in the mines in Kentucky. In Mansfield, he worked at Mansfield Tire.

Alison: How did you know about Mansfield?

Mrs. Shane: Charlie’s brother knew about Mansfield. That’s how we found out about it and the jobs.

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24 Sissy is a common women's familial name among Mansfield's white Appalachians. It usually refers to the oldest (or only) daughter in a family. Bubba or Bub is a common men's familial name and usually applies to the youngest (or only) son. Junior is another common name and given to the son named for his father. This is not always the oldest son. These pet names are given in childhood and continue through adulthood. Only insiders—family members, friends—usually use these names. Even with families that I was very close to, I usually called adults by their given name (though their parents, siblings, and friends usually exclusively used their family names) and children by their pet names if they went by that name in school and among their friends.
ADG: How did Mr. Shane’s brother know about Mansfield?

Mrs. Shane: Charlie’s brother knew of it because his wife’s brothers knew about here and moved here. Most of their family is here now. I was the only one in my family who moved to Mansfield. Everyone else stayed in Kentucky. We came up on a Greyhound bus, with a suitcase, a little bit of clothes in it, and a shopping bag on August 23rd, 1955. It was a Wednesday. What little we had we left behind in Kentucky, including my first doll. Back in those days big girls had dolls. It wasn’t like it is today. It was a big deal when I got my doll. She cost 50 cents which was a really big deal for my family.

The first night in Mansfield we stayed in a hotel uptown. The next day we moved into an apartment uptown which we lived in for a week. Then we moved to Rose Street [in the Northend]. We lived there for a year or two in a little trailer.

Sissy: It was probably a camper trailer.

Mrs. Shane: Then the old couple that was renting the trailer to us, rented us the home they lived in. They didn’t speak English plain.

ADG: Where were they from?

Mrs. Shane: I don’t know.

Sissy: Probably Italy or Germany. I don’t really remember them.

Mrs. Shane: We lived in the house for a year or two. Rent was $50 a month. Then we moved to Tulip Street [on the edge of Roseland] and I’ve been here ever since.

ADG: What was it like moving to Mansfield without knowing anyone?

Mrs. Shane: I was really lonely. I would cut dolls out of the newspaper for Sissy. I’d cut anything out of the newspaper just to keep me busy. The first week I was here was the hardest week ever for me.

Later during our conversation, I asked Mrs. Shane if she ever missed Olive Hill.

Mrs. Shane: I go back every year or two to visit. Last time I went was 4th of July last year. Louie, he takes me.

Sissy: I can remember getting my kids when they were little on the bus to go back to visit.

Mrs. Shane: I wouldn’t want to go back to live. I’d just want to visit.

Sissy: Lots of people have been here working in Mansfield and then they go back and retire in Kentucky.
Mrs. Shane: We had talked about going back to the mines when they started making good money, but I told Charlie, I didn’t want him going back in the mines. What ones didn’t get killed in the mines, died outside the mine.

Sissy: What would have happened if all the people didn't come up here? It’s interesting to think, ‘what if…?’ I guess the factories probably would have left sooner they did.

Mrs. Shane and Sissy’s story is very typical one for white Appalachians in Mansfield.

As with the hundreds of other families who heard about Mansfield from friends and family who had arrived before them, the Shanes were recruited by their sister-in-law’s brothers. Mr. Chestnutt's family came because his brothers had followed the suggestion of acquaintances they made on a train ride. Like most migrants I interviewed, the Shanes and Chestnutts were drawn to the promise of high wages and curious to see if the boast that “you could get a job anywhere within a day of arriving” was true. While there were plenty of jobs available in the 1950s, familial and birthplace ties vouched for a newcomer’s work ethic and enabled newcomers to get placed on preferred shifts and choice production lines. Such arrangements, frequently facilitated by union politics and informal management-worker relationships, benefited the corporations in creating loyalty and dependency on the firm. These relationships were capitalized upon during labor unrest. Yet these relationships also benefited workers who created community out of their work family and who did gain from the benevolent paternalism of the major companies through company-built athletic fields, sponsored teams, scholarships, and donations to local causes, cultural, and educational institutions.

Although people moved to Mansfield enticed by the stories of those who went before them, informants told me that company managers also actively recruited white individuals and families to come work in Mansfield and elsewhere throughout the industrial Midwest. Sending agents throughout the hollers of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee, corporations recruited men and young families from coal mining communities to work in Mansfield's postwar manufacturing economy. Often times, companies would pay for the bus ticket north, deducting the cost from individuals’ first paychecks (cf.
Whites from Appalachia were not the only ones actively recruited to Mansfield. After World War II, auto-parts makers, kitchen appliance makers, and the steel mill sought workers from abroad. With the passage of The McCarren-Walter Act in 1952, migrants who had special skills or U.S. relatives were exempted from the 1924 National Origins Act that established quota systems (Shanks 2001). In telling me their life stories, several German-born residents explained that they moved to Mansfield after they or older family members answered Cologne and Hamburg postwar newspaper advertisements seeking skilled engineers and draftsmen. In contrast to the domestic migrants from the southern United States who were usually tracked into “unskilled” and lower paid positions, corporations in the postwar period sought skilled workers from Europe. Notions of race, intelligence, and biological destiny were at play in these hiring decisions and recruiting streams.

These ideologies were further supported by United States immigration policy at the time which only allowed skilled workers who had sponsors within the U.S. to come to the country. Thus, those European immigrants who migrated and settled in places like Mansfield were already arriving with strong familial and regional ties. Moreover, although churches and families sponsored Europeans, migrants had to show proof of employment before arriving. Thus, their occupationally privileged backgrounds ensured higher wages from the start and guaranteed employment as soon as they arrived. African Americans were not recruited by Mansfield corporations, as far as I can tell from interviews and archival research.

Familial and neighborly ties that originated in Columbus, Mississippi; Olive Hill, Kentucky; Hamburg, Germany and elsewhere continued on in Mansfield. Yet, despite all that families, unions, churches, and social clubs did to make newcomers comfortable, the move was often lonely, isolating, and disorienting. Like many other women, Mrs. Shane wanted the good life promised by the “cityness” of Mansfield—the high paying jobs, the house, the ability to keep her children in school
until graduation. Yet, these benefits came at a price. The emotional toil, particularly on the young women moving to Mansfield, cannot be overstated. Mrs. Shane poignantly remembering having to leave behind her first doll, and struggling through “the worst week in my life” suggests how hard moving to Mansfield was, despite its possibilities. When she arrived, Mrs. Shane knew only her sister-in-law. And while Mr. Shane left unhealthy coalfields, and the Chestnuts left indentured cotton fields, their moves to a production line simply relocated these men into a different kind of hazardous job, a part of the daily risks blue collared Mansfielders always kept at the back of their minds.

Everyone I spoke with knew the exact month and year, and frequently, date and day he or she moved to Mansfield. While she second guessed when other major life events took place, like the year her son Louie was married, Mrs. Shane told me without hesitation the date she arrived in Mansfield. (See Everson 2009 for examples of black Mansfielders who impressively know the time of day as well as day and date they came to Mansfield.) All Mansfielders, in general, are very good at remembering the month and year of events long ago (a gift I do not have and which puzzled friends and informants whenever I tried to tell my own stories of childhood and adolescence). Yet it is significant that almost every Mansfielder who migrated to the city remembers their arrival date. In conversations with other residents, I would regularly hear people of all class backgrounds mention the month they moved to the city. More often working class residents remember the day, but I also had some professional class people tell me how they remembered the exact date of their arrive. In other words, informants would not mention the date only for my benefit in interviews.

This date for many marked the moment when families became dispersed or reunited, when many young people became adults, when a whole new way of life, tied to high wages and urban life became a reality for many people. In some regards, talking about their date of arrival is part of the Mansfield vernacular, a way to discursively honor that transformative time and to memorialize its deeply ambivalent significance in Mansfielders' lives (cf. Mendoza-Denton 2008 and the memory work
the word “thing” does among teenage Latinas). Residents interpret and make sense of their own histories from “midstream” in the “tempo of everyday life” (Rosaldo 1993: 107). Marking their arrival date, in some ways, serves to flag where the tempo changed, or the stream turned (Rosaldo 1993: 104-126).

By 1960 the city had increased by 10,000 people, or a third of its pre-war population. As Mrs. Shane put it during our interview: “There were all these jobs [in Mansfield] because nobody had refrigerators or stoves or electronics after the war. Someone had to make them, so we came up.” As the built landscape became more and more geared towards heavy manufacturing and providing housing and services to workers, the sociospatial terrain reflected the solidification and prominence of a high-waged, working class culture.

By the late 1940s, city planners in Mansfield had rerouted the streets to a series of one-ways to better accommodate the flow of traffic during thrice daily shift changes; bar and restaurants were opened nearly 24 hours to serve workers. Business owners in the central business district around the Square (in local terms, “Uptown” for most blue collared workers, “Downtown” for most white collared workers and rural residents in the county), kept their stores open late on Mondays to accommodate the shopping needs of working families. Workers established savings and checking accounts in employee credit unions and took out loans for houses and college from these accounts. Small corner stores carried fresh produce and culturally specific food items like breads, spices, and meat cuts; all residents shopped at the city food market and ate at its adjoining cafeteria. Rooming houses and subdivided Victorian houses served the needs of arriving industrial workers; new housing was going up all over the city. Companies like Westinghouse and Cyclops Steel built baseball parks in the residential neighborhoods immediately surrounding their plants which were the sites of epic tournaments among company-sponsored teams competing for the city’s championship. Bowling alleys reserved several nights a week for women’s and men’s company teams competing against each other. From
Mansfield’s working class culture and industrial economy came a spatially constructed and produced blue collared middle class landscape.

But corporate decision makers (e.g. owners, CEOs, board of directors, general managers, accounting departments, etc.) did not choose to locate in Mansfield just because of its growing labor pool in the postwar period. Cities around the country, especially in the industrial Midwest and industrial west coast (Self 2004), were experiencing similar population increases. Mansfield’s business class and city boosters—the city’s chamber of commerce, its economic development office, and more informal business organizations—all actively courted multinational corporations and promising start-up companies during and after World War II. Boosters heavily advertised the experienced industrial workers living in the city and pitched the area’s natural resources, its transportation lines, and its proximity to auto manufacturers in Michigan and Ontario, Canada (Chamber of Commerce 1942). Recruitment literature repeatedly emphasized Mansfield’s location as being within 500 miles of half of the United States population. City and county legislation and behind-the-scenes politicking ensured that the city provided infrastructural support (water, sewer, and electric lines), tax breaks, cheap utilities, low loan rates, and negligible property taxes to corporations and businesses. These kinds of financial incentives were the main reasons factories considered the industrial Midwest.

In 1954, decision makers at Fisher Body in Detroit established a plant in Mansfield’s outskirts and ushered in an era of General Motors-related auto work. During this same decade, the board for Westinghouse decided to continue expanding its production of household appliances and electrical products in Mansfield. Local businesses, especially shops that produced plumbing materials and pumps, expanded and splintered into several different companies (originally the parent company—Humphryes Manufacturing and then Barnes Manufacturing)—had made hand pumps that many houses in the U.S. had next to their kitchen sink or in the back of their house. After the war they switched to plumbing fixtures and electric pumps that move water from construction sites and permanent structures
Small scale plants that made the electrical components and innards for appliances and machines were formed. The brass foundry continued producing speciality parts for electric poles and power stations. The incentive packages, the experienced workforce, and the industrial landscape all became major selling points as Mansfield jockeyed on the national and world market to produce quintessential consumer goods of the 1950s and '60s. By 1956, seven Fortune 500 companies were headquartered in Mansfield.\(^{25}\)

Besides working class industrial workers, office and white collared workers were also moving to Mansfield for jobs and opportunities in plant offices and affiliated businesses like banking, law, and accounting. In the postwar period, the new, white, professional class developed one neighborhood in particular, Ranchwood, on forest land in the southeast quadrant of the city (see map 2.4 of south Mansfield neighborhoods). Working hard to cultivate a suburban aesthetic, houses there sat back from the wide streets that all end in –Wood (ex. Ranchwood Drive, Briarwood Street). Petit bourgeois white ethnics moved to Ranchwood as did racially unmarked whites from large urban sites like Chicagoland or Manhattan. Most Ranchwood residents worked professional white collared jobs; some were marketing and advertising designers for Ohio Brass or Tappan Stoves; other served as plant managers at Ideal Electric or Gorman Rupp Pumps. Clothing store owners, accountants, lawyers, insurance agents, and some doctors also moved into Ranchwood. Many Ranchwood residents were postwar newcomers to the city, although several “old” families moved to Ranchwood from their family homes close to the city center. One informant told me of returning from college during a Thanksgiving break and becoming lost as she tried to find her family's new home in Ranchwood. The street upon similarly named street of postwar housing confused her. While away at school, her parents had left behind the rambling turn of the century home they lived in near downtown which was increasingly becoming racially and economically integrated.

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\(^{25}\) These seven were Ohio Brass, Humphries Manufacturing Company, Ideal Electric, Barnes Manufacturing Company, Tappan Company, Crane Plumbing.
Some “imported” lawyers and doctors moved to Woodland (see map 2.4), a neighborhood southeast and uphill of downtown, but as the historic bastion of Mansfield's white elite, Woodland was (and to some extent continues to be) perceived as unfriendly to non-Mansfielders. As the established white rich neighborhood of Mansfield, Woodland did much to police its inhabitants prior to and after WWII. Jewish families in Woodland were the first to have residential pools in the city because they were not allowed membership to the private Woodland Swim and Tennis Club till the mid-1960s. In the 1980s the first black family moved into Woodland; the neighborhood is still glaringly white.

Like Woodland, few, if any, people of color lived in Ranchwood during its first several decades as a neighborhood. When the state of Ohio told the Mansfield City Schools school district in the late 1960s to better racially and economically integrate the newly built high school located in Ranchwood, residents complained of the “elements” their children would have to attend school with (see map 2.4 for location of the two city high schools from 1962-1989). Unlike Woodland which is still very much perceived as the richest, whitest, most privileged and favored neighborhood in Mansfield, Ranchwood operated as a suburb, unmarked and invisible. Not until my third research trip to Mansfield did I know much about the neighborhood. I had no real idea how much housing there was in this area or that the neighborhood even had a name! Informants who had grown up in Ranchwood (and in other predominately white neighborhoods) told me all about the distinctive neighborhoods in Mansfield that I might find interesting: Little Kentucky (Roseland); the Northend (which is now seen as a dangerous and black and poor neighborhood); Woodland. But like so many white spaces, Ranchwood as a suburban-esque, white, professional neighborhood, remained unmarked.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans to white servicemen helped Mansfielders in the postwar period buy houses in newly developing neighborhoods like Ranchwood. These federal sanctioned programs greatly sped white ethnicity's fade into a generalized, unmarked, white racial identity (Brodkin 1998, Sugrue 1996, Lipsitz 1998, Jackson 1980). Yet, despite the historic similarities
between small cities and “global” cities in terms of ethnoracial diversity and segregation and stratified class systems, it was these very same factors which contributed to the uniqueness of small city cityness. Although Mansfield's white flight was more gradual than in other cities, and never total, like many industrial cities, Mansfield's hyper-segregation had become quite obvious by the 1970s. African Americans lived north of Baker Avenue, whites of all ethnic backgrounds lived south of Baker Ave. (Baker Ave. more or less divides the city into a northern half and a southern half, see maps 2.3 and 2.4.) Mansfield's white Appalachians lived northwest of the “black neighborhoods.” Although many Polish, Slavic, Italian, German and Greek migrants and descendants I interviewed recounted living beside black neighbors and other white ethnics when they first arrived in Mansfield, by the late 1970s the Northend's demographics had changed as white workers moved to Ranchwood and elsewhere in the southern half of the city.

With the migration of so many different people to Mansfield in the early 20th century and after WWII, racial understandings were constantly in flux as southern African Americans, racially unmarked whites and racialized whites—white ethnics and Appalachian whites—came to Mansfield with their own particular racial understandings in tow. Prior to the whitewashing of Europeans in the postwar period, Mansfielders understood their city to be multiracial, multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious. Even after the war, the presence of so many recently arriving coworkers and neighbors, along with the constant negotiation required to “learn” race, kept the racial terrain in flux. Moreover, the smallness of the city, even despite its exponential growth during the 20th century (and in particular after WWII), meant that people's experiences of race and class were up close and personal.

Yet, while race and class were unstable in everyday encounters, racial and class projects were becoming legible through the landscape and institutional decisions (Omi and Winant 1994). While Mansfield's factories hired people of color and 1.5 generation European immigrants, these workers rarely labored in the offices, in the non-hazardous floor positions, or in higher waged jobs. First
generation Europeans after WWII fared better than those who had come to the U.S. before the war. Welcome House, which Mr. Chestnutt remembered fondly, has run integrated programs since its founding in 1913; almost every elderly person I know spent some of their childhood learning to swim in Friendly House's pool. But it also held segregated dances until the 1960s. Two Filipino doctors from Manilla and a white woman doctor from Chicago arrived to work in Mansfield General Hospital in 1953; the men lived at the Hospital, the woman off-site. Black and white women bought sewing material and shoes at the same department stores, but working class blacks were unable to try on clothing at the store until the 1960s. From 1947-1963, the local newspaper ran a weekly column written by a black woman editorialist, Vivian Fonmy Ferguson (Hilliard 1999b, 2008), but rarely ran celebratory news stories of local African American achievements. The Boy Scouts were integrated, but the private pool a troop went to in the 1970s was not. Mansfield's racial and class closeness led people to share spaces, but these spaces were always fraught with hierarchies and exclusions. Active policing and surveillance, or border inspections both “across such social hierarchies as gender, age, and class relations, but especially within them” (Lugo 2000: 367, italics in the original), kept it that way.

The geographical constraints of a small city like Mansfield produces an enduring tension between unstable racial and class projects and the pull towards stabilizing and making these categories readable and secure. The uncertainty, negotiation and complications in sustaining racial projects in Mansfield has become embedded within the sociocultural and physical landscape. Chapters 3 through 6 explore the contemporary ramifications of these tensions and the constant straining towards maintaining structural inequalities.

Deindustrialization Comes to Mansfield

A century's worth of migration and manufacturing had paid off for Mansfield. Twenty years after WWII ended, Mansfield's high income levels sustained numerous department stores, jazz clubs, bars, restaurants, four movie theaters, rigorous public schools, competitive youth athletic programs, and
solid rates of new housing development. Shopping centers and strip malls with supermarkets, department stores, and speciality shops went up on the outskirts of the city. More and more factory workers sent their children to college and took vacations in Florida, Chicago, New York City, and beachside cottages around Lake Erie. Women began working on the steel mill floor and in other heavy manufacturing shops. Workplaces and local government positions were increasingly integrated, with African Americans working in plant offices, business offices, serving as union presidents, and being elected to city council. Despite ongoing residential segregation, interracial romantic relationships were becoming public and “mixed” friendships unremarkable. In 1966, the Mansfield City Directory boasted that the city had the second highest average family income in the state.

Cyclops Steel, Ohio Brass, Westinghouse, GM, and other major manufacturers in the city continued updating equipment and modernizing production lines well into the 1970s. The city council and county commissioners persisted in offering lucrative financial packages to established and new corporations. Yet the very same steps which had ensured Mansfield's success in the postwar industrial economy, conscripted the city to the limitations and weaknesses of late industrial capitalism. Mansfield had become a manufacturing city with few other industries to pick up the slack in slow economic periods. This weakness became apparent to Mansfielders in the late 1970s when factories in Youngstown, Cleveland, Toledo, Pittsburgh, Lansing, Detroit, and other industrial cities around the Great Lakes began to slow down or more often, abruptly close, many of them leaving for Mexico, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. While local owners greatly benefitted from global capitalism immediately after WWII, they could not keep up with the “race to the bottom.” In some cases, locally owned companies could not adequately afford the technological upgrades occurring during the 1970s and 1980s. In other cases, like the brass foundry, global capitalism found other places, like Asia, which were more cost effective. In other situations, local companies were shut out of exclusive deals brokered between multinational holding corporations and markets and thus saw significant revenue
reductions.

Mansfield factories did not begin slowing down production or furloughing workers in large numbers until the 1980s. But it was apparent long before Westinghouse and other factories shut their doors in the early 1990s that the region's economic reorganization would significantly impact the city. Multinational corporation buyouts and mergers in the late 1970s and early 1980s sounded the first warning for Mansfield's economy (Bluestone and Harrison 1982). In these buyouts, CEOs and boards of multinational holding companies purchased ailing and struggling companies in Mansfield occasionally to access specialized equipment and often to cheaply acquire workers’ expertise.

However, in their acquisition of companies in Mansfield, most corporations were after ownership rights to distribution agreements and patents, not the equipment or workforce that turned these patents into products. After a century of manufacturing, Mansfield’s industries had established long term, lucrative, and sometimes exclusive, distribution agreements across the region and world. Additionally, developers, engineers, and mechanics in many of Mansfield’s industries had developed products or technologies that were critical for production and that were protected by copyrights and patents. By acquiring intellectual property rights, corporate agents enhanced the production abilities of their multinational holding companies and further controlled the market by consolidating ownership over key elements within production.26 Through these mergers and patent rights acquisitions, capital and investments in Mansfield departed.

As a result of this shift in global capitalism, owners, managers, and top officials were no longer living in Mansfield and making decisions with the city and its residents (nominally) in mind. Instead, corporate officers in Pittsburgh or New York were suddenly running companies which had been locally owned for over a century. Many workers felt betrayed by the elite families who, at the expense of

26 My thanks goes to two very knowledgeable informants for explaining to me the relationships between mergers and intellectual property rights acquisitions. To protect all my informants’ anonymity I unfortunately can not recognize by them by name, but I do wish to acknowledge the important insights these two in particular provided to me.
securing their employees' futures, often received hefty buyout packages. In a few cases, mergers deals were signed and the following week entire workforces laid off. Those few workers who remained at their job site after its closure often assisted in dismantling, packing up, and moving the equipment they had been running just the week or month before. Adding insult to injury, experienced and veteran employees were sometimes asked to travel south to train new employees in Tennessee and other right-to-work states. Some Mansfielders even went to Asia and Mexico in the 1990s to help set up new plants and train workers (cf. Cowie 2001 and workers for RCA).²⁷

At the same time that the factories were beginning to slow down in the late 1970s, the reliance on and use of cars increased through the 1980s and beyond. The closure of plants located near downtown, and the continue ascension of cars meant that residents were less likely to walk downtown to shop. As Mansfielders chose (or were economically compelled) to spend their money in national chain stores located on the edge or outside the city limits, residents had fewer and fewer reasons to go downtown. Over time, only a few long suffering stores and seedy bars were left in what used to be the city's vibrant hub. Many lifelong residents argue that the shopping centers on the outskirts of the city did more to “kill” the city center than the lack of factory wages. Most small cities in the industrial midwest have suffered a similar fate. In an event that Mansfielders still recall with great embarrassment, the comedian Bill Cosby came to Mansfield in 1984 and during his stand-up performance departed from his scripted routine to skewer downtown's lack of people, cars, or functioning buildings. With a punchline few residents found funny, Cosby asked why Mansfield's Square and downtown even existed and suggested that perhaps it would be best improved with a bulldozer. This very public ridicule by a national performer forced Mansfielders to acknowledge that the boarded up buildings, the poorly repaired streets, and the lack of community life in the city's center

²⁷ While global capitalism was withdrawing plants, and thus jobs, from Mansfield and elsewhere in the US, it was relocating them to the third world. In exploiting long standing inequities, global capitalism inextricably bound workers (especially women) in Mexico, Malaysia, and elsewhere to the global marketplace (Lugo 2008, Nash and Fernandez-Kelley, eds. 1983, Ong 1991, Zavella 2002).
were not temporary situations but significant and indefinite problems.

Even with GM\textsuperscript{28} and the two unionized prisons running strong through the 1980s and 1990s, and the steel mill continuing to operate in spurts, Mansfield's community wealth was declining. Young Mansfielders who remained in the city competed against laid off, more experienced, workers for employment; being shut out of manufacturing, clerical, trucking, or building trades positions still in the area prevented many younger workers from acquiring the on-the-job skills so many employers required. Children from blue collared and white collared families who were able to go to college stopped returning to Mansfield, instead taking jobs elsewhere. Young residents who did not go to college often enlisted in the military, acquiring medical, technical, computer, or mechanical skills. They did not always return to the city. The departure of so many young people and the resulting brain drain left the city ill-equipped for its future.

African American Mansfielders were disproportionately hit by local deindustrialization. While racism had kept many (though not all) African Americans out of professional offices and white collared professions, nationwide union policies against discrimination in the postwar period helped Mansfielders of color to get manufacturing jobs. Because many black Mansfielders worked on the production line, they were among the most vulnerable to lay offs and wages freezes. When the factories closed, they were left in a lurch. Moreover, as racism inextricably linked class and phenotype in Mansfield, African Americans were more likely to work non-unionized jobs, temporary jobs, and lower paying jobs. These jobs did not provide seniority transfers to other plants, compensation or early retirement packages, or decent unemployment benefits. Those who worked “under the table” or in the informal sector had no security net whatsoever when their employment ended.

In the postwar period, the factories had enabled whites and, later on, African Americans and Latinos, to move out of the Northend and Flats and other nearby residential areas. But those who could

\textsuperscript{28} In June 2009, GM announced the Mansfield plant would be shuttered by June 2010.
not or chose not to leave, continued to live close to the square and business district. Many residents were African American. As some of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, the housing stock often required vigilant maintenance and large scale repairs. With the departure of factory jobs went the income sources many residents relied on to keep up on home maintenance. Some families sought to generate income by converting turn-of-the-century family homes into subdivided rental apartments. In-town investors, and many out-of-town speculators bought homes from underemployed and unemployed families who were scrambling for any kind of capital. Many houses became rental properties with negligent landlords or were constantly “flipped” by financiers looking to make a quick profit (Morrow-Jones, et al 2005).

As a result of the withdrawal of wealth in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the city center, the blight that was visible in downtown and adjacent industrial districts began to affect nearby residential areas, especially the Northend and the Flats which were majority black by this period. Property taxes declined on these homes (like elsewhere in the city and throughout the Rustbelt) as the value of the homes decreased. As residential property taxes declined and corporate property taxes were left unpaid, the city had few resources to pull on to fund private home repair assistance grants or to pay for the repair of public works and streets. Eventually monies for such projects began to come from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the form of grants. These funds were and continue to be never enough.

By the mid 1990s, acres of factory buildings were abandoned and maintenance had ceased in many facilities. Broken windows went unrepaired in abandoned homes and plants. In recent years, enterprising individuals and, on occasion, the parent company itself have stripped copper wires and pipes, aluminum, and other highly priced recyclable metals out of the buildings. In winter 2008 the steel mill dismantled and removed three large buildings because they were worth more in scrap than standing vacant. A vast field of crumbled and uneven concrete and rebar remains in its place, fenced in
with flimsy security fencing. Within the last twenty years, brownfields have developed as chemicals and heavy metals have leached into the ground. Like the many abandoned houses in Mansfield, the city and the state do not have the money to properly demolish the scores of industrial buildings still standing. Moreover, those buildings still standing can never be used again without major renovation, retrofitting, and costly environmental remediation. As a result, whole blocks of industrial land continue to sit blighted and unusable.

**Nostalgia and the Loss of Identity**

The abandoned buildings that still dominate downtown and the decaying housing stock all over the city are affronts to Mansfield as it once was. I conducted my fieldwork almost two decades after many of Mansfield's plants closed and the sense of loss was palpable in all of my research (Dudley 1994). In interviews, especially with older residents, I regularly heard stories that lamented the loss of high paying jobs and all the social and economic benefits that correlated with unionized production jobs. Like so many of his generation, Mr. White, a black man in his late 50s, told me, “I remember when I got out of high school I had three job offers. And if I didn't like one place, I could quit, have a new job the next day, and be making a dollar more than the last!” Southern U.S. migrants told me about going to inquire about a job and then finding, as soon as they had walked home, a phone message from the factory telling them to report to the morning shift the next day. Younger people would tell me similar stories of how their parents first began working for Westinghouse or Mansfield Tire. Many residents were simultaneously incredulous that such ways of operating actually existed at some point, and jaundiced that job searches and capitalism no longer worked that way in Mansfield.

When I told Ms. Bird, a white woman originally from another small city in Ohio, that I was writing a book-length paper for school about how communities change with the economy changes, Ms. Bird told me “Mansfield used to have a high class, a middle class, and a low class. The high class used to live over there <she turned her body 45 degrees to point in the direction of Woodland> the middle
class used to live in the middle <she stopped pointing to the distance and pointed to a mid-distance>,
and the low class used to live here <she changed her hand from pointing with her index finger to
turning her palm towards her body and moving her open hand vertically up and down>. Now it just
has a high class and low class. There's no more middle class. The middle class is gone.”

Ms. Bird then told me that two months previously, she received a fifteen day notice of
termination from her job delivering goods for a Columbus company. She was 62 and had worked as a
third party contractor (i.e. receiving no benefits or retirement) for almost eighteen years. Her voice
broke as she said, “who wants to hire me? I'm an old woman. I'm going to try to wait till I'm 66 to
draw social security, but I may not be able to make it. But I have to. I can't keep up my mortgage
payments on what they'd give me right now [at 62].” Like so many other Mansfielders who constantly
weighed the financial risks and rewards of taking social security “early” (at a rate that is permanently
lower than the full rate one receives after age 66), Ms. Bird saw herself as part of the disappearing
middle class. For Ms. Bird, the middle class's erasure was all but complete; the landscape hardly
reflected their presence anymore.

The landscape of the past is still very much alive for many residents and shapes the tempo of
contemporary life. I lived in Mansfield during its bicentennial year. Although the city was
institutionally attuned to recounting and celebrating its past during those twelve months, from earlier
fieldwork sessions I knew that people were deeply connected and invested in the past, even without an
anniversary year to celebrate. People regularly told me stories about Mansfield as it had been in the
years after WWII, and, in particular, stories about its lively downtown. This ghost landscape is present
for residents who were not even alive during Mansfield's postwar heyday, or barely cognizant of the
world around them during that period.

29 This is partially why this chapter includes so much historical information; I hope that Mansfielders and those interested
in local history find my compilation and synthesis useful for their own purposes, especially for local history projects,
genealogy work, and contemporary planning and policy analyses.
Mansfielders all the time give directions and locate places in terms of what used to be there. I felt that I had become adequately familiar with Mansfield's history when I not only could follow these directions, but started giving directions myself like, “you know where the old Krogers [a grocery store] is? Turn left there. The picnic is down near where the old rollerskating rink was.” Following the departure of this Kroger in the late 1990s, this particular building housed an indoor arcade, stood vacant, and now holds educational and community activist offices. The lot where the rollerskating rink stood has been a meadow ever since I began going to Mansfield in 2005 (the rink burned several months before my first fieldwork session). Most directions are actually based on even older structures:

“Where is that restaurant?”
“How the old music store used to be on the Square.”
“Oh, you mean Smarts Music? My mother bought her first violin there.”
“Yep, that's the spot.”

The factory closings throughout the 1980s and 1990s impacted more than just pocketbooks and the landscape—workers whose very identities were tied up with being a life-long Mansfield Tire worker, or a union steward at Westinghouse were suddenly unmoored. There are still annual reunion picnics among factory employees, even though many factories ceased production two decades ago. Dozens of smaller cliques of former co-workers still get together over coffee once a week or once a month. These events are periodically announced and covered in the local newspaper and rarely if ever, include managers, corporate officers, or owners who still live in the area. Much of the nostalgia for Mansfield as it once was is very gendered. Informants' reminiscences often lament that men are not longer fully employed or the sole or primary breadwinner. But women also feel the loss keenly as many worked on a production line at one point. All residents take pride in Mansfield-made products and criticize the short lifespan and shoddy quality of products recently made abroad.

Further evidence of my familiarity with Mansfield vernacular was the addition of an “S” to store names. Locally Kroger is called Krogers, Meijer is Meijers, Walmart is Walmarts. However, as a native Illinoisan I drew the line at pronouncing the “s” in Illinois. Of the hundreds of Mansfielders I met over the course of my fieldwork, only a handful left my home state's “s” silent.
Mansfielders have felt betrayed by the factories' departure, but also personally responsible for the success of their products. Recall in my interview with Sissy and Mrs. Shane, Sissy asked “what would have happened if all those people didn't come up here?”. When I asked her what she thought would have happened, she responded: “I guess the factories would have left sooner than they did. I think the factories would have left earlier than they did. Who would have moved up here if we hadn’t? People from Cleveland? Someone from way out West?” In Sissy's formulation, the factories would never have come to Mansfield in the first place if it were not for the arriving workers; nor would they have stayed as long as they did if it had not been for the superior quality of the workers' products. The migration and presence of so many workers ensured Mansfield's products were made, but implied in Sissy's comments and others' conversations, was the belief that Mansfield's work ethic ensured these items were made of quality.

Even though the factories are gone, Westinghouse washing machines still churn across the country (my former workplace in Champaign, IL has an operational 1960s Westinghouse water fountain), Mansfield Company toilets and sinks still run, and Ohio Brass surge arrestors still sit on electric poles in the Northeast. There is currently a lively market online and at local county auctions and estate sales for Mansfield-produced goods. Westinghouse products in particular collect a high premium. Collectors sometimes use these items, other times, they simply keep and display these products. These artifacts are a testament to Mansfield's past and serve as material reminders that Mansfield was a thriving city that left its mark around the country and world, as well as generated solid wages for a growing middle class.

**Conclusion**

The city's shift from industrial powerhouse to becoming the butt of a joke has left residents with a profound sense of loss and nostalgia. In essence, the city has lost its sense of identity. If Mansfield no longer makes refrigerators and washing machines and electrical equipment, what does it make? How
does the world beyond the city limits know it? What is Mansfield good for? After almost a century of incredible growth, high rates of employment, and urbane lifestyles, Mansfielders are struggling to reconcile their memories of the past with the uncertain future.

In the next chapter I explore how globalizing and neoliberal trends are irrevocably unsettling and reforming Mansfield's landscape of race, ethnicity, class, and space. Read together, Chapters 2 and 3, trace the political economic and social histories of a small city and demonstrate the importance of including small cities in urban studies discussions and debates.
Chapter 3: Political Economy in a Changing Community, 1970s-2010

In the postwar period, Mansfielders enjoyed all the benefits of big city living. Located halfway between Columbus and Cleveland, Mansfield seemed to be the perfect alternative to the volatility of large postwar cities and the conformity found within their growing suburbs (Sugrue 1996). By 1970, unemployment was at 4.4% and over 40% of Mansfield's 55,000 working residents labored in manufacturing. Another 25% were employed in the banking, real estate, educational, and health professions that developed alongside the factories, and close to 35% worked in the retail and service industries that served Mansfield's blue and white collared workers. 15,664 residents, or 28.5% of the population, were 15 years of age or younger (United States Census Bureau 1971a, 1971b, 1971c). Seeing themselves as a smaller, better paid version of a quintessential metropolis, historical facts of prosperity, success, and security were important for Mansfielders in understanding themselves and their small city (see chapter 2).

Four decades later, residents struggled to reconcile the image of Mansfield as it once was with what it had become in the new millennium. By 2008, Mansfield was among the poorer cities in Ohio with high rates of unemployment, spiking numbers of housing foreclosures, a shrinking city government budget, public schools in academic emergency, and an aging population (U.S. Census 2008b). Like many cities in the industrial midwest, Mansfield has struggled to regain its footing since the restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s when factory after factory downsized or closed and thousands of unionized workers were left underemployed and often without any work. Mansfield's recent history hews to the standard story told of deindustrialization which emphasizes the devastating effects of capital withdrawal, declining community wealth, and a decaying built environment. And rightfully so; communities throughout the industrial northeast and midwest have been completely decimated socially and economically by the widespread closure of factories and continue to be further challenged by the

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31 A slightly abridged version of this chapter appears in Connolly, ed. 2010 as Goebel 2010a.
imploding auto industry.

Yet such a rendering of the post-Fordist economy, particularly as experienced by small cities within the United States and Canada, elides several key developments. New industries have been sprouting in deindustrializing North America even as manufacturing has stagnated and declined in prominence, employment numbers, and revenue returns. Corporate investments—especially in the health care industry—and federal and state assistance programs have been moving into the midwest and northeast, helping to develop a new economy in the Rustbelt. Like other scholars, I use Rustbelt to name the “re-imagined community” that insiders and outsiders construct of the former industrial midwest and northeast (Anderson 1991, Lugo 2008). Rustbelt is not city or size specific, but instead indexes the lost dreams that so many people and places have experienced (High 2003, Cowie and Heathcott, eds. 2003).

Instead of working on factory production lines, many local Mansfielders now labor as medical assistants and technicians. This reconfigured economy has also brought with it new workers: workers who are mostly college educated, white collar, and foreign born or “imported” from other parts of the United States. Prior to the 1990s, Mansfield was almost 90% white and 10% African American with miniscule numbers of Native Americans, Latinos, or Asian-descent residents. By 2008, the Census estimated that 73% of Mansfielders self-identified as white, 23% as African American or black, 1.7% as Hispanic or Latino, and 0.6% as Asian (U.S. Census 1971a, 2008a). Two percent of all residents (no matter race or ethnicity) were foreign born; most were naturalized citizens (U.S Census 2008f).

The influx of highly educated and well paid “outsiders” during the last two decades has reconstituted class disparities in new multiracial and multicultural ways. As a result, simultaneous trends of economic development and divestment, along with the increasingly marked visibility of race, ethnicity, and class, have indelibly imprinted city life with unresolved tensions. As all Mansfielders strive to understand themselves and their changing city, visions of, and for, the small city compete with
one another. Mansfield's situation resonates with hundreds of small cities in North America and underscores the often paradoxical and contentious processes of deindustrialization and neoliberal capitalism (O'Hara 2003). The small city of Mansfield suggests a perspective that is often absent in discussions about urban development and points to larger neoliberal trends that are reconfiguring cities throughout the United States.

While the last chapter focused on archival data and oral histories collected in 2006, this chapter draws primarily from participant observations I made while doing fieldwork in Mansfield from 2005 to 2010. I use data and statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau to confirm the trends I found emerging in my qualitative research.

**Neoliberalism and the Small City**

As the county seat and largest city in the twelve county area, Mansfield serves as the economic hub for the north central Ohio region and takes on the brunt of the county's operating costs and civic responsibilities. When factories began to leave the midwest and northeast for the southern United States and then the global south in the 1980s and '90s, Mansfield and Bromfield County realized the entire area would be severely impacted. As a small city it had fewer sources of revenue than other, larger, cities.

Despite federal programs designed to help cities weather economic change, Mansfield has had uneven success. One reason it has struggled is because the city fits awkwardly into Housing and Urban Development (HUD) classifications. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's two primary programs—Community Development Block Grants and HOME grants—provide monies and tax credits to create affordable housing and to redevelop economically depressed neighborhoods. HUD divides locales into two categories: those with a population of 50,001 and larger, and 50,000 and smaller. As a city with just over 50,000 people, Mansfield competes for HUD funds as an “entitlement community” a designation that applies to the larger category. The demographically smaller locales are
grouped together and their funds are collectively administered by their state's government. As a result, Mansfield vies against very large metropolises like Cleveland for funding; in some state and philanthropic programs, Mansfield competes against much smaller locales (Department of Housing and Urban Development 2009). Being on the cusp of two drastically different federal (and sometimes state and philanthropic) categories has been a constant concern for city government's officials.\footnote{My thanks to Mansfield's Community Development Officer for explaining to me the HUD classifications and their implications for Mansfield.}

Therefore, in the 1980s and 1990s, city and county officials sought to retain existing companies and began courting new businesses and industries to replace the leaving ones. As a testament to Mansfield's infrastructure, preexisting worker know-how, marketing savviness, and a little bit of luck, manufacturing was still (just barely) the largest employer in the city and county in 2008, despite the layoffs during the 1980s and 1990s (U.S. Census 2008c). In 2008, 22.10% of all employed Mansfielders work in manufacturing; 20.6% work in educational services, health care, and social assistance (U.S. Census 2008c), and the rest of the population spread across retail (11.9%), food service and accommodations (11.4%), professional and administrative (7.9%) and information and finance, insurance and realty (8.1%), construction and transportation (8.3%). Yet manufacturing's prominence and prestige has declined precipitously in Mansfield with many small nonunionized shops taking the place of the large unionized factories which had employed thousands in the postwar period.

Union membership has significantly declined in Ohio and Mansfield's membership reductions are presumably similar (or even more severe) than the state's. (Because of its size, union membership information for Mansfield is not enumerated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Census.) In 1986, 22.4% of all Ohioans were union members (Hirsch and Macpherson 2002b). By 2009, only 14.2% were (Hirsch and Macpherson 2010b). Youngstown, Ohio has a similar industrial profile to Mansfield's with a large prison complex and a large GM production plant and can serve as an analogous case. In 1986, 36.6% of workers in Youngstown were union members (Hirsch and Macpherson 2002). By 2009,
20.4% of all Youngstown workers were members (Hirsch and Macpherson 2010a).33 Union numbers have declined across the United States due to many reasons including the switch from manufacturing to service within the U.S., restrictive laws which make organizing nearly impossible in new shops, and a growing disillusionment with unions by workers (Richards 2008).

Most critically, organized labor has lost numbers and power because the entire nature of labor within the United States has shifted. As Nash and Fernández-Kelly wrote in 1983, “the last three decades have witnessed the growing integration of the world system of production on the basis of a new relationship between less developed and highly industrialized countries” (vii). As factories fled the industrial United States for Latin America, Asia, Africa during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, industrial unions found they no longer had receptive workplaces to organize, or the ability to effectively maintain their members' rights and protections. Membership in service unions (like SEIU and UNITE-HERE) have seen an increase, but service and health care industries still remain drastically underorganized across the U.S. (Fink and Greenberg 2009 [1989]).

The footloose movement of capitalism around the globe has not only restructured state economies, but also local landscapes (as discussed at the end of Chapter 2) and international labor relations (Caulfield 2010). Despite the seeming rootlessness of global capitalism, its latest iteration—neoliberalism—has come about precisely because of state intervention and assistance. In the 1970s and 1980s, countries and private corporations began implementing a range of economic practices which social scientists and urbanists usually call neoliberal capitalism or, simply, neoliberalism (Comaroff and Comaroff, eds 2001, Harvey 2005, Richland 2009). Neoliberal economic programs maintain that the global marketplace should determine the costs of services and goods. In the name of increasing efficiency and profit, state neoliberal economic policies are marked by deregulation, globalization, the

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33 These numbers are only for card-carrying union members. The percentages are slightly higher if considering all workers who are covered by a union contract, i.e. receiving union-secured benefits even if they haven't signed a membership card.
rising use of third party contractors, and the privatization of services and responsibilities that the state
formerly assumed (Mathew 2005). The World Trade Organization, the World Bank and governments
around the world have legislated and enforced policies to ensure this economic approach works
(Brenner and Theodore, eds. 2003, Ferguson 2006, Klein 2007, Ong 2007). Although multinational
corporations manipulate capitalism to the advantage of their bottom line and often to the detriment of
the (welfare) state, the state is very much present in neoliberal policies and practices (Juffer 2006). In
this way the state both feels the pressure to conform to neoliberal capitalism and to maintain pressure
on citizens and cities to participate in the neoliberal marketplace.

Accompanying neoliberal economic policies has been the intensification of social practices
which position individuals and organizations (including cities) as entrepreneurs, all equally capable of
competing in the marketplace as profitable workers, savvy consumers, and self-regulating citizens
(Greenhouse, ed. 2009). Moreover, social neoliberal ideologies suggest that one can, and should,
 improve one's self in order to be a better economic, political, and cultural citizen; whatever
shortcomings one might experience, are the individual's responsibility to rectify (Foucault 1988). With
a premium on maximizing profit, racism and other forms of exclusion are morphing to accommodate
into the marketplace, but also take advantage of, previously excluded people. Workplaces, schools, and
other institutions are becoming more multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural even as racism and
xenophobia (along with ablism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ageism) continue to shape all peoples'
life experiences and opportunities (Dávila 2004). In the context of late global capitalism, the twin
processes of neoliberal economics and neoliberal social ideologies now inextricably shape life in
Mansfield and all cities within the United States and beyond.

Therefore, as a small city, Mansfield has had little choice if it wants a fighting chance on the
global marketplace. As a result it has had to participate in the neoliberal policies and practices that
increasingly permeate the everyday lives of people in the United States. For example, in the 1990s, the
city and county offered tax abatements and free utilities to urge Cyclops Steel Corporation to keep Mansfield's steel mill open. Mansfield, its sister village Linden, and Bromfield County took on tax breaks and construction costs for utilities to court multinational big box retailers and service industries like call centers. In one instance, according to several informants, the city annexed three miles of unincorporated land immediately adjacent to a major road in order to provide utilities and infrastructure to a Wal-Mart being built near the highway several miles away from the rest of the city. In another example, Mansfield petitioned for Foreign-Trade Zoning (aka Free Trade Zone) around its new industrial park in a bid to attract corporations that distribute internationally. It is now part of FTZ 181, the Northeast Ohio Foreign Trade Zone, which is made up of an archipelago of industrial parks based in Akron, Canton, Massillon, Youngstown, Lordstown, and other deindustrializing Ohio cities (Northeast Ohio Trade and Economic Consortium 2010). Several companies in the industrial park are products of, and therefore take advantage of NAFTA, as well (see photo 1).

Moreover, looking for in-place revenue streams, the city used state and federal money to expand the two unionized state prisons. In concert with the nation's increased incarceration of nonviolent offenders, immigrants, and youth, Mansfield's prison populations have grown, like in much of the Rustbelt (Lynd and Lynd 2001). The prison industrial complex and its attendant security industries (like home security companies, private security guard companies, and private investigation services) have made their mark in Mansfield as they have throughout the United States (Rosas 2006). In February 2010, incarcerated persons accounted for 9.1% of the city's population. Six percent of Mansfielders work as prison employees or in the city's private security sector (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, 2010a, 2010b). The prisons are beyond capacity and, despite state budget cuts, require more staff to handle the crowded conditions. These neoliberal measures by the city and county kept some jobs in place and generated new low waged, low skilled jobs. However, they were not enough, and city officials, regional county planners, and business boosters sought other
solutions.

While Mansfield was losing its major factories, the industrial midwest and northeast, like much of the country, was expanding local health care facilities and services. Since the late 1980s, the health care industry has grown exponentially, becoming the largest employing industry within the United States by 2008 (Relman 2007). Such trends tracked similarly in Mansfield and Bromfield County with health care as an employing industry growing 56% since 1990. Health care has become the new, largely unacknowledged, economic darling in Mansfield. I focus on the health care industry because it provides an compelling example of how neoliberalism intersects with small city space, small city economics, and small city social life. Additionally, events occurring in Mansfield, particularly in terms of neoliberal health care and its related industries, resonate with many other small cities within the United States.

**Neoliberal Health Care**

In 1996, the Mansfield area hospitals—Mansfield General Hospital located within the city and Magnolia Community Hospital located 30 minutes north in the town of Magnolia—merged and were reincorporated as Sunshine Health System. Citizen's Hospital, located immediate east of Mansfield's city limits in an unincorporated township, was bought by nearby Redbud Samaritan in 1997 but was permanently closed the following year. Despite the continued presence of manufacturing in the area, Sunshine is now the largest single employer in the six-county area it primarily serves. Sunshine indirectly employs hundreds more because health care in Mansfield, as elsewhere, now encompasses much more than just hospitals and doctors' offices.

This industry, what Arnold S. Relman calls the medical industrial complex (1980, 1991), includes durable medical equipment suppliers, private ambulance and ambulette services, home health services, nursing homes, group homes, medical transcription services, dialysis clinics, occupational therapy offices, oncology treatment centers, outpatient surgery practices, digital imaging facilities, case
workers, and much more.\textsuperscript{34} Even though Sunshine Health System is non-profit (and thus tax exempted, meaning it does not pay taxes on its large properties), the hospital contracts much of its elite staff (ex. all emergency room medical personnel, cardiac clinic personnel) from private companies. The third party contracting system is in keeping with neoliberal economic practices that encourage public sector programs to use private sector, for-profit, contractors to deliver services (McGregor 2001, Teghtsoonian 2009).

As it did for retailers and new manufacturers arriving after 1990, the city of Mansfield and the county took on the cost of running utility lines out to private medical developments on the edge of the city where local business partnerships and Sunshine Health System were building doctors' offices and outpatient clinics. These office complexes, along South Bricklayers Avenue, line over a mile of the city's “outer belt” and are located several miles away from the outpatient clinics and the medical offices which grew around the centrally located hospital. The South Bricklayers Avenue complexes are mostly private offices, providing non-emergency and in some cases, non-essential services. While a women's health practice and a dialysis clinic are located on South Bricklayers, so are private clinics and a medical spa that offer colon cleansing, botox injections, and chelation therapy\textsuperscript{35} (see photos 2 and 3).

These offices are not located “in the city,” which would be central for most of the county and on the limited public transit lines used by Mansfielders without transportation. Instead, the South Bricklayers Avenue developments have reconfigured the city by expanding the municipal boundaries and carving out a new niche for middle-class and upper-class patient-consumers. In interviews, informants perceived the neighborhood around the hospital to be dangerous because it is primarily

\textsuperscript{34} Since 2000, Ohio has been among the top five states for bio technology start up firms. These companies are clustered in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Akron. Proctor and Gamble is headquartered in Cincinnati; Cleveland is home to a Mayo Clinic; Akron has a world renowned children's hospital that specializes in cancer and burns. Despite these industries being located a distance from Mansfield, they, like the health care industry writ large, contribute to the health care industrial complex in the Rustbelt (Vanac 2008).

\textsuperscript{35} Chelation therapy removes heavy metals from the body. The FDA approves only a few of the processes and for very specific situations of metal poisoning. Chelation therapy is controversially used for non-FDA approved conditions, like autism and heart disease (American Heart Association 2010).
renter-occupied, with aging housing stock and is racially mixed. The South Bricklayers Avenue developments enable patients to avoid the hospital neighborhood completely. The construction of specialty practices on the edge of the city limits is happening in Rustbelt cities around the nation (ex. Dougherty 2008) (see photos 4 and 5).

Small cities heavily court and subsidize these niche specializations because the healthcare market is so fierce. In order to distinguish themselves from regional competitors, local health care systems often target particular consumers. Mansfield's Sunshine Health System boasts that it has the number one best cardiac surgery unit in the state and “cancer treatments, diagnostics procedures, and research protocols are the same as those offered by hospitals in larger cities, without the hassle of daily commuting” (Sunshine Health System 2009a, 2009b). Other small Rustbelt cities like Richmond, Indiana advertise that they have the highest quality digital imaging and comprehensive heart center in the area. Decatur, Illinois, has primary stroke center certification (Reid Hospital and Health Care Services 2009, Decatur Memorial Hospital 2008). Small cities use financial assistance and tout their pre-existing infrastructure to convince hospitals and healthcare providers to expand facilities. The relative ease in driving to a small city for health care—health care which is as competent as big city care—enables a city like Mansfield to draw consumer-patients who might otherwise go to Columbus or Cleveland for treatment.

But I contend that it is not just small city cityness driving the intensification and growth of the health care industry in the Rustbelt. I assume here that the medical industrial complex was, and continues to be, interested in former industrial cities precisely because of the industries that previously dominated places like Mansfield. Although many factories downsized or closed in the 1980s and 1990s, plenty of unionized retirees with generous benefit packages and pension plans remained in the city after the plants shuttered. Until recently, it seemed guaranteed that retired workers would have benefits in perpetuity. As it is, almost one fourth of Mansfield's households received retirement income
in 2008. The census classifies retirement income as: “(1) retirement pensions and survivor benefits from a former employer; labor union; or federal, state, or local government; and the U.S. military; (2) income from workers' compensation; disability income from companies or unions; federal, state, or local government; and the U.S. military; (3) periodic receipts from annuities and insurance; and (4) regular income from IRA and KEOGH plans. This does not include social security income.” (U.S. Census 2000a).

Even during the beginning of late 20th century deindustrialization, strong union contracts and revenue from other worksites were high enough to support early retirees, full term retirees, and their spouses. Having bought their homes and established roots locally, it was unlikely that many former workers or their spouses would leave the city and take their healthcare plans with them. Instead these residents were locked into the area, and as their aging bodies required more care (especially likely for those that worked in the dangerous and environmentally hazardous conditions found in and around most manufacturing plants). they would become long term “clients” of the industry.

Additionally, in Mansfield at least, the prisons, GM, and Cyclops Steel continue operating, and with these unionized workplaces, workers and some dependents continue to access health insurance. With general trends of downsizing and reduced production in the last two decades, the most junior (and thus usually youngest and healthiest) employees have been let go first, leaving an older unionized workforce in place. In general, these workers need more care due to age and time on the job and have access to health benefits through union contracts that pay for back surgeries, knee replacement surgeries, heart stents, and other major, costly procedures. Although many of the remaining manufacturing shops in Mansfield use long term “temporary” and “contract labor” in order to avoid

36 I use spouse, instead of the more inclusive term “partner,” to accurately reflect the heteronormative reality of union contracts and retirement packages in Mansfield.
37 GM announced the closure of the Mansfield plant in June 2009. As of June 2009, Cyclops Steel had been on complete shut down five of the previous six months. Still, prior to the 2008 economic downturn, these factories were running at least one, if not two or three, shifts a day.
union demands, and union membership has declined in Mansfield, the number of households drawing retirement benefits is seven percentage points higher in Mansfield than in the United States (U.S. Census 2008i). Social security pensioners and survivors receiving benefits account for 31.9% of all Mansfield households (Medicare reimbursements are not included in this enumeration) (U.S. Census 2008h). Civilian veterans makes up 10.2% of the population and often qualify for VA benefits (U.S. Census 2008b).

Even as GM and other companies have negotiated recent rollbacks in union contracts, which have included the slashing of health benefits for spouses, many workers who retired with enough savings turned that capital into property and stock investments. The landlord/tenant ratio in Mansfield is noticeably lopsided vis-à-vis the country at large and reflects both the low cost of property and one common way middle class and elite Mansfielders generate income. In the 2006-08 U.S. Census Community Survey, Mansfield's owner/renter ratio was 58.9% : 41.1%. The nation at large was 67.3% : 32.7%. While doing research in Mansfield it seemed as though almost every white homeowner over the age of fifty I encountered, and a good number of older black homeowners I met, actually owned more than one home—their primary residence and then their rental property. Although it sometimes felt like every homeowner I was ever introduced to had another property, certainly that was not the case.

However, according to the 2006-08 Community Survey, 21.4% of all households in Mansfield received income through rent income, stock dividends, savings and bond interest, or estate and trust fund pay outs (the census does not enumerate median dollar amounts per sub-category, nor does it break down this information by race, age, or sex). Assuming that the vast majority of households receiving interest, dividends, or net rental income own their own home, the proportion is actually 36.4%. Nationally, 25.1% of all households reported rental or dividend income in 2008 (U.S. Census 2000b, 2008g). In most cases landlords in Mansfield only own one or two other properties, but income
from those rentals is enough to pay for vacations, children's college tuition, save for financial emergencies, indulge in pricy hobbies like car restoration, and in general maintain a middle class lifestyle. This kind of captive capital, which seemed somewhat assured in the late 1990s and early 2000s, guaranteed that people would pay for medical care, even for care that private insurers or Medicare didn't cover.

I certainly do not want to suggest that Mansfielders have wonderful health insurance plans, plentiful savings, or that everyone even has access to health care. On the contrary, more and more residents are going without health insurance and many are forgoing medical attention because they can not afford it. According to the local newspaper, 15.1% of the county's population under the age of 65 was uninsured in 2008. This is up from 11.7% uninsured in 2006. 13.4% of Ohioans were uninsured in 2008 (Zimmer 2009). The majority of my informants, in fact, were not privately insured, though some had Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security Disability Insurance, or SCHIP (state-sponsored health insurance for children). But in many cases, particularly among working class, working poor, and unemployed Mansfielders, basic pain and cold medicines are beyond everyday budgets and people do without, borrow money, or forgo other expenses in order to access rudimentary medical supplies.

Those who are lucky enough to receive medical attention and medication through the public health clinic, emergency room, public assistance programs, or by paying out of pocket, regularly take only part of their prescriptions. One working class family I interviewed saved money by giving their son ADHD medication only during the school year (colleagues in the mental health field tell me this is a common strategy nationwide). Over time I learned that many of my informants saved prescribed medication for another bout of illness—either their own or a family member's or friend's. These medications were rarely sold for money, but were exchanged as part of a larger reciprocal economy of circulating goods, capital, and familial obligation. Such practices are in keeping with the more general economy of neighborliness and reciprocity in low income communities (see Stack 1974 as a classic
study on this point and for another example of a small city struggling with economic change).

The most commonly shared pills—those for pain and for sleep—are certainly attractive to all people, but they are especially prized by sleep deprived low waged workers who may work more than one job, usually on their feet on factory lines, in restaurants, in big box store aisles, or as maintenance and cleaning crews. Inhalers are another often shared medication and are also sought after by industrial workers and service workers, many of whom have developed asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) after working years with chemicals or in particulate dust. While one prescription might be divided among family members or friends, there is still a large consuming market for these medications in Mansfield and pharmaceutical companies are not losing money, even on shared prescriptions. In fact, peer-to-peer sharing accounts for a fair number of requested prescriptions. Also, the free medical and mental health clinics usually give out samples in order to save patients money; this generosity by pharmaceutical companies works to make Mansfielders familiar with targeted medicines and is written off as a tax-deductible donation by the pharmaceutical company. Surely the health care industries, especially pharmaceutical companies, recognize that they have a captive and receptive pool of potential consumers in the Rustbelt.

Living and moving through a built environment with many brownfields, older housing stock with asbestos and lead, and a continued presence of air pollution sickens a high number of residents. Cigarette breaks are still honored in Mansfield and many former industrial cities; drinking is a relatively inexpensive way to socialize with coworkers, family, and friends (Popp and Swora 2004). Mansfielders are also “unhealthy” because many, especially working class and poor residents, have limited food options. As Ms. Bird (whose job loss I discussed at the end of chapter 2) told me in the summer of 2008, “they say everyone’s overweight but it’s not everyone you know. With the cost of gas going up how much do you think fresh vegetables and fruits are going to cost this summer? We can’t pay for it, even if we wanted good food. Celebrities and you know can afford to stay thin. They have
the personal chefs and can buy fresh food. I can't."

Economic insecurity, and thus insecurity about the future, has also led to a rise in mental illness. Residents struggle with nostalgia for a city as it once was and with the unfulfilled fantasies of the economic and social securities formerly found in the city. The stress of being unable to provide the consumer goods, and sometimes basic necessities, for children, parents, partners, and families troubles many Mansfielders, especially men (Dunk 2002). As men and women adjust to shifting gender roles, and the frustrations of not being able to be a “good” (i.e. providing) parent or partner, these stresses takes a toll on individuals and families. Donald Castle noted in his 1990 dissertation on education in Mansfield that school aged children in the 1980s were in increasing need of social and mental health services as the stress of unemployment began affecting students' home lives. By 2008, 18-19% of all Mansfield City School children were classified as behaviorally disturbed/mentally retarded (personal communication with school officials). This high number indicates both real problems among Mansfield's children and one strategy the schools and families use to acquire more desperately needed state funding. The health care industry must be well aware of the rates of respiratory illness, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, mental illness, and other corporeal marks of the stresses of Rustbelt living.

Dani Filc argues that the intensification of the health care industry capitalizes on neoliberal models of care and individualization. These frameworks encourage personal responsibility among patients; in this way individuals self-diagnose and pro-actively request treatments, or treat themselves. As a result, specialty and designer care has increased, as has the outsourcing of family or community based care to group homes, nursing homes, home health aides and other health experts. Such practices of personal responsibility and outsourcing dovetail with frameworks that emphasize biomedical (versus sociostructural) explanations for health. “The medicalization of everyday life plays a significant role in determining the importance of the health care sector as a field for capital accumulation...
medicalization contains the potential to make almost any problem appear to be a 'health problem,' medicine becomes the answer for problems whose origin is social” (Filc 2005: 190). Entire industries and facilities of expert health knowledge have developed in Mansfield and throughout the Rustbelt to treat symptoms.

Neither the industry nor the city that courts the medical industrial complex acknowledge that many of these health problems are expressions of unaddressed societal problems. Understanding people's obesity or overweightness, smoking, substance use or abuse, and other “unhealthy” activities as individual failings elides societal problems that create a conducive environment for these deviances (Biehl and Moran-Thomas 2009, Teghtsoonian 2009). Certainly people are making the decision to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, and eat unhealthy food despite the presence of public service announcements, media reports, public health campaigns, and medical advice that warn against these potentially self-harming practices. But focusing solely on individuals ignores larger problems like chronic individual and community stress, constrained family budgets for fresh food or preventive medical care, and the lack of state commitment to healthy communities and healthy choices. Even when state agencies work to improve poor and working class lives, their efforts are partial and the benefits uneven as social welfare programs compete with economic policies that created the need for these programs in the first place.

Reproducing Class in the Small City

As union-secured corporate paternalism disappeared along with factories in the 1990s, the state was forced to address the voids created by capital withdrawal, decimated wages, and contract rollbacks. In response, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Job and Family Services expanded their offices in Mansfield to develop worker retraining programs, GED programs, unemployment benefits, and government assistance programs through food stamps, housing vouchers, and rent assistance. United Way partners like the Area Agency for Aging and the drug and alcohol
rehab center also grew as the societal impact of rampant unemployment became obvious. Although the Clinton administration sharply curtailed government assistance benefits nationwide, the number of recipients went up within Mansfield.\(^\text{38}\)

For those workers who were negatively affected by factory closure, the county and state attempted to find them new jobs in nonunionized manufacturing, service industries like call centers, or significantly, in the health care fields. Many workers and soon-to-be workers, were encouraged to earn certificates and associate's degrees at the local technical college. Of the 28 associate's degrees and 18 certificate programs currently offered, almost half are in health care fields.\(^\text{39}\) The technical college also maintains agreements with colleges and universities within Ohio and hosts visiting instructors, two way video conferencing, and online courses for bachelor degree programs. Again, almost half of these bachelor degrees are in health care (primarily nursing) or technical fields like information technology and technical management.\(^\text{40}\) Also indicative of the push towards health services, was the establishment of a private college of nursing through Sunshine Health System in 1997. Prior to the incorporation of Sunshine Health System, Mansfield General Hospital had had a school of nursing and offered a hospital-based diploma program which was similar to an on-the-job training and certificate program. The Sunshine College of Nursing is the new millennium's version of that school and now solely offers bachelor of science in nursing degrees at $14,000/year for tuition (Sunshine College of Nursing 2009).

Perhaps the most obvious evidence of how much the small city is banking on health care (as

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\(^{38}\) It is important to note that the shift in the welfare system to a neoliberal one occurred under Clinton, as did many other legislative acts that helped to usher in the current neoliberal turn. For more, see Duggan 2003.

\(^{39}\) The twelve health and human services associate degrees include majors like bioscience, criminal justice, radiology sciences, respiratory care. Eight other associate degrees are in the engineering, computer, and digital arts fields, an indicator of the continued presence of manufacturing and heavy industry in north central Ohio. The final seven degrees are in business, finance and professional services management. Of the eighteen offered certificate programs, ten are in finance and professional services (e.g. office skills, PC repair, networking-microsoft, etc) and eight are in health and human services (e.g. early childhood education, educational assisting, community health worker, practical nursing, etc.) (Mansfield Community College 2010).

\(^{40}\) Of the five on campus bachelor degree programs, three are in education and health services, one in electrical engineering and one in business administration. Of the seventeen online programs, ten are in technology fields, five in health care and human services and three in business programs (Mansfield Community College 2009).
well as new iterations of manufacturing and production), can be found in the public school district. Within the last decade, the Mansfield City Schools established a health technologies course series for its high schoolers and in 2008 considered developing a biosciences and health sciences magnet school. Fifty five percent of public school high schoolers are in “Career Tech” courses, which include the health technologies series, as well as classes in childhood education, machine technology, construction and maintenance, CAD, culinary arts, and cosmetology (Mansfield City Schools 2009). While these skills are practical and useful, and do indeed help city high schoolers find jobs after graduation, these jobs reproduce class and employment stratifications. Students in these courses are tracked out of liberal arts college preparatory courses and away from the foundational educational resources and requirements needed for professional, white collared, high paying jobs.

Of intersectional significance is that many of these career tech students are white Appalachians and people of color of all class backgrounds, and working poor whites. According to many of my informants, the school system has historically tracked these marginalized groups into the “industrial arts” and non-honor courses. From my observations in the public schools during the 2008-09 school year, it is clear this kind of tracking is still practiced, though perhaps it is not as obvious today as over half the student body is classified as economically disadvantaged and it is almost equally divided between whites and nonwhites (School Matters 2010). Tracking racially, culturally, and economically marginalized students into the industrial arts and career tech programs disadvantages precisely the students who would gain the most from preparatory courses and training for university degrees.

While renal dialysis technicians and emergency medical technicians can earn more than their peers who work in fast food or at the local plastics factory, these are still extremely low waged jobs. Even more to the point, medical technician and healthcare support occupations that are overwhelmingly filled by women (ex. nurses' assistants, home health aides, phlebotomists) are especially low paying with a national average of $26,340 a year (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008a). Mansfielders earn less
than the national average at $23,200 a year. The largest sub-groups of healthcare workers in Mansfield—home health aides; and nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants—average $19,380 and $21,200 respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008b). The commodification and neoliberalization of health work is in line with enduring modes of capitalism that appropriate and undervalue the important and economically critically work women do.

Although city boosters treat the medical and health care industry as the answer to factory closures, these $7.25-$12 an hour jobs are the new contingent labor workforce. Many jobs are call-in (i.e. as needed) or part time (Sunshine Health Systems 2010). Ironically, only some of these jobs provide medical benefits to their employees and there is no nurses union or health care workers’ union in Mansfield. Moreover, I know from interviews with workers and patients that many Mansfielders, especially women, do unlicensed home care at rates below the minimum wage. These freelance jobs are often established between family members (ex. a niece caring for a widowed aunt) or among neighbors (a stay-at-home mom may assist her elderly neighbors with light housecleaning and changing bandages three times a week).

Medical technology and assistant jobs, and much of the primary and secondary schooling administered in the city, do not prepare Mansfielders to prescribe treatment in an emergency room or perform surgery in the local cardiac clinic. Nor do the associate and bachelor degree programs, and pre-professional high school curricula adequately train Mansfield's youth and young workers for the white collared administrative jobs that are also being generated in the Rustbelt. Instead of functioning as college preparatory institutions, the high school and local technical college have become service schools. As a researcher of Mansfield City Schools delineates (Castle 1990), the high quality of public education declined during the 1980s because sharply reduced school funding limited course work opportunities and did not replace aging equipment or keep up with new technologies.41 Castle traces

41 The city opened a new high school in 2004 which is completely teched out and is every educator’s dream facility. Improvements to the elementary and middle schools are slowly occurring.
how the closure of factories led to lower property tax revenues from companies and individual homeowners who were laid off and losing their homes. Those families who had the financial ability to pay property taxes often used their resources to move to nearby towns, thus moving into a new school district.

The lasting impact of losing high paying jobs is evident on the current educational opportunities for students today: only 30% of all residents paid their city income taxes in 2008, meaning that the most recent school levy actually generates only one third of the promised revenues. The same shortfall applies to a 2008 library levy, and recent county nursing home and elderly services levies. Many residents remaining in Mansfield simply can not afford to pay property taxes, or in the case of some landlords (especially out of town landlords), chose not to. With high numbers of renters (who do not pay separate property taxes since they do not own the property the live in), as well as so many people with burdensome mortgages and constricted incomes, it is no wonder that Mansfield has had a difficult time finding the necessary funds to run basic social services and educational programs. The lack of funds, except in rare cases, also prevents the city from building an investigative case and suing individuals and companies for back taxes.

Moreover, with “School Choice” programs established by No Child Left Behind legislation, city residents can take the money the state and local school district allocate to their school-aged children and use it to pay for private school tuition or out-of-district fees. Additionally, guardians can use their student's allocated funds and enroll their child in an internet-based school district, or home school their child. As a federally sanctioned option, “EdChoice” as it is called in Ohio, further exacerbates the public schools' financial deficit and favors bureaucratically savvy parents and guardians. Many of the medical elites and white collared professionals in Mansfield use “EdChoice” to subsidize their children's tuition for Mansfield's private elementary school, one of its two private Christian schools, or

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42 My thanks to the superintendent of the Mansfield City Schools, and the president of Mansfield's NAACP branch for alerting me, in 2009, to this circumstance and its ramifications.
stronger school districts nearby. Many fundamentalist Christian families use EdChoice to recoup homeschooling costs. Like most programs associated with No Child Left Behind, EdChoice uses public monies to pay for-profit, private contractors.

To finance the last months of fieldwork in 2008, I worked as a tutor for a private tutoring company which contracted exclusively with state education departments. My employer received $40 per tutored hour from the state of Ohio; I was classified as a third party contractor and received half the tutored hour (i.e. $20) in untaxed wages. The students I worked with were each eligible for up to 28.5 hours of tutoring or $1,140 worth of private tutoring, funded through state dollars. Through the neoliberalization of education, the divide between the financially secure and the insecure continues to widen.

As the state retreats just when more people are turning to it because they require social assistance, other agencies and organizations are stepping in to fulfill the roles the state use to hold. Churches in particular are doing the social services that the state can no longer afford. About fifteen churches in the downtown area have coordinated their free meal schedules so that there is at least one free meal a day for city residents. I regularly attended weekly meals which combined a religious service with the meal. This was typical in most of the participating churches. There are usually 50-100 people per meal, sometimes more than 150 people depending on the time of the month, time of year, and the type of food being served. People who go to the free meals are of all ages, anywhere from newborn to elderly, and they are among the most ethnoracially diverse group in the city. Most attendees live in apartments, rental houses, or homes which they own outright. A few live in the homeless shelter or with friends. Many are employed, working in the food and service industry. Some work in the local plastics factories and others do freelance repair jobs. A number of parishioners are retired or disabled. Because, for a number of folks, the free meals are their main source of socializing, attendees become friends, godparents, and partners through these services.
Mansfield's “megachurch,” Water and Wafer Church, is part of the evangelical Willow Creek Association and provides free childcare, free addiction recovery meetings, and food pantry items to its attendees (for more on the evangelical trend in U.S. Christianity, see Bielo 2009, FitzGerald 2007). Informants tell me that Water and Wafer Church will pay people's utilities and rent or mortgage too, but I was never able to confirm this service with the church. Some informants cynically suggest that the church takes advantage of insecurity and upheaval in people's lives; in return for childcare and paid bills, one is expected to “convert” and regularly attend religious services. Informants claimed they knew people who tried to “leave” Water and Wafer Church after having received help and, according to informants, were “guilt tripped” into staying with the church by parishioners who visited the departing family at their home. Even if the family was uncomfortable with the service format (which is charismatic) or the ideological orientation of the church (i.e. evangelical), informants claim that families they knew felt that they had to continue attending because they had received assistance. Although the church would certainly never agree with my informants' interpretation, it is clear that non-anthropologists are also aware and concerned with the costs and conditions that result from the neoliberalization of social services.

Acquaintances who live near Sunshine Hospital told me that around Easter one year they answered their door to find two men on their doorstep: “they were there with a full ham, canned veggies, packets for making gravy and instant mashed potatoes. They just gave us this basket. I was stunned! I asked them, 'who do I thank?' One of 'em said 'the guy upstairs' and then they just left. There was a card in the basket or whatever inviting us to join Wafer and Water Church.” Thinking that perhaps the donors knew that my acquaintances were caring for an elderly relative in their home, I asked if that was why they received the basket. “No, no, everyone on the block received a basket. The men were going up and down the block and knocking at every door and giving every one of our neighbors the same kind of bag.” In taking their mission to their neighbors, the Wafer and Water
Church goers were providing food baskets to what they perceived as a needy neighborhood.

But even as these kinds of charitable and neighborly gestures are necessary in the neoliberal era (people need to eat and the state does not give enough food assistance to adults or children), they reproduce racial and class hierarchies. For example, my acquaintances owned their own home, had secure jobs, and did not need a food basket. Because they lived in what is perceived as a “dangerous” and “poor” neighborhood, the Church targeted their block for the food donation drive. In another example of the ways the provider/recipient relationship creates unnecessary and often times unbridgeable distances, the vast majority of churches providing the free meals in downtown are white and middle class, with congregants living mostly outside of the city limits. Many hosting churches also coordinate with other congregations in their conference so that, for example, a church from a Columbus suburb may provide the food and labor the last Monday of every month. Youth groups regularly come to serve food.

The way the food providers have responded to food eaters over the years often astounded me, often more so because we were in a church basement for worship and the meal. Some food providers mingled with parishioners during and after the service and meal, but most stayed in the kitchen the entire time. A few different groups went so far as to close the kitchen doors and counter hatch until it was time to serve. In physically closing the doors between the kitchen and the dining area, obvious boundaries were made between who is in a position to receive and who was in the position to give. Those who kept open the doors and hatch may watch the service and the parishioners, they often did not join in with the singing and sharing that regularly occurred in services.

I have been attending free meals since beginning research in 2005 and the food provided over my years of fieldwork has been diverse, though it tends towards hotdogs and potato salad, or beef stroganoff and mashed potatoes. While certainly food choices are constrained by donating church budgets and people's donated time (it is much cheaper to buy a 10 pound box of potato salad from
Sam's Club than to buy fresh vegetables and prepare leafy salads), it was clear to me that some donating churches felt that the parishioners should be content to simply be eating, even if the food was unappetizing, unhealthy, or potentially dangerous for diabetic or food-allergic residents. One particularly memorable meal was comprised entirely of processed white food—pulled chicken on white bread buns, potato salad, macaroni salad, and sugar cookies.

Despite local preferences for American homestyle cooking with its emphasis on meat, creamy gravies, and buttery vegetables, the “white meal” as I came to think of it, was roundly panned by every attendee that night. In fact, I became good friends with two attendees as a result of neighborly bantering about the high price of food with color. (These same friends also sometimes tally how many hotdogs they eat in a week at the free meals.) Consistently, the first foods to run out at free meals are fresh vegetable trays and bright green salads. When parishioners find out that a church known for its raw vegetables spreads and its choice of sugarfree desserts and drinks (for diabetics) is serving a particular night, word spreads quickly through the city. While it is a blessing that local churches have coordinated their efforts and feed city residents, the provider/recipient relationship often relies on and reproduces class hierarchies and notions of racial propriety. The distance made between providers and recipients often felt unbridgeable and it felt to me during fieldwork that free meal services benefitted serving churches, more than that residents who attended the services.

Neoliberal Self Reliance

Even as churches and state social assistance services have sought to help Mansfielders impacted by the loss of high-paying jobs, residents often rely on themselves to make ends meet. Next to the cash register in many locally-owned businesses is a jar with a picture of a very ill local child (or sometimes a young adult). Accompanying the picture is usually a brief description of the child and the disease or condition she is battling. The jar asks customers for their spare change to help pay for costly medical treatments. A few customers may personally know the child or his family, but most usually do not.
Families will also regularly host fundraising meals for very sick children—friends will donate home cooked dishes, a service club like the Elks will donate the banquet hall space, and on occasion a grocery store may donate food. The fundraiser is then announced in churches and local news outlets, and residents (who may or may not know the child) will pay $5 or $7 to go to the fundraising meal. The newspaper occasionally covers these events which often results in more donations. Informants who have assisted or managed these fundraisers tell me that they can raise anywhere from $150-$600.

Another strategy many residents use to avoid poverty and the social, class, and racial implications of this economic “fall from grace” is to become small time entrepreneurs. For example, during the summers, it is impossible to drive through the city without passing a yard sale. Garage sales occur in every neighborhood and residents sell everything from furniture to baby clothes, to boxed lots of old records and A-tracks. With the increasing use of technology, more and more Mansfielders are also turning to user-driven websites, particularly eBay.com and, to some extent, craigslist.org. Many Mansfielders use eBay to sell antique and collectors items found in family members' attics and at local estate sales (photo 6). A small but growing number of Mansfielders also use eBay to sell name brand clothing and home furnishings bought cheaply at one of the several discount retailers that have come to the area in the last decade (photo 7). One indicator of these websites' popularity is the number of free library classes which teach patrons how to use eBay.

Whereas prior to the internet almost anyone could sell possessions or flip goods through secondhand stores and pawnshops, informal networks, classified ads or the local “tradio” radio show (a daily call-in program which functions as the aural equivalent of print classifieds), only a minority of Mansfielders have proficiently become online entrepreneurs. Many Mansfielders do not use the internet regularly because it is too expensive to buy a personal computer and pay for monthly web service. But more to the point, Mansfielders' digital literacy is relatively limited. Those who use digital cameras and the internet to resell items at a profit are usually under the age of 45 and are white collared
professionals. E-sellers in Mansfield are both white and people of color. Although selling used goods or acquiring goods and reselling them for a profit is an age-old practice, the ways it is increasingly mediated by the internet limits who can participate in this informal, entrepreneurial market. In this way, Mansfielders who are already relatively economically secure, resourcefully generate income.

Through these measures, Mansfielders creatively further their bids at economic stability even as this kind of entrepreneurialism remains in line with neoliberal economic ideologies which promote self-reliance, and cultural narratives of “making it” on one's own. However, neoliberal economic restructuring has left Mansfielders little alternative but to resourcefully generate capital from informal economies.

Along with entrepreneurism, many Mansfielders (and Ohioans) look to lucky breaks to generate income. Many informants, no matter their class background, age, or race, play the lottery. With dozens of different lottery games to play (scratch and win, pick to win multistate pots, etc), residents usually make back money spent on $1 and $2 scratch and wins. Mansfielders tend not to play “pick 3” or “pick 4” games unless a large pot develops, like in the multistate “Mega Millions” game. Bar conversations regularly center on “what would I do if I won the lotto” and almost every one of my informants—from a high powered lawyer to a chronically unemployed barfly—mentioned that they play for fun, and for the chance to win big. In 2009, Ohio ranked 10th in the nation in terms of total gross lottery sales; per capita for all lottery games, Ohioans spent $202 (Ohio Lottery 2010).

Mansfielders (and Ohioans in general) also regularly play card games and gamble in homes and private clubs. Soon they will start gaming in casinos. After several contentious attempts, voters finally passed a constitutional amendment in November 2009 which will now allow casino gambling in the state of Ohio. Despite being opposed by religious groups, planning commissions, and small and large local businesses, many Ohioans felt that casinos were one of the few remaining ways for the state to generate revenue and jobs (Fields 2010).
Odds games, like the lottery and gambling, acknowledge the unknowability of the future. Players hope the unpredictability of the outcomes work in their favor. In this way, players are not so much self-reliant, as looking to take advantage of the randomness of the game. So many Mansfielders know that despite neoliberal claims, very few people can successfully participate in the marketplace. Having been disadvantaged by corporations which have left the city and having been abandoned by a state that abdicates its responsibility to its citizens, there is something comforting in knowing that games of chance can not discriminate. Of course the house always wins, but the transparency of lottery games and gambling games feels knowable in comparison to unannounced cessation of services, or abrupt workplace closings.

*Making New Hierarchies*

The expansion of the health care industry and the neoliberalization of social services has reenergized long standing class and racial divisions in Mansfield while also creating new fissures in the social terrain. Mansfield has become more multiracial and class stratified in the last two decades because, as many residents have pointed out to me, relatively speaking there were very few homegrown professionals during the 1990s. As a result there has been a small, but steady, in-migration of medical elite who staff specialty departments and clinics, and white collared professionals with advanced degrees who administer the government agencies, educational programs, and human service nonprofits that expanded in response to corporate withdrawal. While a few “locals” fill these jobs, many of the doctors are “foreigners” and most of the human services positions are held by “imports.” In the interwar and postwar period Mansfield was a city of immigrants and migrants (see chapter 2); in the last twenty years fewer people have moved to Mansfield and the kinds of people moving to Mansfield have tended to be middle class, not working class as before. The slow down of in-migration rates, as well as the changing face of migrants has brought the backgrounds and attributes of current “imports” to the fore in ways that were not as emphasized previously.
Those born, raised, and still living in Mansfield as adults usually call themselves and are called “locals,” “natives,” or “real Mansfielders.” This category applies to white Mansfielders and Mansfielders of color, no matter their occupation, class position, or ancestral geocultural origin. When discussing the city's social categories, residents most often emphasize commitment to community and pride in the city as the defining criteria of localness. Localness also comes from one's embeddedness in social and familial networks that stretch throughout the city and over generations.

Locals often call the recently arrived medical elite “foreigners” as they tend to be South Asian, South Asian American, East Asian, East Asian American, and sometimes Eastern European. Local Mansfielders often do not make a distinction between internationally born and U.S. born physicians, surgeons, and specialists. These nonwhite elites frequently are not part of white and black local Mansfielders' images of their city, although their presence, especially in healthcare settings, is often hypermarked and a source of tension and frustration for native Mansfielders. In doing research, I met three medical professionals (and suspect there are many more) who moved to the area for the fabulous packages offered by firms contracted by the non-profit hospital, and for job opportunities in Mansfield that are much more difficult to attain in larger urban settings. Some moved to Mansfield on four to five year contracts (this is how emergency room work is contracted throughout the nation), others had moved permanently.

In general, the medical elite keep a very low profile in Mansfield because they are treated as “foreign” to small city life and because many have interests that lie beyond the city limits. Moreover, four and five year contracts often inhibit medical professionals from establishing local roots. In spite of their low public visibility, Mansfield's racial terrain is becoming increasingly variegated as more and more foreign born medical professionals arrive in Mansfield to staff the growing health care industrial complex. For example, according to one South Asian American informant, 90% of Indians and Indian Americans in the Mansfield area are affiliated with the healthcare industry. I would estimate there are
about two hundred South Asians and South Asian Americans in the city. Because Mansfield is so small, to maintain the anonymity of residents, the 2006-08 American Community Survey does not reveal the breakdown of countries of origin of foreign born inhabitants. In 2008, the Census estimated that less than 1000 Mansfielders were foreign born, the majority of whom were naturalized citizens (U.S. Census 2008f).

In contrast to the “local” category and racialized medical elite category, U.S. born African American and white professionals who moved to Mansfield as adults are called and call themselves “imports.” Nonblack domestic professionals of color, like internationally born medical elites, are often considered “foreign” or are racially indeterminate in Mansfield’s biracial imaginary. They, like the medical elites, usually call themselves imports or “transplants.” Working class people who move to Mansfield as adults may be called imports, but the term is usually reserved for middle class, highly educated, white collared arrivals. Imports tend to socialize with each other and a few locals. In this way, categories of local, foreign, and import index intersecting vectors of social insider/outsider, place of origin, race, occupation, and class.

One self-identified transplant explained she had come to Mansfield because: “the rich [local] people felt it was below them to allow their children to work these kinds of ‘in the trenches’ jobs so they didn't learn these skills or come back here to use them. The rest of the city, the majority of the city, was never adequately prepared to go to college. People thought the factories would be here forever. So there was a real vacuum. We all arrived here fifteen, twenty years ago when there was another recession going on. We were desperate for work and willing to take it anywhere, even if it wasn't our dream destination.” This interview occurred before the 2008-09 economic crisis became apparent nationwide; the recession my informant is referring to is the early 1990s period of deindustrialization. As I noted in Chapter 1, Mansfielders of all stripes were, on the whole, rather blasé about the 2008 economic meltdown, telling me “we've been in a recession for at least the last eighteen months. Finally the rest
of the country is seeing it too.”

Some adult local women went back to college in the 1990s and took jobs in the expanding health and human services fields with their newly-obtained masters of social work and bachelor's of nursing degrees. Recently, more and more local college graduates have decided to remain in or return to Mansfield after obtaining liberal arts degrees. One local young man with a B.A. degree told me, “I love my job [as a middle manager]. I feel like it’s a personal contribution. I’m doing my part to bring 500 new jobs to my city...Mansfield is poverty-stricken. This [business] is going to make a difference.” Many young, highly educated locals, expressed similar sentiments when I asked them in interviews why they returned to the city after college.

However, Census datum corroborates the common narrative among imports: 14% of Mansfielders hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Nationally, 27.4% of the population has a higher education degree (U.S. Census 2008d). While there are plenty of locals who hold professional white collared jobs and may not have a college degree, overall, the low numbers of college graduates in the city is indicative of constrained education opportunities and the region's “brain drain.” As a result, the city has had, and continues to have, a reduced pool of locals who fulfill the ongoing and increasing need for adult literacy teachers, child development physical therapists, school psychologists, case managers, social workers, workplace retraining coaches, reference librarians, directors and administrators for the free mental health and medical clinics, the homeless shelter, and the women's shelter. Disparities between working class and poor residents, and middle and upper class residents are reinforced by the arrival of professionals and medical elites.

Plenty of members from elite black and white families have remained in Mansfield, although many generation Xers and Yers never returned after leaving for college on the economic and educational privileges provided by their parents. Those who have come back to Mansfield tend to run family businesses still in existence. Many feel that they are fulfilling a civic and neighborly duty by
returning to their city and keeping open long running business. In many ways, they are positively influencing their hometown. However, often times their community service occurs from a distance. For example, although many white elites sit on boards of directors for nonprofits, few work the “in the trenches” jobs that the city needs from these nonprofits in the deindustrializing era. In contrast, most black elite families are elite precisely because they were and are school teachers, ministers, union officials, city government officials, civil rights leaders, and other 'in the trenches' workers.

Imports are dedicated to the city in a broad philosophical sense—their jobs by their very nature are “do-gooder” positions. But few medical elites or white collared professionals feel welcomed in the local community and very few imports formally participate in community politics, the public school board, or local non-profit institutions. For example, during my fieldwork years, no imports sat on the city council; a young professional from the east coast was added to the school board midterm to fill a seat that had opened on account of a death. He was voted out in the next election. The composition of community politics is slowly changing with the arrival of new non-locals on the school board and in administrative positions in key cultural institutions and nonprofit organizations. However, in many cases, one is invited to join the local chamber of commerce or asked to participate on the boards of local nonprofits (all these institutions are overwhelmingly run by “locals”). The one exception to the scarcity of imports and medical elites in civic life is committee work at the local private schools where many of their children attend.

Although white collared professionals are financially secure, many imports do not participate in the (usually expensive and time consuming) activities that cement one's place in Mansfield’s sociopolitical scene. For one, most white collared professionals do not bring in the kind of paychecks that allows them to bid at high-priced charity auctions, attend expensive dinners, or join private athletic clubs where alliances and power relationships are brokered and cemented. Additionally, many are busy raising children who will, without question, attend college. Moreover, all imports emphasize the
temporariness of their stay in Mansfield. Even though they might have lived in the city for fifteen years already, they regularly made clear in interviews that they do not intend to stay in the city after they retire. Instead of becoming members in organizations that might garner them local status, many imports prioritize saving money for college funds, dedicating energy and time to family and children's extracurricular activities, and traveling out of Mansfield on a regular basis.

Like the human services professionals, few medical elite participate in community activities writ large, though they create their own communities through religious institutions and through culture schools. The Bromfield County Muslim Association serves mostly South Asian, some Arab, and a few Nation of Islam Muslims. Their congregation is about 130 people. There is a Korean Methodist Church in Linden that ministers about 150 people. There is an Indian Dance Academy for children. The Jewish synagogue has sporadically held Yiddish and Hebrew language classes. Many more informal in-home get-togethers occur among families.

At times, non-natives are asked to participate on a board or to run for local elected positions. But overall, power in the city tends to be held by local elites. According to many nonelite locals, those (usually white) local elites who sold family businesses in the 1970s or 1980s still hold fantastic sums of wealth in the form of stock and property investments. While this claim seems likely (though unverifiable by an outsider anthropologist), those elite families and individuals who have stayed in Mansfield access enormous funds of historically constituted social and political power. As a result, they continue to reap the benefits of being, as one import cynically characterized it, “very big fish in a very little pond.” While these positions of influence are sometimes abused, they are often utilized for the community good.

On the whole, there are marked divisions between imports and local elites, based on generation, educational background, life philosophies, and often political persuasions43 and cultural interests. These

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43 Elites are both Democrats and Republicans, though they tend to lean Republican with its pro-business platforms. Imports tend to be Democrats, but there are many fiscally conservative imports who likely vote across party lines. The
differences are not idle, but are at the heart of the city's struggle to redefine and understand itself in the new millennium. A struggle over visions for the city's future creates ongoing tensions between locals and imports. As a result, very different worldviews and methods of accomplishing these projects are simultaneously shaping the city. While there is sometimes convergence between differing visions, just as often imports and elites work at odds with one another. Imports are eager to use their cultural and human service institutions for broad goals of equality and inclusion; bettering the city is a corollary benefit. Some locals approve of these new visions of the city but many are slow to embrace the accompanying changes. Most locals are more focused on improving the city—reclaiming the financial security and regional prominence it once had—equality and inclusion are by-products, not the primary aims of most locals' projects. These similar objectives, but very different approaches, to the city's future mean that energies, resources, and goals diverge in significant and conflicting ways.

Imports who are involved in formal politics, and the many more who administer nonprofit and government assistance and human service agencies, often raise the hackles of old timer power players. Trained in universities and business schools, imports tend to institutionalize protocols and formalize agreements and partnerships. They prefer emails and their Blackberry or iPhone PDAs to in-person meetings or phone calls. New visions and news ways of “doing business” collide with old-school machine politics, old boys' networks, politicking, and the reliance on well-placed friends.\textsuperscript{44} Certainly, imports massage the system and participate in nepotism, but they don't have access to important networks or the social capital or trust needed to proficiently and effectively manipulate power in long lasting, expansive kinds of way.

As a small city, Mansfield is a place that remembers generations of genealogical information,

\textsuperscript{44} Without question, I relied on, and occasionally contributed to these extensive and informal networks. While I might sound critical of them, I am completely and forever indebted to informants, colleagues, and friends who “knew someone” for my research.
neighborly histories, and the associated scandals with each. This familiar, if at times impersonal, knowledge of one's neighbors defines small city cityness as much as its geographical boundaries and built environment. Thus, the composition of Mansfield's small city cityness is changing as power shifts to people whose familial histories are not tied up in extended local families or in decades of exchanged favors. The lack of “references” for newcomers concerns locals and makes them wary of proposed projects and protective of small city life. Because so many imported professionals appear to not feel a significant commitment or connection to the city itself, many of the old guard lament the lack of engagement with civic responsibility. When imports attempt to implement or enforce their visions for the city, locals question their right and ability to make claims on the community.

Despite the tensions between old and new ways of doing business, Mansfield creatively copes with community and government cash shortages in ways that speak to the specificity of small city political and social dynamics and the accommodation of disparate world views. Several decades ago, major philanthropic foundations in Mansfield, which are primarily holdovers from family owned companies, organized themselves into a consortium. The local charitable foundations give their budgeted philanthropic monies to a scheduled pool which then annually allocates the majority of the monies to one receiving charity or organization. In this way, United Way, the art museum, the performing arts theater, the drug and alcohol counseling facility, and other nonprofits do not compete against each other, but receive a sizable donation every several years. This method equitably shares local financial resources and reduces competition. Certainly this arrangement is a gatekeeping mechanism—funding only goes to those organizations recognized by the consortium and which the group feels are doing good work—but it is also in line with older notions of social responsibility and community commitment. The existence of such an agreement points to the advantages of small city social life, highlighting both the strength of gentlemen's agreements among movers and shakers and the formalization of business management by imports.
Yet, as imports and locals struggle over visions for the city, working class and working poor Mansfielders become more and more marginalized from these conversations and in many ways, from the city as a communal institution. Institutionally-supported programs like union retirement plans and the continued movement of capital out of economic vulnerable communities via housing rent and out-of-pocket healthcare costs indirectly and directly benefit middle class bank accounts. Networks of well placed and institutionally savvy friends and colleagues also benefit middle class and elite Mansfielders. These networks circulate financially advantageous knowledge, like information about EdChoice, first time homebuyer programs, and other lucrative ways of “working the system.”

Moreover, employer provided health insurance keeps many middle class families out of financial ruin; as do credit cards, bank loans, and other forms of credit which unemployed and underemployed people often can not access or chose not to access because interest rates are so high. Relatedly, it is now standard practice in most minimum wage workplaces for human resource departments to do a credit check on potential employees. When I applied for cashier jobs in Mansfield (because my research funding had run out), I asked why credit checks were necessary. One hiring manager told me that if I carried lots of debt or didn't pay my bills on time, the company assumed I would either be tempted to steal from the register or I might not come to work regularly and on time. My tutoring job did do a standard FBI background check because I worked with school aged children as an educator: the check was looking for a criminal record, not my credit report.

The 2008-2009 financial crisis further exacerbated disparities between middle class and elite residents, and working class and working poor residents. Protected by their jobs as medical elite, and as professionals in social assistance programs run by the government or nonprofits, the financial crisis has not significantly impacted imported Mansfielders. Long standing family businesses, rental income, and retirement pensions keep local middle class and elite Mansfielders insulated as well. While national accounts of the financial crisis regularly focus on individual stories of ruin, often implying
community economic instability has diminished class and racial hierarchies, such descriptions of the recession are partial. In fact, in Mansfield (and I suspect in other Rustbelt cities), the 2008-09 Recession has reconstituted and fortified middle class privilege. Certainly the threat of or actual revocation of middle class status is transforming individuals, but not necessarily diminishing, middle class dominance and its privileges in the United States. In a broader sense, responses to the economic meltdown have institutionalized middle class privilege through corporate bailouts and other programs that benefit middle class investors and employees. Relatedly, international capital being pulled from third world countries and IMF loans being recalled reconstitutes global disparities in wealth and power. Although the economic crisis has endangered indices of middle class success, this chapter has shown that, in fact, class disparities and class privilege have been strengthening in the Rustbelt since deindustrialization in the 1980s.

**Conclusion**

The social, economic, and political changes found in Mansfield are happening in hundreds of small Rustbelt cities. In examining deindustrialization more closely, it is clear that factory closures withdrew massive amounts of community wealth from small cities around the country, but capital did, and continues to, trickle into cities like Mansfield via health care and human services. Yet the expansion of the heath care industry and human services programs has not replaced and enriched the region as boosters and planners might have hoped. Instead, these new industries have provided high paying jobs to “outsiders” at the expense of local working class, working poor, and poor residents. In fact, nonelite locals are increasingly held hostage to the whims and financial decisions of local elites and imported white collared professionals. As a result, the disparities between the rich and the poor continue to widen with those with professional degrees and college educations almost completely removed from the Rustbelt's continued economic hardships. In the seams of neoliberal economic programs and social practices, class disparities are being reconstituted, even as small cities become
more racially, culturally, and socially diverse.

While reproducing longstanding class hierarchies, recent economic programs and developments have brought in a more heterogeneous mix of highly-skilled professionals which has reconfigured the sociocultural landscape of Mansfield and other small cities like it. Residents have struggled to reconcile the multiracial, class stratified reality of their city with their image of it in the post-war as being biracial, multi-ethnic and blue collared middle class. Also important to the social fabric and sense of what Mansfield is, has been the introduction of new ways of doing business. Struggles over visions for the city's future and who has the sociopolitical weight to make changes continue to plague local elites and white collared professionals.

Small cities around the nation (and beyond) are experiencing economic and social changes, similar to Mansfield. There is clearly need for more research on the question of race and middle class status within small cities, especially as more and more middle class people in these small cities are people of color. However, as an initial study, Mansfield's case demonstrates, on a small scale, the shortcoming and limitations of current neoliberal economic policies and cultural practices that claim to uplift all sectors of society.

Having traced the social life of Mansfield's changing political economy in this chapter and the previous chapter, in the next three chapters I turn to the implications of these changes in the everyday lives of Mansfielders. While Chapter 2 used archival materials and oral history interviews from 2006, this chapter used participant observations from 2005-2010 and governmental statistical data. In the next section (Chapters 4-6), I use both interviews and participant observation. I focus on the racial and racialized ramifications of the spatial, social, and economic reconfigurations outlined in chapters 2 and 3 and explore how residents make sense of their changing worlds.
Chapter 4: Trusting Neighbors: Making Race through Relational Space and Storytelling

Race and “race relations” are a part of everyday life for Mansfielders. In a city with 50,000 residents, 74% of whom identify as white and 25% of whom identify as African American, Latino or Asian, Mansfielders regularly encounter neighbors who are ethnoracially different from themselves. Physical closeness and the constant negotiation of social space creates plenty of opportunities to develop, and be confronted by, racial worldviews.

This chapter recounts observed interactions and excerpts from interviews with residents, many of whom are working class, to begin showing how race is “made” in Mansfield. I focus mostly on middle class residents in Chapters 5 and 6 to provide further analysis. In this particular chapter, I develop a general overview of race relations in Mansfield and explain the framework I observed Mansfielders using to understand social relations in the small city. While these observations are based on my research experiences in Mansfield, let me emphasize again that similar dynamics and ways of making sense of the world can be found in small cities around the United States. In fact, these modes of understanding our cultural worlds are likely to be found in many places—I do not believe that they are site specific or only applicable to learning race. My intention here is not to single out individual Mansfielders, but rather illuminate general trends in the United States with specific examples. To that end, in this chapter I focus on two important processes: 1) how Mansfielders' individual experiences with their neighbors create relational space or feelings of interpersonal closeness or distance and 2) the importance of stories in codifying racialization and racial projects. My analysis of race making in Mansfield centers on these two elements because trust lies at the heart of both, e.g. Does this relational space between us feel safe? Do I believe your story? What is my “gut instinct”? Ultimately, I argue that racial understandings come from and is built upon trust.

Trust, a culturally coded emotional and social relation,\(^{45}\) undergirds so many social

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\(^{45}\) My thanks to Natalie Havlin for this succinct description.
relationships, it is surprising that few researchers have examined the role trust plays in racial projects. Many writers who are concerned with trust focus on social actors who exist in institutionalized power differentials: doctors and patients (Grimen 2009), parents and school officials (Slawski and Scherer 1978), buyers and sellers (Acheson 1988), or patrons and clients and bosses and employees (Alvarez and Collier 1994). Those scholars who focus on trust among equals or individuals who are not institutionally bound, generally do not examine race as one potential social relationship mediating trust or which can be influenced by trust and distrust (see Middelthon 2001 for a discussion on trust as it relates to condom use among gay Norwegian men or Edelman 2003 for a comparative study of railway workers). Vélez-Ibañez does examine how trust or confianza shapes the operation of Chicano and Mexican rotating credit associations (1983) and briefly addresses how confianza can occasionally transcend ethnoracial boundaries through the sharing of life experiences—in both cases he cites, select non-Mexican coworkers who were invited to join a workplace-based rotating credit association (90-91). Implicit in many contemporary research projects regarding race, racialization, and racism, are questions of trust; however few studies explicitly or closely focus on its role in mediating race relations.

Besides brief mentions like those found in Vélez-Ibañez, scholars who examine the intersection of race and trust most often ask who trusts “more”: whites or nonwhites? This questions is put through various iterations: in interracial situations, do whites or African Americans or Latinos trust more (Boyas and Sharpe 2010, Smith 2010). In intraracial situations, which racial groups trust each other more (Simpson, McGrimmon and Irwin 2007)? How does class impact different racial groups' trustingness (Taylor, Funk and Clark 2007)? I am not interested in asking who trusts or distrusts “more,” instead I'm interested in how trust operates in the construction of “race relations” or racial worldviews. In this chapter I ask how does trust provide the scaffolding that shapes the contours of racial worldviews?
While I am keenly aware that power differentials exist in all social relations, Mansfielders most often form their racial worldviews out of interactions with their neighbors—relationships that are less formalized and less power laden than institutional relationships (like doctor-patient). Although access to power often differs among neighbors, anthropologists, geographers, and historians have long noted that propinquity—or physical nearness—plays an important role in how people develop ideas and views about the sociocultural worlds they live in (Hewitt 1986, Low 1996). Thus social space, and the interpersonal relationships that develop in social space, are critical sites of race making that grow out of trust. Storytelling, like social space, is another significant site of race making that builds on trust. Storytelling is one important way humans attempt to make sense of their worlds—either by telling stories or listening to stories which may or may not be the speaker's own experience (Shuman 2005, Hurston 1990). Stories of race—like all stories—are always open to the question of whether we trust the storyteller and if we trust the story he or she tells. Storytelling reinforces, depends upon, and interprets relational space and thus, trust.

**Relational Space and Neighborliness**

Many scholars have theorized socio-spatial dynamics and how space is made in these dialectics (Lefebvre 1991; Low, ed. 1996; Soja 1980). They find that social space (a broader term that captures the interplay between the production and construction of space [Low 1996]) is host to and producer of a field fraught with sociocultural hierarchies; always and already framing how encounters between people may unfold. In other words, racial projects form within materially produced landscapes (the production of space) and the space generated from social exchanges and daily use of these built and natural landscapes (construction of space) (Low 1999). Social space is one important vector along which, and through which, racial experiences and worldviews are made.

But along with the everyday interactions and encounters that are fostered by the geographic and built environment and that socially construct space, emotional rapport between individuals develops
also. Social space, particularly in a small city like Mansfield, begets *relational space*—the interpersonal space between people that can crackle and widen with hostility or close with affection and empathy.

Ann Laura Stoler's edited volume, *Intimate Geographies* (2006), approaches this spatial dimension that is, remarkably, often left under-discussed in analyses of cultural life, but is commented upon all the time by social actors (ex. “She's felt distant lately, I wonder if she still loves me.” “Our high school class has always been really close, we still meet for lunch once a month.”) Stoler and her co-contributors investigate how imperialism and colonialism in North America recruit “the intimate” to maintain dominance, particularly along racial lines. While contributors use “intimacy” in a variety of ways, all show how claims of interpersonal knowledge, often accompanied by physically shared social space, lead to certain racial worldviews (Stoler 2006: 2). For my purposes here, I follow one of Stoler's characterization of intimacy as having “less to do with the privileged secrets close encounters are thought to bestow than with something akin to Heidegger's notion of 'nearness'—not something that can be measured by physical distance so much as the degree of involvement, engagement, concern, and attention one gives to it. Whether that involvement be sexual relations—or other bodily contact or tactile relations, whether it be in kitchen, field, school, or home” (Stoler 2006: 15). Intimate racial knowledges derive from relational space—people make racial understandings from the involvement and attention they give one another in small city social life.

My interest in relational space and how important it is in constructing racial(ized) worldviews developed after my first summer of fieldwork. Yet, I didn't fully recognize the obvious significance of relational space in social life until several months into my year long research session. By 2008, after two summers of fieldwork in 2005 and 2006 and several years of coursework, I was theoretically and practically attuned to the ways social space and race mutually constituted each other in Mansfield.

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46 For a feminist philosophical examination of “the stranger” and post-colonality, see Ahmed 2000.
With this in mind, I would ask informants during interviews about the neighbors they had while growing up. The original purpose of this question was to help me map the mono- and multi-racial nature of Mansfield's neighborhoods over time, which I hoped would demonstrate the difficulty of finding monoracial, and thus segregated, neighborhoods in a small city. (As chapter 2 shows, the history is more complicated than this hypothesis and essentially negates this theory.)

Informants, nonwhite and white, old and young, poor and middle class, would give me the demographic information I was looking for, but also regularly told me stories about beloved neighbors who were racially and/or ethnically different from them. There was also a small minority of informants (almost always white homeowners) who would tell me how race-neutral they had been before the neighborhood “started changing” with the sale of homes to racially different people or the conversion of owner-occupied residences to rentals (the subtext to this common comment is that whites own houses and people of color rent). It was not only the familiarity with next door neighbors' home maintenance habits and social lives that struck me in interviews, but how much weight and importance informants themselves put on their neighborly relations and other “intimate” encounters with other residents around the city.

In talking about neighbors, it was clear to me that social space played an important role in structuring relational space. This is not surprising, as Dana Cuff points out, “the neighbor, then, is the last unavoidable front of spatial politics where civility and contention may emerge, where abstractions of the other are met, literally face-to-face, and sustained over extended periods of time” (2004: 569). All Mansfielders are neighbors to some extent (though not in the strict sense that Cuff means). Existing in wide ranging networks which cross race and class lines, Mansfielders share place-specific experiences of school and the workplace, familial and neighborhood connections, religious, club, and social affiliations. One young man, a local white professional, speaking to the neighborliness of the small city, told me “I like Mansfield because I can go out to any bar and even if I'm not with friends, I
know someone. I see familiar faces, like you and [the friend I was with]. In Columbus, Cleveland, you
don't know anyone.” But not everyone appreciated the close-knit, familiarity of the small city. Another
young white professional, a local woman, took a less celebratory view and wryly explained it as
“everybody knows everybody's business and they are always talking about you. Even when you're dead
they're talking about you because you died.” African American informants of all ages gave me similar
takes on the small city, pointing in particular to barbershops, beauty salons, churches, and the black
veterans' social club as sources of (depending on one's perspective) information and rumor.

Even if individual residents do not “know” each other personally through kith and kin networks,
small city space means that people must shop in the same handful of groceries, choose from the same
pool of barbers and hair stylist, and run into the same gas stations for cigarettes or the local newspaper.
The physical smallness of the city and the constant negotiation of social space brings neighbors into
regular, if at times brief, encounters. Such encounters are especially important sites for race making and
the making of racial world views because they give residents an opportunity to observe and inspect one
another (Lugo 2000). Moreover, people are not anonymous in these encounters. The momentary or
ongoing contact neighbors have with one another, the interpersonal space that gets created between
individuals, carries tremendous weight (Kelleher 2003: Chapter 3, addresses the importance of publicly
acknowledging acquaintances and friends in creating neighborliness among Northern Irish Catholics).

For example, one white middle aged informant drove farther than necessary to wash her clothes
because she and the African American attendant who oversaw a laundromat across town had developed
a great fondness for each other; these women had originally met at another laundromat years earlier.
They never saw each other outside the facilities. Many informants had gas station “friends” or
restaurant server “friends”: people whose lives they knew a bit about and whose neighborly
relationship they actively worked to maintain. I too went to the same convenience store clerks, bank
tellers, and car mechanics with whom I talked about the weather and local news events, asked after
children and their school progress, and reported that my research was going well. I never saw these neighbors outside of their labor settings.

Informants—white, African American, and Latino—expressed hostility and suspicion towards a Sikh convenience store owner and his Sikh assistant not only because of state-sanctioned and encouraged racism towards people from South Asia and the Middle East but because this particular owner often stocked nearly expired products, was frequently out of essentials, and charged high prices. What galled many informants, however, was that both men always seemed put out when a customer came to the counter. Informants found themselves unable to connect with or develop amiable relationships with the owner or his employee—contentious relational space was almost as unforgivable as the limited shopping choices. Conversely, the informant who drove farther than necessary to wash her clothes valued the camaraderie she had with the facility attendant over the convenience of using a closer laundromat. Neither situation could be called friendship, necessarily, but both were a neighbor-based, intimate relationship that relied on previous encounters and influenced how future meetings may transpire.

Although projects of race are never a forgone conclusion but rather made over and over, social and relational space is intersectionally racialized, gendered, classed, aged, and sexualized, which means that Mansfielders could (and often did) develop intimate racial knowledges out of the consistencies that emerged in everyday encounters (Valentine 2008). In some situations, race came to the foreground of an interaction, as it did for shoppers at the Sikh man's store. In other cases, race was part and parcel of a more complex relationship, as it was between the laundromat neighbors. But despite moments when race was an unremarked part of the social landscape, intimate racial knowledges often developed out of the lived experiences people accumulated over time. In a small city where everyone is a neighbor of some sort, relational space and its attendant intimate racial knowledges were important dynamics which institutions and individuals monitored as closely as they monitor constructed space and produced space
(Chapter 6 expands more on this point). Mansfielders parlayed these spatial knowledges, rightly or wrongly, into entire systems by which the unpredictability of life was made manageable. Thus, an analysis of racial projects in a small city is incomplete if one only focuses on the natural and built landscape or symbolic and cultural elements of space.

Not surprisingly, in a small city where everyone is a neighbor, informants often reported using social space to predict relational space. Ralph, a black man in his 40s, clearly summed it up when he described going to an unknown bar with a white friend: “you know, as soon as you walk in the door you do a fast look around the bar to see what kinds of people are in there and if they are going to be okay with you and how drunk people are. You know, sizing up the crowd.” In “sizing up the crowd,” he and other African Americans are not only seeing how many other African Americans and other “trustworthy” people of color and/or whites there are at a certain locale (“what kinds of people are in there”), but also making predictions on whether or not the crowd is “going to be okay with you,” and how stable and predictable the relational space will be (i.e. “how drunk people are”). Whites similarly talked about predicting the emotional responses they would have when they went into an unknown space or a space that was racialized as black or brown. At the heart of all these questions is: do I feel safe in this space? And more to the point: Do I trust my neighbors?

Relational space, that shifting intimate distance and closeness that builds and disintegrates among neighbors, is emotionally generated, and physically and psychologically felt. I had many conversations with whites about the different neighborhoods in Mansfield, especially the Northend. In these conversations, not only was social space frequently racialized, but relational space was also commented upon. Below, I use an excerpt from an interview with Michael O'Hara, a middle class white man in his 30s. He had grown up in a small northern Ohio town where Latino agricultural workers have long lived either as seasonal migrants or permanent settlers. However, few other people of color live in this area (in general, rural northern Ohio has few African Americans). Michael had
lived in the urban southern United States during his teens and early twenties and had come to
Mansfield for a job several years previously.

1 The black youth that I have seen firsthand, do seem to be very steeped in certain hip hop
2 culture. Not just uh music and um...you know.. it's almost a chip on the shoulder kind of thing.
3 Like like, I don't necessarily feel I'd be welcomed with open arms (hhh) you know, on
4 certain parts of Operator Street47 or whatever. There seems to be more uh, there seems to be
5 some undercurrents of anger, or uh, certain amount of bitterness. I don't know what it is. It's
6 almost like if you pull up on Baker Ave and there's a car of black guys. On the left and I'm on
7 the right. You just try not to make eye contact...but if you do. And if they catch you look-
8 <self editorializing> They. You know, everything I say sounds so bad. <returning to story in
9 normal voice> But if this car.. of people..sees you observing them, or looking, they want to
10 know “why he's looking at us?” Or “what's he want, eh?” And then, you know, it becomes
11 very confrontational. It's like, <affecting high pitched voice> “what's you looking at?”
12 <returning to his normal voice> You know? <using a deep voice as a response> “What's you
13 looking at!” You know, that kind of thing.
[....]
14 it might just become a very uncomfortable 20 seconds.

While there is exists a healthy and important body of literature on the spatialization of race and
racialization of space (Berry and Henderson, eds. 2002, Hirsch 1983, Kennedy 2000 are representative
of this literature, see also Harris 2006 for an excellent bibliography of race and space), most of this
literature only glancingly examines how relational space also contributes to understandings of space
writ large and racial knowledges. The focus of Michael's story is not just about how he understands
black culture, but how his understanding is spatialized in the small city and how his emotional
experiences with relational space and social space support his racial worldviews.

The inability to neutrally or positively connect or make a safe feeling relational space with
racial others translates into feelings of anxiety, unease as Michael describes in lines 2-4, 6-7, 10-12, and
14. Focusing on the relational space between himself and his imagined black interlocutors, Michael
predicts a “very uncomfortable 20 seconds” and the “undercurrents of anger or certain amount of
bitterness” and “confrontation” which,based on the way he framed the story, is racially motivated. In

47 Operator Street runs through south Mansfield and north out of the city along the edge of the Flats and Northend. Near
downtown, Operator Street serves as the main thoroughfare through a neighborhood that is fast changing from owner-
owned, majority white, to being predominately rentals and African American. Michael is likely referring to this part of
Operator Street.
this example of relational space, the emphasis is on feelings—on the emotional and psychological responses to space which derive from Michael's inability to make a connection with the neighbors he is observing. How his real or imagined interlocutors of color feel, especially when being surveilled, remain mostly unexamined in Michael's story. In the two instances where he considers his neighbors' responses (lines 3, 9-10) he assumes aggression and anger. This fact of relational space—how it feels to interlocutors—is often under-considered, thus leaving questions of power and privilege unaddressed.

Many white informants discussed the uncomfortableness they felt while driving through the Northend not only in terms of emotional or psychological responses, but also physiological responses. One informant called it a “gut reaction.” For many white informants, the Northend's constructed space of deteriorating buildings and produced space which is racialized as black and classed as poor, was not just an abstract sense of uncomfortableness. It prompted them to sweat, tense up, turn knots in their stomachs, and have other physiological reactions to the relational space being forged between themselves and their neighbors in these spaces. African American informants of almost all class backgrounds reported experiencing similar reactions moving through Magnolia (the historically well known sundown town to the north of Mansfield). Such bodily-felt anxieties, which are based on space and place, heavily influenced how informants understood other neighborhoods.

So many white Americans rely on their “gut instincts” when confronted with unknown situations, spaces, and people. Often national and local discourses, almost all racializing and most frequently racist, framed or swayed how social actors emotionally and physiologically approached a situation and responded to it. Like the rest of the United States, intimate racial knowledge in Mansfield derives from national racial projects and the racializing discourses that make racial hierarchies and

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48 See Kelleher 2003, especially page 100 on the ways that Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland use “telling” to distinguish between Protestant “Others” whom they will not even acknowledge on the street and other Roman Catholics who, perhaps unknown, they feel a kinship with. Roman Catholics expressed shame at the ways they rely on telling, but still admit to using “the signs (the clothing, the twitches of the head, the body posture, the look in the eyes) entailed in the telling” (2003: 100).
racism in the United States. Historically constituted and codified, institutionalized racism, perpetuated through legal, educational, health, and political systems, along with racist media, all confirmed the racializing worldviews many Mansfielders co-constructed and participated in (on these topics, see Harris 1993, Delgado and Stephanic 2001). Informants (white and of color) would reference Rush Limbaugh, Fox News, and right leaning news sources to support their claims. Informants, especially white informants, would cite local and AP wire news stories in the Mansfield News Journal⁹ which insinuated racial motivation in crimes where whites were the victims. They would point to the News Journal's daily police log to confirm that the Northend and Roseland were really dangerous neighborhoods. They would repeat culture of poverty claims as given, indisputable fact (for more on the culture of poverty, see Bourgois 1996, Lewis 1965, Moynihan 1965. For critiques of this concept, see Briggs 2002, Montes 2005 and Torres 1998). Although relational space is not made through the media, but through interactions between individuals, neighborly encounters and the racial knowledges that came out of those intimate moments were influenced by media and codified and perpetuated by the state and other institutions like education, religion, healthcare and politics (Delgado and Stefanic 1997, Bonilla-Silva 2003).

Certainly this racial knowledge is selective; positive and antiracist media and policies do exist. And many informants could recount neutral or positive experiences with racially different people (I would ask for such stories most frequently in interviews with other whites because these interviews tended to use blanket characterizations most often). But for all the institutional discourses that shaped social actors' world views, Mansfielders mostly, if not overwhelmingly, cited their own experiences and others' as the main evidence used to create their own racial knowledges. Experiencing conflictive or potentially distrustful relational space was hard to shake and individual experiences, or collections of

⁹ An entire dissertation could be written on the Mansfield News Journal and the xenophobic, racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist talk found on its online comment boards. In maintaining my (perhaps overly hopeful) belief that only a few people talking hate on the comment boards does not reflect the majority sentiment of the city, I refrain from spending too much time on the Mansfield New Journal.
individual encounters, often inflated to become evidence of and the basis of a racial worldview. As one informant put it, as “I can only learn from situations that I've lived through...I just go off what I've been through.” Individual informants acknowledged that they categorically disliked, did not trust, or felt racism towards particular racial groups, because of individual (bad) experiences.

Day to day neighborly encounters were simply most important for many Mansfielders in shaping the contours of race in the city. This was clear through the many conversations I had with informants which referenced particular people, specific interactions, and the local results of that interaction. Mansfielders, especially whites who had uneven experiences making relational space with people of color, had numerous (negative) incidents catalogued which they would reference as their own expert racial knowledge. In the intimacies of quotidian life, neighborly encounters built or broke trust in ways more decisively and more immediately felt than any way a media report or institutionalized racism could do. Intimate interpersonal experiences carried tremendous weight in Mansfield, as, I believe, they do elsewhere. I would argue that this is why diversity trainings and antiracist teachings often fall short of their goals—they simply do not match up to the felt experiences of so many people—especially whites towards whom diversity training is targeted.50

Interestingly, white Mansfielders who had little experience with racial others were often very honest about their lack of interracial encounters and in fact, really did not express complex multilayered racist worldviews. Certainly these Mansfielders had race-based theories which were often misinformed and racist, but they did not have the catalogued experiential knowledge which so many people drew on to explain and support their racial worldviews. Yes, white Mansfielders with few interracial experiences usually had unfounded fears and beliefs, but they were also extremely curious about racial others. This curiosity, unfortunately often reduced people of color to “specimens” to study

50 Diversity training does work, as potentially evidenced by the increased enrollment and retention of students of color in some universities, like Minnesota State University, Mankato. However MSU-M's diversity training is part of a larger strategy, headed by Dr. Michael D. Fagin and institutionally supported by the university president (Roger 2008).
and to interrogate, but it also provided opportunities for dialogues that frequently did not happen among whites who had regular interracial contact. The importance of day to day encounters, and the possibilities they hold, all offer potential ways for whites and nonwhites to honestly talk about race, racialization, and racism.

_Telling Stories about Relational Space_

Stories of individual interracial negative experiences or interracial crisis situations where intimates (in the Stoler and Heidegger sense) experience intense conflict were one of the most consistent themes to emerge in interviews and in participant observation. Certainly the premise of the interview, “can I interview you about Mansfield's race relations” made it likely that I would elicit these kinds of stories from all interviewees (white and nonwhite). And as a white woman, whites, in particular, felt comfort and sometimes relief, that they could discuss race and specifically African Americans with another white person (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion about my whiteness in the field). But whites and people of color often, unprompted, shared personal stories with me of their positive and negative interracial experiences upon simply hearing that I studied race relations. I found throughout my fieldwork, however, that, for many whites, narrative events that focused on interracial conflicts or negative situations often seemed to hold the most emotional weight of all the stories related in the course of the interview.

For example, several times in an interview, an older white man retold or referred back to an incident in which he had lent money to a black friend and never received repayment. During another interview a young white woman recounted how she tried to have a nonracist view of Latinos in opposition to her parents’ extremely negative and racist views. But after Latino men whistled at her several different times and after a Mexican man once insistently hit on her at a bar outside of Mansfield, she began to purposefully avoid all people she perceived to be Latino. Events like these became discrete text that informants regularly recounted within the formalized interview setting and
entextualized in informal conversations that I was an addressee of or audience to (Bauman and Briggs 1990, Silverstein and Urban, eds. 1996).

In negative encounters and crisis situations, race-focused and usually racializing and/or racist explanations were (re-)engaged as the primary narrative frame for understanding the negative or stressful event and outcome. It was white informants, most often, who recounted discrete negative experiences or contentiously ruptured relationships in exacting detail, sometimes narrating over and over how the situation developed and how it injuriously resolved. At the root of all stories was the issue of relational space—how it had been reorganized, how amicable relational space had been taken advantaged or, how trust had been broken or misread. However, both whites and people of color told and entextualized these stories in their everyday talk.

An interview with Eva, a white woman in her early 20s who worked and attended college in Mansfield, typifies how (white) informants narrated an interracial encounter that went negatively and illustrates how informants often responded to the broken relational space. I include the interview times in the excerpt to demonstrate that these negative encounters are often catalogued and linked together as a chain of evidence. Within two minutes and thirty seconds Eva moves from one story to another, hardly taking a breath. I might add that she told me more stories before and after the two below, however I have chosen to only focus on these in the interest of succinct analysis.

(42:20)
1 Eva: A couple of black friends that, you know, that I thought I was cool with. They would
2 stand outside [the classroom] and you know, they would tease me. Say things. Whatever. And
3 I'd joke back with them. Well they said something about—

4 Alison: These are all men? [[This question related to an earlier conversation about men of
5 color.]]

5 E: Yeah. And they said something about jumping me after class, <lowering the pitch of her
6 voice slightly to indicate she is quoting> “cuz we’re from the ghetto and that's what we do.”
7 <voice resumes normal pitch> Ok-ay. Whatever. So after class me and this guy were talking

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51 Although Eva didn't live in Mansfield, her regular trips to and years of experience in the small city qualified her for my study; essentially if someone had an opinion about Mansfield cultural life, I was willing to listen.
8 back and forth and said something or other. He said something about me being a hillbilly.\footnote{I address the local meanings of hillbilly in Chapter 5.} 9 You know, ha ha. I didn't, I didn't care. I was like, “well I rather be a hillbilly than jumping 10 people after class from the ghetto.” Quote unquote, repeated exactly what he said. So which 11 made me feel like it was okay to joke around. He snaaaaapped. He came at me. Calling me 12 an f'ing B. You know, threatening to choke me. Like went absolutely nuts. Calling me 13 racist.

14 A: Oh my god.

15 E: Everything. Like I had to go in the back office and shut the door because I thought he was 16 gonna hit me. And that's just one of those things where <4 second pause> You said it. I said 17 what you said, I thought it was funny, you called me hillbilly, we were joking. Right there. 18 That's the thing. I shouldn't have to walk on eggshells. You know, I didn't come after you. 19 Threatening you. Calling you racist. That's the thing that bothered me. (43:41) And then one 20 time. And Like I said I listen to rap music. So I had my iPod on and umm, do you know? 21 <speaking under her breath> Ahh. Um. What's that song? What's it called? Ice Cube? 22 Umm? My mind's blanking. <resuming normal pitch> I'll think of it. But, it had the 23 word..and I was singing the verse and it said “nigga.” And I was just singing it and I said it. 24 And <again self-editorializing under her breath> I don't even remember her name. <normal 25 voice> A girl who worked [at the same place] with me, she was black, yelled at me, we got 26 in this big long debate about it. And I'm like, she's like yelling at me that I can't say that. 27 And yaddadadadaa. Alright. I understand your perspective. I sincerely do. But I don't 28 think it's right that you can sit here and tell me not to say that word. Not to sing that word. 29 But then you turn around when your friend walks in the door and you say “what up nigga”. 30 I don't think that's right. Especially when I was just singing a song. I wasn't coming up to 31 you like you was my nigga. I wasn't trying to be on your level. I didn't call you a bad word. 32 I was singing a song. There should be nothing wrong with that. And I just..I just hate the 33 fact that you have to walk on eggshells around them. And it just.. It upsets me.. (44.53)

In this excerpt, Eva focuses on the relational space she formed with several classmates and a
coworker; people she “thought I was cool with” (line 1). It was striking how vividly Eva and other
interviewees described an interracially negative event and how it affected relational space, and, in
comparison, how cursorily informants explained the reason why a conflict arose or escalated. In the
story about the men, Eva focuses on how their relational space is built on friendly bantering (lines 1-3,
7-9) and then about how it crumbles during a tense encounter (lines 11-13, 15-16). She does take some
time to set the scene (lines 3, 5-7) and explain how she thought she could trust her interlocutors, i.e. “a
couple of black friends that, you know, I thought I was cool with” (line 1). In contrast, the actual
catalyst that destroys her sense of trust and which reorients their relational space is only given the
briefest attention (lines 9-10). The rest of the story (lines 11-13, 15-19) focuses on how violently her
classmate responded to her, “He snaaaaped. He came at me. Calling me an f’ing B. You know,
threatening to choke me. Like went absolutely nuts” (lines 11-12) and how threatened she felt in their
relational space, “Like I had to go in to the back office and shut the door because I thought he was
gonna hit me.” (lines 15-16). She responds to the shifted relational space and struggles to understand
why her interlocutor treated her as “untrustworthy,” as is made clear through opposition, i.e. “you
know, I didn't come after you. Threatening you. Calling you a racist” (line 18-19).

Although it was not very present in this excerpt, interviewees often implied or cued through
metanarrative elements (i.e. editorial asides) (Babcock 1977), the assumption that the event resolved
negatively because the storyteller and his or her interlocutor were racially, and thus irreconcilably,
different. When I explicitly asked why the negative encounter or crisis situation occurred the way it
did, white interviewees and interviewees of color usually said “because he’s racist” or “because I’m
white and she’s black” or offer other similarly raced focused explanations.

Interviewees of color often provided additional evidence that corroborated their claims of being
stereotyped and/or targeted due to their phenotype. My familiarity with Mansfield and my own
observations of racism throughout the city often led me to give credence to interpretations by
informants of color of negative interracial events. While it was clear from many whites’ stories that a
negative interracial incident occurred because they were racialized (i.e. their whiteness was highlighted
like in line 26, “she’s like yelling at me that I can't say that”), it was not always obvious to me that the
negative event had transpired simply because the interlocutor of color “hated white people” (which was
an explanation I heard with some regularity). White interviewees often had a more difficult time
explaining why a situation was specifically racial, or recognizing that their own actions potentially
provoked the situation into a racializing register (see line 23 and lines 27-29 as examples of the latter).
When whites acknowledged that they may have made a misstep, they often acknowledged it, only then to immediately minimize it: “Alright. I understand your perspective. I sincerely do. But I don't think it's right...” (line 27-28) or shift the responsibility off themselves: “I said what you said” (lines 16-17). Often times in analyzing their interlocutor of color's response, informants, like Eva, implicitly suggested that the reaction of people of color to their racist provocation was disproportionate to the offense: “[I] repeated exactly what he said. So which made me feel like it was okay to joke around” (lines 10-11) and “I wasn't trying to be on your level. I didn't call you a bad word. I was singing a song.” (lines 31-32).

Frequently whites would frame these conversations as being “yelled at” (line 26); thus positioning themselves as being unfairly criticized or attacked. In some renderings, especially by white women, this criticism was almost transformed into a moment of victimhood. This move is particularly obvious in Eva's first story—as a white woman, she should not be “yelled at” by a black man. In many ways, positioning herself as a victim allows Eva to claim that she is trustworthy, and that her black interlocutors wrongly mistrust her: “I was just singing a song. I wasn't coming up to you like you was my nigga” (lines 30-31).

How the relational space in which racist comments are made might feel to the interlocutor of color (in the case of white storytelling) was almost never considered in stories of relational space. Moments when whites are “yelled at,” people of color are usually trying to educate or correct a white person—these attempted lessons often come from places of anger and frustration, but are dismissed by whites as people of color being overly sensitive, hyper, “snapping” (line 11) or going “absolutely nuts” (line 12). The reasons for a person of color's “yelling” were often lost along with the interrupted relational space, as were the lessons they were trying to impart.

When I would ask whites if actions, which relied on immunities guaranteed by whiteness, might have exacerbated the interracial crisis situation by sabotaging the trust formed within relational space,
whites often said their actions were warranted and the appropriate response to the discrimination, hate, or disappointment they were experiencing. This response, again, harkens back to “gut” reactions and bodily-felt emotional responses. Often in interviews and everyday talk, white interviewees would express pain or anger at a negative interracial situation not only as a disappointed friend or poorly treated customer, but as a white person outraged at the attack on, questioning of, or irreverence towards their whiteness. Note how Eva says twice in the excerpt above, “I hate the fact that you have to walk on eggshells” (line 18 and 33).

In cases where the conflict did not seem so much race-based as situational (for example a black bankteller not immediately assisting a white customer because the bank is busy) or personality (the white customer who is too shy to make eye contact with anyone, including the black bank teller), I sometimes suggested to interviewees and informants that something else besides race might have motivated different actors to act in certain ways. I would also ask informants or interviewees if similar conflict situations might be found in intraracial situations. Interviewees of color and white interviewees acknowledged these possibilities, but ultimately made it known that they thought the situation was entirely mediated by race. Intraracially similar experiences, or interracial experiences that were unexpectedly positive, often complicated and tempered people’s racial thinking. Yet, participant observation and interviews indicated that, especially among whites, individual negative experiences of relational space and the emotional responses to these incidents often superseded moderated, nuanced racial worldviews.

While one particular incident or even a collection of narrative texts can not reductively represent an informant’s racial worldview (nor can one informant speak for an entire racial group), these stories of unstable and threatening relational space are important because of their prevalence in Mansfielders’ talk, and how commonsensical informants found these explanations. Negative relational space—and the reactions they provoked and are shaped by—stayed with informants for a long time,
getting catalogued in everyday talk and becoming entextualized as explanations and evidence for wariness, distrust, and dislike. Moreover, the emotional responses informants had indicated the significance and importance of “trustable” relational space in their lives. In accumulating individual experiences, Mansfielders felt as though they had developed an intimate racial knowledge which they then used to explain certain cultural behaviors or patterns. In just a few interactions, particularly interactions where trust is on the line, opinions could become set which might take years of countervailing experiences to undo. The inflation of individual experiences into group-wide stereotypes is an important phenomenon to recognize and the significance of these events in informants’ own reckonings urges researchers to consider the impact of negative neighborly encounters in interracially making race and racial worldviews. Chapters 5 and 6 use ethnography to explore, in greater detail, the ways individual experiences create racial worldviews.

**Race and Trust in Storytelling**

Intimate racial knowledge comes from firsthand experiences of relational space, but it is often made, codified and transmitted through stories told among friends and family. The cataloguing and repeated entextualization of first hand experiences of uncomfortable relational space and betrayed trust among neighbors are one way stories make racial worldviews in Mansfield. But often informants told “other people's stories” as a way to understand, explain, and bolster their own claims (Shuman 2005). Even if a (negative) interracial event did not happen to the storyteller directly, but rather involved a sibling, parent, best friend, or other close intimate, the story was treated as compelling fact. Like all stories, stories of race in Mansfield that “travel from their owners often insist that the particular experiences of a particular person might be applicable to other particular persons in their different, but equally particular situations” (Shuman 2005:7). Importantly, for these stories to carry meaning and to sway audiences, there must be trust between the listener and speaker.

Below I recall a storytelling experience which was typical for Mansfield. I use it because it
demonstrates the layers of trust involved in making racial worldviews. I also use this story because it is very representative of the ways Mansfielders form and adjust their racial worldviews; the story reveals the complexities and factors that informants take into account when assessing race. Because this vignette serves multiple purposes, I first assess how race is made in this story and then I analyze the role trust plays in making race stories.

In 2008, I was drinking coffee with Lily, a white working poor woman, at one of Mansfield's few coffee shops. At the time she had a son, 14, and a daughter, 18, who both lived in California. In telling me about her life, Lily said her daughter “will probably end up marrying a Mexican, since all her friends are Mexicans.” Lily was unhappy with this projected future because, as she explained, she is “scared of Mexicans. They are always together in groups of eight or nine. I have no problems with black people but Mexicans scare me.” Caught off guard by this unexpected turn in our conversation, I asked her what she thought Mexicans might do to her, what it was that she was scared of, and she could not answer: “They just scare me. The color of their skin makes them look oily or something”. She emphasized several times that African Americans didn't bother her: “I have no problems with the blacks, it's the Mexicans that scare me.” After mentioning again how Mexicans congregated, I asked “do they always group together in such large groups?” “No, I guess not, but they still scare me.”

In general I was surprised by this conversation because Mansfield has very few visible Latinos. The 2006-2008 American Community Survey by the US Census estimated 788 Latinas/os lived in Mansfield during the time of my fieldwork. That was 1.7% of the population. The vast majority are seen as “white” and are monolingual English speakers or bilingual English-Spanish speakers. I would estimate maybe another 50-75 Latinos were uncounted by the American Community Survey; these folks tended to be young, Spanish-dominant men who were possibly undocumented and almost always hidden away in the kitchens of local Chinese and Mexican food restaurants. They rarely stayed in

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53 This interview was not recorded. I typed up the interview immediately after we finished speaking, but could not remember it verbatim. Key phrases that stuck out to me are quoted, provisionally, here.
Mansfield for more than 18 months before moving on to another job opportunity elsewhere in the

country. The people Lily envisioned filling the “Mexican” index hardly registered on the radars of

most Mansfielders in 2008 or before (I think this is generally true, even today in 2010). During my

years of intensive fieldwork from 2005-2008, the few discourses on Latinos that circulated in

Mansfield tended to focus on closing the US-Mexico border, reflecting the influence of nationally
dominant discourses and not locally salient concerns. Yet, in 2008 and earlier there was no discourse of

the “Latino Threat” taking over Mansfield itself (Santa Ana 2002, Chavez 2008). As there were few

Latinos to “over run” Mansfield, it is not surprising that national discourses of the “Latino Threat”

found little traction in the small city, again suggesting the importance of local concerns in shaping

Mansfield's racial worldview.

I asked Lily how many Mexicans she had encountered in Mansfield and she replied “not many,

but there are lots in the South where I lived” (she had lived in urban North Carolina for nine years.).

“My sister was having sex with one in a hotel and he did something and she started bleeding and was in

the hospital for 10 days!” I asked, “do you think it was the guy or do you think maybe your sister

already had a problem?” Lily told me maybe, but it was clear she did not agree with my alternative

interpretation. We had reached impasse in our conversation, and I had clearly strained our own

relational space to the limit. After a few seconds during which we warily looked at each other,

assessing how hostile our conversation had become and how uncomfortable the other person was, I

changed the subject to her son and asked questions about him. Shortly after that Lily had to leave for

work and the subject of Mexicans and Latinas/os never came up between us again.

While this particular conversation focused on Mexicans (and Latinos more generally), I had

countless conversations with Mansfielders about racial others. Talking with Lily, several key themes of

racial knowledges emerged which were present in many of my conversations with white Mansfielders

and Mansfielders of color. Instead of simply focusing on her utterances themselves and debating
whether or not they are accurate, for the purposes of this chapter I am more interested in how Lily explains her racial knowledge of Mexicans and how she used storytelling to define and advance her racial worldview. The evidentiary moves Lily made in her storytelling were common.

First, Lily made clear that only Mexicans (and people who she thinks are Mexican-descent) make her apprehensive and that she has “no problems with black people.” Informants of all racial backgrounds made similar demarcations, for example, between northern and southern African Americans, urban and rural whites, “hillbillies” and “other whites,” Latin Americans and Latinos, first generation immigrants and descendants, Africans and African Americans. In explaining that she is, essentially, selectively bigoted, Lily (and others who made this claim) suggested that there are inter and intraracial differences between nonwhites which she is able to discern. If she found African Americans “scary” as well, I might think she is wholesale racist and completely dismiss her. The ability to distinguish between good and bad people of color makes the appeal that I should give credence to her claims that Mexicans are scary. This reasoning is parallel to the reasoning Mansfielders (white and nonwhite) used when explaining to me that “there's white trash and whites, just like there are niggers and blacks”. Being able to recognize that not all whites are 'white trash', or African Americans are different from Latinos relies on the notion that one is savvy enough (and race-neutral enough) to see variations within and among racial groups.

Second, her example is extremely gendered. Discussions about Mexican men and their physicality (she never talked about Mexicanas or Latinas) and how they injure women in the most intimate of circumstances all work to justify her fear of Mexicans (see Chavez 2008 for an analysis of Latinas as threatening). In Mansfield, most conversations I had about race focused on men of color or white men. This is not to suggest that women are not raced, but rather they, especially women of color, are frequently erased in conversations about race (Crenshaw 1994, hooks 1981). The physicality of Mexican men is further reinforced by the mention of their “oiliness,” which is in line with racializing
talk that focuses on smell, hair and skin texture, and other bodily attributes and harkens back to the longstanding racial slur of “greaser.”

Next, she points to “they're always in groups of eight or nine” as a threatening practice. The supposedly “cultural” behavior of congregating or grouping in public is frequently racially stigmatized in media reports (Ruddick 1996) and focuses on how racially marked people “dominate” public space. Of parallel note is that white Mansfielders all the time overestimated the number of Africans Americans who lived in their city (white informants frequently would say anywhere to 30-60% of the city's population was black; in reality African Americans make up less than a fourth of the city's population and less than 10% of the county's population). Whites, especially, would cite African Americans' visible presence, especially near the city's center, as the basis for their overestimate. The large numbers of whites who lived outside the city core—either in neighborhoods like Woodland, Ranchwood, or Little Kentucky, or further out in the rural county, were invisible in many (white) Mansfielders' imagines of the city.

Fourth, especially significant in light of my discussion of relational space, Lily cites as compelling evidence her own emotional responses to the relational space between herself and former and imagined future Latino interlocutors: “they scare me.” Like Michael O'Hara's experience driving on Baker Ave, Lily has an emotional response that is physiologically felt—how can her anxious heart palpitations, or queasiness in the gut be wrong? Relatedly, she supports her emotional response with personal knowledge which is more or less neutrally factual: “there are lots in the South where I lived”.

Finally, in the face of my disputations and questions, Lily tells a graphic story about her (presumably white) sister's experience with a Mexican man. Lily bolsters her own claims by utilizing someone else's story as third party evidence. Lily's use of someone else's experiences (in this case, her sister's) was an extremely common tactic Mansfielders used in discussing race, racialization, and racism with me (as well as class and class hierarchies, sexuality, gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, and
other vectors of stratification). I found that many Mansfielders used “other people's stories” to reinforce their own observations or interpretations. The relational space between trusted intimates (for example, best friends or siblings) gives much weight to what another person says or experiences. The trust one put into someone else's reported experiences or pronouncements on an issue had great effects and was often used to support or confirm an informant's interpretation of interracially-inflected experiences.

When other people's stories were used as evidence, the story was often treated as being beyond the reach of criticism and interrogation. Personal stories, Shuman points out, often attain and receive this untouchable status (2005: 6). When stories are challenged (as I do when I questioned the particulars of Lily's sister's experience and thus the basis of Lily's racial beliefs), I called into question not just the story, but the trust Lily has with her sister and the trust built between Lily and myself:

“Narratives about everyday life experiences depend not only on the validation of experience as something that truly happened, but also on the validation of the identity claims necessary to support the idea that the teller is entitled to claim that experience as his or her own [to empathize with or retell]” (Shuman 2005: 155). In relying on the relational space we had built with one another, Lily assumed that I trusted her, that I saw all her stories as felicitous.

In disputing Lily as a story teller, I questioned not only her story, but also her emotions and physiological responses to a social situation. In a sense, I don't trust her—and to Lily it certainly sounded like I did not believe her story or her interpretation. By distrusting her evidence, I invalidated her emotional, psychological and physiological feelings. Under liberal discourses, she is entitled to have and express these feelings, and moreover, these feelings should be treated as persuasive evidence. The effects of my skepticism—do I believe her story, the claims it makes and the claims she wants it to make—have a ripple effect and may ultimately prompt Lily to question herself or re-evaluate the trust she has for herself. Race builds out of these imbricated layers of trust.

In this moment, our differing racial worldviews were most stark and caused us to mistrust each
other. While I generally tried to keep my personal anti-racist worldview to myself during fieldwork to allow informants to speak comfortably and candidly, at times I was explicit. I am usually skeptical of accounts which position whites as “victims” or “at no fault” in negative interracial encounters. I also try to remain aware of the ways whiteness grants me and other whites privileges at the expense of people of color. Lily's racial worldview differed from mine. The incompatibility of our views made it difficult for us to trust each other. Any chance of us bridging the difference required trust: do I trust you to meet me halfway? In this interaction, it was perhaps not surprising that Lily and I lost our safe-feeling relational space—my skepticism and her response to that skepticism were just too much to surmount.

_**Trusting the Racial Lessons of Intimates**_

In some cases, other people's stories become tales of warning or other allegorical lessons (as Lily's story is). But informants also attributed their worldviews of race, racialization, and racism to explicit lessons trusted family members or friends taught them. Trusting a family member's judgement or directive deeply influenced how people thought about race and was often mustered as evidenced which confirmed one's racial worldview. For example, in Mansfield, “mother taught me” stories carried tremendous weight. Women, in particular, explain their racial worldviews as something they had learned from their mother. Carrie, 50, white: “I was fetched up in the South and my mother taught me that a nigger was worthless person. It didn’t matter the color of their skin” (I return to this quote later in Chapter 5's discussion of the “race trump card” and whiteness). Mrs. Truth, 60s, black: “my mother taught us that we were equal to whites and that whites were equal to us.” Or: Mrs. Esketh, 80s, white: “I was shocked and disgusted that the restaurant wouldn't serve the [black] man's family. That is not how I was raised. My mother and father taught us to respect everyone, no matter what their color.” I believe this particular discourse held so much weight, lifting it above question or reproach, because it is premised on the relational space between mothers and their children, especially the gendered
intimacy between mothers and their daughters.

Mansfielders learned race and developed racial worldviews from other family members' directives as well. This is not surprising as the family home is often the first and most persuasive site where cultural actors learn race. Albert, a white man in his early 40s who was born in Mansfield but raised in Olive Hill, Kentucky, told me about learning about race while growing up: “When we’d [Albert and three other male cousins] come to visit [Mansfield] during the summer, our cousins [in Mansfield] would say to us, ‘this isn’t Kentucky anymore. So just shut your mouth and don’t start shit.’ The hardest thing we had to get used to is white girls dating black guys. But we did, cause that what we had to do.” Relational space and trust shape inter- and intra-racial encounters but they also shape how teachings among intimates are received.

In stories like Michael O'Hara's, a person is unable to develop trust with his or her racially-other interlocutor, or had trust and then lost it. The relational space between Michael and his (real or imagined) interlocutors is too wide to bridge and he is left feeling anxious and uneasy. Based on previous encounters, he is hesitant to trust certain types of people enough to assume the best. Anticipated or real reactions to these moments of anxiety, contestation, and tenseness are made in relational space and color how Mansfielders see the world. In stories like Lily's, trusting one's gut is, again, a present conditioner, but she must also trust the validity of another's storytelling. Similarly, in order to be successful, explicit lessons among intimates require trust. Of note is that stories and lessons are often framed or offered in ways that sanction only one interpretation. Just as stories can be used to build rapport among neighbors, they can also strain relational space and destroy trust: “Personal-experience narratives are mediated by the teller, by the expectations of the audience, by prior understandings of the events, and by the situation in which they are told; their truth requires negotiation and can involve contested interpretations” (Shuman 2005: 155).

Having (many) encounters and interactions with racial others in Mansfield, and often having
strong reactions to these experiences, means that residents talk about race a lot. They talk about race with family members, friends, coworkers. They react to media reports, write letters to the editor, comment on online comment boards, pen books. In comparison to my own mostly white, middle class, 1980s childhood where race was rarely explicitly mentioned and almost never discussed in sustained or thoughtful ways, I was always impressed at how competently and effortlessly Mansfielders, especially white Mansfielders, talked about race among themselves and with racial others. However, the ease with which residents talked about race also belied how easy it was for many (white) Mansfielders to believe that they were authorities on race, especially on interracial matters and cross-racial knowledge. This sense of racial authoritative knowledge, of being viscerally and emotionally confronted by racial others, often made it hard for white Mansfielders to see the power differentials in a given situation. Whites often could intuit socially made power differentials, but these revelations were temporary, and often in the abstract. More frequently whites struggled to see how they were privileged in the midst of catalogued encounters that they actually experienced.

Experiences, often reinforced through storytelling, regularly presumed that feelings and reactions were never wrong. When assessing one's experiences with propinquity and relational space, and one's stories and others' stories, the focus was on how the speaker felt and their interpretations were granted primacy over other, often absent, voices. In encounters and in the telling of stories, there was rarely ever consideration of how interlocutors felt and rarely an interrogation of one's own role in social actions. “Authoritative” race talk and racial worldviews spoke from the effects and results of an encounter and not the structural backgrounds that may—despite similar outcomes perhaps—shape encounters differently. When one felt embarrassed, affronted, or uncomfortable, when one believed they could not trust their interlocutors, it was hard to see the power differentials shaping the event; especially for those who are structurally granted power.

Conclusion
Personal experiences and the stories of others—based in emotions, relational space, and trust—provide the evidence that supports racial projects and help refine abstractions of race through specific cases. Within the small city, neighborly encounters are one important site where relational space is built, unsettled, and constantly negotiated. Social space—and the relational space that can come out of it—makes assumptions of trust and distrust, thus generating a scaffolding upon which racial worldviews solidify. In turn, these racial worldviews impact how people approach a situation; the tensing up, the hostility, or the ease one might feel in an intimate moment comes from a long line of strung-together neighborly encounters. Rightly or wrongly, racial knowledge and these ever recharging racial projects are made in and made into relational space and social space.

In addition to neighborly encounters, race is learned and made through storytelling. Cobbled together from experiential knowledge, relational space, social space and circulating discourses, stories of race help tellers and listeners make sense of their worlds. The frequency of racially inflected stories and the weight informants placed on these stories suggests that stories of race are an important mechanism Mansfielders use to make sense of their small city. At the heart of storytelling (and at the heart of neighborly encounters) is the issue of trust. Trust operates at multiple levels in storytelling: do I believe your story? Do I believe you as a storyteller? Do I believe the claims or lessons the story is trying to make? As a storyteller, do I believe myself?54

The role of trust and relational space in making race explains the seeming contradiction between talking and acting racist and having meaningful and close interracial relationships. This contradiction always puzzled me and was especially prevalent in the small city where I would often hear informants express extremely racist opinions and readings of an interracial situation, and then, almost in the same breath, demonstrate respect and loyalty for racially different friends or loved ones.

54 The similarities between trust in storytelling and trust in ethnography—both in the collecting of ethnographical material and in the ethnographic account is obvious. Shuman argues empathy—and thus questions of trust—lays at the heart of both storytelling and ethnography (2005: Chapter 6).
In individualizing experiences—either making exceptions for intimates or only trusting select persons—informants were focusing on the close and affectionate relational space they had built with individuals. However, the vast range of experiences, and how these encounters are catalogued and weighted in people's worldviews is why race is so contradictory in Mansfield, how someone can be both anti-racist and racist in almost the same go. Because experiences are contradictory, subjective, contextual, people's racial worldviews can be nuanced but along very particular and at times idiosyncratic lines (Lily's perception of Latinos and African Americans in small city America demonstrates this).

In the following chapters I examine more closely how race works “on the ground” in Mansfield: chapter 5 looks at the place of race in middle class white racial worldviews and how whiteness and privilege are policed and protected. I use ethnographic examples of storytelling and moments of reorganized relational space to understand how whiteness is defined and defended in the small city. I look at both intraracial and interracial examples to shed light on the variations within whiteness and the role it plays in racializing people of color. Chapter 6 more closely examines the intimacies of interracial friendships and romantic relationships. There I examine how relational space is made, interpreted and inspected, often in the name of whiteness. Both chapters offer further interrogations of the ways trust provides the scaffolding for racial worldviews.

In chapters 5 and 6 I also include discussions of how racializing cultural dynamics can be harnessed and transformed, how a race conscious, but anti-racist, world can be made. Because of the social space of small cities—the propinquity and the inability to avoid interracial encounters—I believe Mansfield and small cities like Mansfield are important vanguards for these changes and can lead, by example, the national dialogue on race, racialization, and racism.
Chapter 5: Middle Class Whiteness: Protecting and Policing Power and Status

As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, whiteness is no longer as assured as economic safeguards disappear, civil rights become extended to people of color, and racism is socially and legally contested. In Mansfield's case, these changes intersect with the small city spatial intimacies that constantly reshape neighborly relationships. This small city racial closeness means that white privilege is perpetually at risk of being exposed as unjust.

To maintain the naturalness of whiteness, representatives of, and generators of this power structure—white people and white cultural practices—must constantly self-monitor and be inspected. White racial respectability and the guarantees of white racial privileges are tenaciously patrolled and protected so that current U.S. interracial and intraracial hierarchies continue to hold legitimacy. Almost any attention called to whiteness—especially the whiteness of middle class whites whose unmarked class standing depends on and determines their racial identity—undermines the naturalness of racial privilege and class entitlements.

During my research, protecting whiteness in Mansfield often meant, in practice, that distinctions were made between whites who enacted and embodied white racial propriety and racial respectability and those who could not or would not. The very existence of talk that names and sections off various whites suggests whiteness both as a racial identity and as an cultural ideology is full of variations and contention. More to the point, reactions to these variations in whiteness suggest that difference can stress and threaten the hegemonic social order.

Before going any further, I should clarify that I do not believe all whites equally seek, desire, or can access all the benefits of whiteness. As this chapter will demonstrate, the heterogeneity of white racial identities, and thus white culture, make whites differently interpret, invest in, and benefit from whiteness as an ideological structure. Not all whites equally access the “wages of whiteness” (Hartigan 1999, Roediger 1991, Wray and Newitz, eds. 1997), and there are many individual whites who practice
anti-racism, challenge white supremacy, and work to divest themselves of the payouts of whiteness on a daily basis. But the structures of racial privilege remain and whites—even racially marked and uninvested whites—still benefit to differing degrees. Certainly some whites have easier access to and more assured benefits from white racial supremacy than others, but the fact and effects of whiteness still remain.

For the purposes of this chapter, I keep whiteness in conversation with, but not reducible to, white people. Like George Lipsitz, I believe that “opposing whiteness is not the same as opposing white people” (1998: viii). This chapter is not meant to vilify individual Mansfielders. Rather, I examine how whiteness as a cultural phenomenon shapes social relations, motivating some people at the expense of others. In this chapter I most often use whiteness to mean historically constituted structures of racialized power and privilege which derive their social meaning and momentum from particular configurations of phenotype, white identity, and culture. These structures of privilege are often invisible and commonsensical to whites—they are “normal” life, how things “should be” and how things “naturally” occurred. They are often glaringly obvious to people of color.

This chapter examines how whiteness works in Mansfield. I begin by examining how whiteness is monitored. I focus on how intraracial boundaries are made and how racially marked whites—ethnic whites, Appalachian whites, and poor whites—and their racial respectability are constantly inspected. I use examples of intraracial encounters to begin showing how middle class whiteness, i.e. racially respectable whiteness, is constructed in opposition to what it is not. My examples often hold elements of resistance, and I briefly examine the “backtalk” that potentially marked whites employ (Stewart 1996).

I next examine how whites, especially middle class whites, talk about blackness and “race relations” in supposedly nonracist ways. I show how this “race savviness” often perpetuates whiteness, either by accusing other whites of racism or by using racially-inflected, often racist, talk and “jokes.”
examine how race savvy whites frequently absolve themselves of responsibility for racist actions and talk through a number of strategies, including the use of institutionalized funny spaces, ventriloquism, claiming they're “just joking,” and appeals to “human nature.” These strategies all assume certain white “terms of racial engagement” which in turn, reenergize and solidify white privilege.

I next turn to the ignorance of whiteness and how ideas of race savviness are often at the root of whites' assumptions of what blackness and brownness are. I examine how this ignorance of history and culture, and white lack of self-awareness rely on deep reservoirs of white privilege and racial supremacy. I then explore a moment when whiteness and its privileges is called into question. I use a vignette to examine the ways whites respond to challenges of white racial supremacy and how difficult it is to see systems of oppression when focusing only on relational space. The section on defending whiteness concludes by recounting different ways whites protect whiteness and how those efforts intersect with small city social space.

I close this chapter by examining moments when whites and people of color subvert and challenge whiteness. This last section suggests that even as whiteness is reconstituted through race savvy discourses and racial ignorance, more and more cracks are destabilizing its core.

In tracing a particular constellation of practices that maintain, but also undermine whiteness, my goal in this chapter is not to give a definitive explanation or account of whiteness but rather to map significant points in the field of race relations, from the perspective of the small city. Anthropology offers the invaluable skill of contextualizing these flashpoints, which in turn, provides an understanding of whiteness and the deep investments whites have in its continuation.

**Inspecting Whiteness**

As Alejandro Lugo writes, “[border] inspections take place not only across such social hierarchies as gender, age, and class relations, but especially within them” (2000: 367). In documenting how Mansfielders inspect whiteness and to what results, this chapter seeks to “fully
understand why and how certain borders are not easily crossed or transgressed” (Lugo 2000: 267).

The inspection of “internal frontiers” is not new in Mansfield or elsewhere (Lugo 200: 361). In Mansfield, as elsewhere during the 19th and 20th centuries, ethnicity was a major factor in determining one's white racial propriety (Guglielmo 2003, Roediger 2006). Even after World War II when white ethnicity began to diminish in importance in Mansfield, as partially evidenced by the distribution of whites and housing across the city (see Chapter 2), ethnic background was still a significant force in shaping social relations in the small city. Talking about ethnicity in 1960s Mansfield, Jerry Popa told me during a life history interview about his experiences socializing with friends and dates who lived in Woodland, the richest and whitest post-war neighborhood.

And dating girls out there [in Woodland]. I tell you, The first question I always got, I could almost count on this question was, are you Italian? They thought Italians weren’t, were, you know, were a sub-culture <slashing his hand at about mid-torso height>. Because they always asked me that. I tell you, I can’t tell you how many times I got asked that question. The first question was, are you Italian? I never, I never for once thought what would have happened if I said yes. Now when I said I was Romanian, that was almost worse. ‘Cuz the Romanians. You go to Europe, they are the most hated people because the Gypsies are Romanian. They hate Gypsies in Europe. Now I think, gee, I wonder if when I told them I was Romanian they ever thought this guy is even worst than Italians. Ha!”

By 2008, Jerry could laugh about being interrogated and even poke fun at the ways his ethnicity might compromise his “respectable” racial status (i.e. “Now I think, gee, I wonder if when I told them I was Romanian they ever thought this guy is even worse than Italians. Ha!”). However, despite his jocularity, it was clear from his stories that ethnic hierarchies were monitored and actively maintained in the small city during his childhood and adolescence. Although Jerry was third generation Romanian, his last name, his parents' working class status, and his family's geocultural origins, all made him suspect in the eyes of the racially unmarked white elites. His ethnoracial respectability had to pass muster with gatekeepers; in other words, “the first question, are you Italian?” was one immediate method used to test the legitimacy of his claims to whiteness and his claims on whiteness, i.e. was his whiteness acceptable enough that he could date white elite daughters.
Today, geocultural origin continues to be an important white racial identity marker, however instead of marking European-descent people, white Appalachians' racial identities, as well as their claims on the privileges of whiteness, fall under inspection. “Hillbillies,” the most often and most preferred term used in Mansfield to describe white residents who have familial origins based in Appalachia, has multiple meanings and implications. As a cultural index constantly in play, “hillbilly” captures the indeterminacy of Appalachian whiteness and what other whites feel are the proper claims white Appalachians can make to white racial privilege.

I hardly need to point out that people of color, including Native Americans, African Americans, and the racially ambiguous Melungeons (Puckett 2001, Winkler 2005), also have historic ties to Appalachia; their erasure in most media accounts and in the minds of many residents in Mansfield and beyond suggests how profoundly and reductively non-Appalachians misunderstand the region. Conflating Appalachia with a marked whiteness geographically contains potential white racial impropriety, enabling whites without ties to Appalachia to distance themselves from the insecurities of marked whiteness. Moreover, many whites and people of color erroneously assume metonymic relationships among rural Appalachian origins, poverty, and racial impropriety. In reality, there are many middle class white Appalachians (living in and outside of Appalachia) and there are many whites living in poverty who are not from rural Appalachia. In Mansfield, hillbillies are usually blue collared and working class due to their long association with Cyclops Steel and other postwar unionized factories, with some bourgeois white collared professionals in Mansfield claiming Appalachian relatives (see Hartigan 1999 for his discussion of Detroit's hillbillies). Despite the realities in Mansfield and elsewhere, the conflation of region and class works to further reinforce contemporary understandings of respectable and disreputable whiteness; in demonizing poverty and Appalachian culture and affiliation, middle class whiteness remains the unmarked standard for racial respectability.

Even whites with historic and recent ties to Appalachia will distance themselves from the
possible implications and meanings of marked whiteness. For example, one day Anson, a white, blue collared, middle class man in his 50s, told me that he had relatives who lived in Little Kentucky, but “we don't usually acknowledge that side of the family.” When I laughed out of surprise and shock and asked why, Anson used one young relative as an example: “he talks like a hillbilly, but he's third generation! His mother was born here, he was born here! But he sounds like he just came up from Kentucky! It's incredible. It's like, coooome oooon, talk regular English. Talk smart. They sound so uneducated.” I regularly heard this kind of assessment from Mansfielders of all backgrounds (including from residents in Little Kentucky).

When I mildly challenged Anson with a “oh come now, that's why you don't talk with your relatives?” he told me that “I think we're considered the uppity family out of all the cousins, but I don't care. Look at where I am and look at where they are. They're still in Little Kentucky; my father never even lived there, even when he first moved to Mansfield.” In using speech community differences as a proxy, Anson called into question his relative's white racial respectability. His comment, “coooome oooon, talk regular English,” at the time almost sounded like, “coooome oooon, be a good white.” Focusing on “regular English” and “they sound so uneducated” is also reminiscent of whites' assessments of Black Vernacular English and the use of English by nonnative English speakers, like some Latino migrants. The relative's marked whiteness, as indexed by his talk, led Anson and his immediate family to distance themselves from what they saw as racially problematic kin connections.

In 2006, I was telling Homer, a white man who had retired early from a trade union, about my interest in knowing more about the different kinds of white people that live in Mansfield. Because I was still unsure about the connotations associated with “hillbilly,” I said that I wanted to interview “white Appalachians” about moving to Mansfield. Homer replied that he had former coworkers who lived in Little Kentucky and to whom he might be able to introduce me. In talking about Roseland more generally, Homer said I would probably have difficulty getting into Little Kentucky, “because
Appalachian Americans don't usually trust anyone.”

Throughout my years of fieldwork I regularly heard from non-residents that Little Kentucky was a tightknit community that didn't like outsiders (in general, that was not my experience). What struck me in Homer's comment was his term, *Appalachian American*. In 2008 I ran into Homer again and in the course of our conversation he used this phrase again. In other words, while it was probably a label he only used with me, the graduate student anthropologist, it was not a fluke mispeak in 2006.

In both instances, I understood “Appalachian American” to work the same way as African American or Japanese American does—to generally qualify and mark a nonwhite or white ethnic's person's affiliation with the United States. In almost all variations of ____-American, the adjective indicates a nonwhite or “off-white” racial identity. In this way, Homer's use of Appalachian American suggested to me that he saw white Appalachians or hillbillies as having qualified or only limited claims on whiteness and its racial privileges.

Even self-described hillbillies inspected their neighbors' racial respectability. In 2008 I began searching for housing in Roseland after my original contact fell through. My hunting took me to many of the local institutions where I spoke with small business owners, asking them if they knew of anyone who was looking for a renter. In at least two incidences I was told, “Well honey, I can’t think of a single person. You know, I wouldn’t let my dog live in some of those places. You know for a young lady, like yourself. I can’t think of anyone.” Describing residencies in Roseland as so debased as to not be worthy of an animal, marked neighboring white Appalachians as indecorous and disorderly.⁵⁵ Not so subtly, “a young lady like yourself” positioned me as a racially respectable white. Throughout the year I lived in Mansfield, I occasionally heard neighbors direct the insult, “I wouldn’t let my dog live there…” towards other Little Kentucky residencies. I never heard it used to describe homes or

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⁵⁵ As dogs and other pets are often treated as family members within middle class homes, this comment, by extension, implies that the speakers would not want Appalachians as relatives either. My thanks to Dr. Alejandro Lugo for this insight.
residents of other neighborhoods.

In essence, white Appalachians in Mansfield often produced an uncomfortableness among whites who had recently attained an unmarked racial status. It was disquieting for some to be so close to Appalachian whiteness, especially for informants with familial ties to the area like Anson, or for the small business owners who sought to position themselves as reputable in the marked space of Little Kentucky. Yet while Appalachian whiteness is often derided for its potential racial impropriety, some white city residents and Mansfielders of color respected individual hillbillies and esteemed their geocultural background. This is not surprising in light of the ways Mansfielders make their racial worldviews through individual experiences, and often separate individuals from group assessments (see end of Chapter 4 for more). In the local Mansfield racial imaginary, white Appalachians are also quaint, honest, simple Christians who love their children, defend their women and families, and have superior gardening, cooking, mechanical, and construction skills. Mansfielders argue that whites from Appalachia have a few socially outdated attitudes or conservative ways of doing things, but overall, are “good people.”

Although white local elites and white imports (see chapter 3) were less likely to make a distinction between upstanding white hillbillies and racially ostracized ”white trash,”

56 “rednecks,” and poor whites, people who often used hillbilly as a term of respect or proudly self-identify as hillbilly would also use it pejoratively on occasion. Relatedly, “redneck” carried a much more negative connotation than hillbilly in Mansfield but was sometimes used as a compliment. Within Mansfield, redneck tended to signal absolute racial and class impropriety or out-of-controlness. Occasionally, I would hear whites say “I got red” or “I was really red that night” while describing ridiculous drunken antics. When I first heard this phrase, I asked what it meant, thinking perhaps they were using a racist stereotype to compare themselves to Native Americans. “Oh, you know, we were acting like total

56 See Wray and Newitz, eds. (1997) for the cultural work “white trash” does in U.S. racial hierarchies and how it ties to notions of properness and respectability.
rednecks” these informants responded.

However, “redneck” can also mean, sometimes, blue collared working class whites. In this more sanitized connotation, it is almost analogous to the positive meanings of hillbillies, but without the “old-timey” inflections. Recent comedy acts like Jeff Foxworthy, and other performers on the “Blue Collar Comedy Tour,” as well as popular songs on the country western radio circuit like Gretchen Wilson's “Redneck Woman,” have likely assisted in the term's reinvention. However, because whiteness is often an unmarked racial category and ideology, any instance where it is highlighted runs the risk of being disgraced. As a creative index, hillbilly (and to a lesser extent, redneck) can signify positive or negative cultural, economic, or racial identities. It is an unstable index constantly in cultural play, particularly in Mansfield where hillbilly whiteness was very present.

Not only was Appalachian whiteness often subject to the possibilities of indictment and censure, so were poor whites. The economic inability to prevent and ride out life instabilities often positioned poor whites (and by erroneous association, white Appalachians) as failing at whiteness. Yet, instead of understanding poverty as a structural cycle which is a direct effect of capitalism and that often extends over generations, many Mansfielders (and Americans in general) saw poverty, especially among whites, as a willful, almost spiteful choice, or a biologically inherited impropriety. Consider the following from my fieldnotes, after spending an afternoon with a white collared professional who worked in the educational and human services field:

She tells me that the mother of the little girl is “no good,” into drugs, and that she really thinks “it” (i.e. wildness, or what I would call racial/class impropriety) “runs in the family”. At one point she says, “You know, sins of the father or whatever: I really think that’s true.” This is similar to [another informant in 2006] telling me the same about people on welfare and that they are genetically disposed to it, it's inheritable. She [the professional] says, “this population wears you down” (i.e. white Mansfielders who are like the little girl's family). “There’s no stability here” she tells me to further explain why there are so many kids with problems and families that are unstable, etc.

Through culture of poverty arguments, poor whites became biologically incapable of being
racially respectable: “it runs in the family” and “you know, sins of the father, or whatever.” Poor whites were morally indicted and racialized for their economic inability to prevent or manage disasters. Moreover, unlike middle class white families who were individualized and often socially excused for deviant actions; whether alcoholism, poor money management, domestic abuse or something more banal like an unmowed front yard or tardiness to a school event; poor whites and Appalachian whites are were often treated as an undifferentiated mass, with the most racially egregious individuals serving as representatives for the group.

But hillbillies and the many working class and poor whites who most often felt the censure of marked whiteness, used “backtalk” to challenge notions of propriety that were based on middle class ideals. They scoffed at bourgeois ideals and often used me (with my stylish eyeglasses, university affiliation, and white middle class feminine ways of speech) as a representative of that racial cultural world. Informants would occasionally direct backtalk at me and regularly used backtalk for my listening benefit. One particularly humorous, though uncomfortable, moment occurred when an informant, a self-identifying, blue collared, working class hillbilly in his thirties, teased me about getting out my notepad to write down a phone number. He took the notepad away from me, and while flipping through it for a blank page, ran into cooking recipes I had written down. “Only a college person would write H2O for water” he said with a snort. When I weakly responded, “did I really?” he replied with a big, “oh yeah, yeah you did”. For the next several weeks, whenever he saw me, he would ask in a nasally, faux-British accent, if I “cared for some H2O to drink”.

In general, however, resistance to middle class white ideals and policing was only so successful. Ultimately, white collared professionals like the one above who thought a child was genetically destined to be “wild” or exhibit racial impropriety, often had great sway over working class and working poor lives (see chapter 3). In less power-laden and high stakes encounters, such inspecting, scrutinizing and marking of the whiteness of hillbillies and poor whites still influenced social
interactions. Talk and worldviews about marked whiteness did not position white Appalachians, rednecks, or poor whites as “not-white,” but rather as practicing an incorrigible kind of whiteness or making inappropriate, overreaching claims, on the privileges and benefits of whiteness (I explore the notion of racial incorrigibility in Chapter 6). These discursive texts often positioned the speakers as decent whites, or magnanimous and discerning people of color, who could distinguish between respectable and disreputable whiteness.

“It's in the Language Between White People”: Race Savvy Whites

Another common approach white Mansfielders (and many whites in the U.S.) used to define and secure white racial respectability was to talk about race and racism in presumably savvy and non-racist ways. This kind of whiteness, this race savvy whiteness, was often very middle class, relying on idioms of cosmopolitanism, multicultural experiences, and being properly educated about the ways of the world (see Thompson 2003 for a similar discussion of antiracist whites who position themselves as “exceptional”). Often at the expense of people of color, race savvy whites used conversations about blackness and brownness to advance their own racial propriety and racial supremacy.

Race savvy whiteness was often most obvious in interactions where whites identified racism in other whites. In positioning themselves as racially knowledgeable enough to recognize and condemn racism among other whites, this strategy regularly left the self unexamined and confirmed one's own whiteness as unproblematic, or even commendable, i.e. “She's racist and I know that because I am not racist—I am racially hip.”

For example, I would regularly give rides and hang out with Rikki, a gay, gender bending, middle aged white man. During one of our drives from the grocery store, we were talking about racism in Mansfield and Rikki volunteered that several years previously he had thrown out his mother from his house when she said something racist during a family party. Rikki's white roommate had “mixed” (i.e.

57 I explicitly mark Rikki's sexuality because, to him, that identity was the most important aspect of his personhood.
multiracial) nieces and nephews who were playing in the next room over. Rikki said, “they couldn't hear her, but I wouldn't stand for it, so I threw her out.” When I asked him what his mother had said, he wouldn't tell me, only commenting that he refused to talk to her for six months. He said that the stalemate ended when his mother bought all the children Christmas presents, implicitly apologizing for her comment. Rikki's story was so striking to me because two weeks previously, as we were driving the same route home after grocery shopping, Rikki had told me that he wouldn't vote for Barack Obama. “I don't trust Barack. He has purple lips. I don't mean to make it all racial. I'd vote for Colin Powell. I just don't trust Barack.” At the time of that conversation, I interpreted Obama's blackness, his phenotype, as being the primary reason why he was untrustworthy to Rikki. In thinking about these two conversations as a diptych, it seemed to me that Rikki's whiteness functioned as the hinge holding them together.

In identifying racism in others (in the case of Rikki, his mother), the speaker subsumed his or her own stakes in whiteness by highlighting another white's inappropriate claims or uses of white supremacy. When white speakers considered their own whiteness in relation to the whites they were criticizing, they most often positioned themselves as racially attuned, even anti-racist crusaders who were defending the defenseless: “they couldn't hear her, but I wouldn't stand for it.” In these formulations whites took an unacknowledged position—they had the power to decide when something is or is not racism: “He has purple lips. I don't mean to make it all racial, I'd vote for Colin Powell.”

In adjudicating racist talk and actions by themselves and other whites, a high ground was often made claim to. A self-righteousness was especially pronounced among white middle class imports who often distinguish themselves from local middle class and elite whites in terms of how nonracist they were compared to locals. In discussing how “backwards” locals were, imports elevated themselves by demonstrating their race savviness and by extension, their cosmopolitanism. This kind of intrawhite differentiation was also used by many middle class whites to distinguish themselves from “rednecks”
and hillbillies who supposedly express and hold racist beliefs, in contradistinction to middle class race savvy and cosmopolitan whiteness. While my experience was similar to many imports (this is not surprising since my background is very similar to many imports), in that I witnessed blatant racism among locals, I also witnessed a tremendous range of subtle racism among imports\(^\text{58}\) (Frankenberg 1997). This racism often took the race savvy form.

Relatedly, race savvy whites also often treated their willingness and ability to call out racism in other whites as a sign of their racial acumen. Because they could identify racism in others, race savvy whites often felt confident discussing race, especially black culture and blackness, and were often quite pleased with themselves that they were able to openly and provocatively talk about a taboo topic (colorblind discourses are still present among many Mansfielders, especially middle class white residents). Sometimes this talk took the form of assuming to know black people's experiences, as it did for this white middle class man: “If I were a poor black guy, working at the Baker St. Carwash <snicker> and living [in the Northend] and I just happened to see Barack talking on MSNBC as I was flipping past from BET or whatever, I would be inspired by what he was saying.” Other times this authoritative talk on blackness explicitly or implicitly appealed to personal experiences with people of color. From a white woman who was married to a black man: “[The black speaker] was late and I thought she was on black people time, but she really was late. You know, weather and the roads or whatever.” At first I thought this woman was subversively making fun of the stereotype of “colored people's time” but from the rest of her conversation, it was clear that she thought it could have been a legitimate explanation. These two speakers were unlike some of their peers who went to great lengths to not see or talk blackness or brownness (Frankenberg 1997), but their “ability” to authoritatively and comfortably talk about African Americans often reasserted their whiteness through the repetition and “confirmation” of racist stereotypes and assumptions.

\(^{58}\) I am acutely aware of the ironic position I am putting myself in when I discuss the ways whites assert a non-problematic whiteness by labeling other whites “racist.”
Similar to making authoritative talk about people of color, race savvy whites often felt comfortable enough to make racially-inflected jokes (i.e. usually racist jokes). Because race savvy whites “understood” race and racism, they positioned their race savvy whiteness and “awareness” of the joke as excusing themselves from the implications and effects of the joke. Often race savvy whites shifted attention away from the problematics of their own white supremacy by using marked whites as the focus of the joke.

For example, during the final days before the 2008 presidential election, Mansfield (like all of Ohio) was flooded with out-of-state volunteers who had taken off time from their jobs to canvass for their candidate of choice. Two middle class white men from New York were among the many campaigners who had come to turn people out to the polls. In talking with the men as they stopped by the Obama headquarters for more provisions, they told me:

We were out knocking doors and we knocked on the door of this hillbilly guy. He was like 80, with just two teeth. We asked him who he had voted for and he said, <affecting a southern or “hillbilly drawl”> 'the black boy.' It was like he was happy that he voted for Obama but didn't know any better how to tell us about it.

Both men thought the exchange was hilarious and I heard them repeat the story to several other volunteers over the next few days and drawlingly ask each other, as an inside joke, if anyone else they spoke with had voted for “the black boy.”

Just a day later when I was knocking on doors in the county (I never canvassed in Mansfield or in surrounding areas where I had research relationships), I was paired with a white professional who worked in Bromfield County's educational and human services field. As we were driving the barren fall county roads, he told me a similar story which he had heard on the radio. “The reporter asked some old lady who she voted for and she turned to her husband in the house, <affecting a southern or “hillbilly” drawl> 'honey, who did we vote for?' The reply came back: 'the nigger' <again, in an affected drawl>.” The professional thought the radio segment was hysterically funny and could hardly
keep the car on the road as he belly-laughed at the conclusion of the story. I had not mentioned the New Yorkers’ “funny story” to the professional and was alarmed to realize that this election-related racist joke was becoming its own circulating genre.

I realize why whites find the disconnects in this joke “funny”: at the butt of the joke are whites who don't know any better than to use racial epithets. But more to the point, by serving as a negative example, this joke affirms the race savviness of middle class whites. It seemed to me that these three men (I never heard women tell this joke, though they likely did), were using humor to separate their white middle class, “imported” selves from the marked whiteness of local hillbillies. Comments on teeth, “accents,” and even age all indexed Appalachian whites as being racially disreputable. Like the example of Rikki and his mom, the stories these men told also left the speaker's whiteness unexamined as they ridiculed and castigated other whites. The humor also seemed to serve as a tactic to neutralize and distance oneself from what was clearly still a very present concern in Mansfield and the nation—the nation was electing a man of color to the presidency.

This reported racism among hillbillies also enacted or reproduced racism through recontextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Although the men did not claim ownership—they merely reported the racism, thus absolving themselves of responsibility for it—the men and I could recognize how racist and inappropriate this joke was. This way of perpetuating white supremacy is in line with a more general tactic whites used to make racist remarks without taking ownership of the white supremacist implications—they made someone else say it. This “ventriloquism” as I came to think of it, was a specific type of reported speech (Lucy, ed.1993) that used people of color or marked whites as the originators of the original utterance. By positioning themselves as solely transmitting speech (Irvine 1996), race savvy whites were able to not take responsibility for racist talk. Speaking with a white educational and human services professional about community wealth disparities between Mansfield's whites and people of color, the professional told me:
We had a woman from the Bronx come out here. I don’t remember if she was a visiting assistant professor at [a nearby college] or what, but she was from the Bronx and she said that she couldn’t believe the blacks out here. That they were the laziest people she’s ever met. She left after a year.

Alison: Was she a white lady or a black lady?
Professional: Black lady. She was from the Bronx, you know, from the school of hard knocks. She left after a year, she couldn’t take it.”

In people of color ventriloquism, whites repeat what a person of color (may have) said and use that discursive text to affirm middle class white values and propriety. In this way, whites do not have to take responsibility for racist talk, racist ideologies get submerged as just talk, “she said”. Similarly, in the ventriloquism of marked whites, race savvy whites speak racism through the supposed voices of hillbillies, “rednecks” and other racially suspect whites. In a more formal analysis, using Gee’s formulation (1999), through little d discourse, white middle class Discourse is passed off as the Discourse of people of color or marked whites. While the reported speech certainly may reflect the worldview of one person of color, whiteness co-opts the voices of marginalized people and racially marked people to perpetuate racialized ideologies of privilege and supremacy.

Implicit in so many of my interactions in Mansfield was that only working class, poor, and Appalachian whites were racist. Blatant moments of racism, when it could not be attributable to anyone else but the middle class white speaker, were treated as “just a joke.” Middle class whites often ensured, through coercion, persuasion, or by disavowing the full implication of their actions and statements, that the “joking” frame was the only proper way to interpret an encounter.

In early 2008 I attended a town “roast” which spoofed a beauty pageant to make its jokes and roasts. The beauty pageant premise was so successful because the yearly competition that determines what young woman will represent the state in the Miss America pageant is held in Mansfield, in the very venue the roast was taking place in.\[^{59}\] Raising money for a charitable cause and loosely tying the event to the beginning of the bicentennial celebrations, the roast was more or less by the city elites, for

\[^{59}\] I mention this as way to capture the quirkiness of Mansfield but to also maintain my broader argument that small cities are global cities which contribute to and are tied to events and histories beyond their immediate horizons.
the elites (I wryly noted in my fieldnotes that afterwards all the cars departing the local theater were headed in the direction of Woodland and the well off, mostly white suburb of Blue Ash.) There were frequent jabs at various local institutions (for the local newspaper and its tendency to publish hunting pictures in the fall: “celebrating our ability to bring you wire stories, ads, and dead animals 365 days a year”) and current local and national events. But the event was also extremely white—in terms of its audience and its content. One “beauty contestant's” platform was migration: “We have room for intelligent, hardworking immigrants. They are intelligent” she said indignantly. “After all, they taught their kids pure Spanish.” The smirking cut drew appreciative howls and laughter from most of the crowd.

During the same show, an Indian American man in his late 20s who had recently been elected to the state legislature was there playing a well known county commissioner and in the role of a judge for the “beauty pageant.” The county commissioner, a white middle aged man, was infamous in the area as a nonstop talker who dominated conversation and forced meetings to drag on for hours. As he was introduced, Representative Safti parodied the commissioner by talking over and over the emcee. After several unsuccessful attempts, the emcee finally cut off Rep. Safti and got in a last word with, “been to the tanning parlor, haven't you?” The audience of several hundred people laughed and my mouth dropped open in shock. Rep. Safti self-consciously shrugged his shoulders and continued with his mumblings, acting as the commissioner.

I found this “joke” incredibly racist as it unnecessarily drew attention to Rep. Safti's racialized body and reduced him to a racialized object for the audience to laugh at. A comment on race in this context seemed unnecessary to me, although the emcee and show's writers clearly felt an explanation for the “commissioner's” skin color was in order to explain how a man of color could parody a white man. Moreover, the tanning parlor “joke” dismissed Rep. Safti's real racial identity via his parodied identity through a frivolous activity—going to a tanning parlor. Because this “joke” took place in an
institutionalized funny space (i.e. a roast), any accusations of racism would have been dismissed as overly sensitive or “missing the joke”. But the result remained the same: Rep. Safti was quite literally spotlighted as a racialized subject and essentially named as “not white” in a very public venue. Our anonymous whiteness, protected by the darkened audience seats, and the whiteness of Rep. Safti's fellow cast members, was asserted through contrast.

If someone actually questioned whether a joke, was really “just a joke,” whites were often quick to minimize the implications of their statement. For example, during the 2008 primaries I was drinking coffee at the Democratic Party's headquarters as I often did in the mornings (the Democrats were my landlords the first two summers I conducted research in Mansfield—I lived above their headquarters which is located on the Square.). One morning as the primaries were reaching a fevered pitch and the Clinton and Obama professional campaign teams were swarming in and out of the Party headquarters, an Asian American man came through carrying grapefruit and doughnuts for the volunteers' table. Standing around with some local Democrats, one of them turned to me and said in a half whisper, “What the hell is that? Even Tokyo is interested in this [primary].” I shook my head and chided the speaker.60 “Oh I don't mean it,” the speaker said with a giggle.

I often heard in Mansfield (and in non-fieldwork settings) a racist comment followed by a disclaimer of “oh I didn't mean it” or “I'm just kidding.” In recognizing a racist utterance, but dismissing it as a joke, speakers put distance between the comment and themselves. In this way, not only did they disavow the implications of the comment, but whites were still able to affirm their race savviness by essentially saying, “I know what I said is racist, but because I know it is racist, I couldn't have really meant it”. (Hill 1995). Relatedly, race savvy whites also often recognized racism in themselves and their neighbors, but dismissed it as an inevitable part of human nature. Whites (and some people of color) would say to me in interviews and during participant observations: “we're all

60 I leave the gender of this informant undisclosed to protect their anonymity.
prejudiced, it's human nature”—as if biology or our genetic blueprint “makes” us racist and thus absolves us of any responsibility for its “natural” expression. This phrase, “we're all prejudiced” also works to shift the onus of racism off of whites, making people of color just a culpable for its existence.

In saying “Oh I didn't mean it,” or “we're all prejudiced” whites are able to acknowledge white supremacist actions by other whites and themselves, without ever having to apologize for, mitigate, or acknowledge the implications of white racism. Whites know it is unacceptable to publicly racialize Asian Americans or use racial epithets to describe African American political candidates, but have very little incentive to not be racist. In fact, these minimized moments of racialization and racism actually work to reenergize and confirm whiteness; they were almost like special winks between white speakers which built a race-based, racially exclusive, relational space. In either minimizing obvious racism, or treading on the edge of what could be considered racist actions or remarks, these winks were just one of a repertoire of responses whites used to assert white supremacy.

Not surprising, as a white woman, I was often an interlocutor to these “white to white” moments in Mansfield. Perceiving phenotypic similarities between themselves and me, white informants often presupposed a race-based camaraderie. This presumed shared investment in whiteness assumed a safe situation in which many whites could give voice to or act out their fears and concerns about the changing racial order. It was assumed that I would be a safe person with whom to generate white relational space.

As Keith notes below in the following interview excerpt, these white racial “terms of engagement” are very difficult to prevent or stop. Here I am asking Keith, a white professional in his 30s, about growing up near Catalpa, a town 40 minutes north of Mansfield which has a lot of Mexican-descent laborers who come through on the summer agricultural circuit or who now permanently live in the town. When I would ask Mansfielders about Latinos in the area, most pointed to Catalpa as the only place in the region that had a Latino population.
1 Alison: What was the racism like in Catalpa, was it bad?
2 Keith: Yeah, it's pretty. It's extreme, but it's not. It's not, they don't act out. It's not that kind of racism.
4 A: Whites don't act out?
5 K: Right right. It's more like.. uh..
6 A: What do you mean by 'acting out'?
7 K: Oh they're not burning their houses down or burning flags or effigies or anything like that.
8 It's uh, it's much more subtle than that. It's in the language between white people. You know, 9 “those people” when they mean Mexican. You know things like that. It almost goes without saying, like you don't have to even define it because uh, it's assumed that you will already agree with that perspective. So when you're talking with someone in line at the bank or 12 whatever, even if they're total strangers. They'll be like, “Well, we could have been here earlier but there was a family of Mexicans.” And that is, it's very difficult to pinpoint 14 because uh it's, it's more in the tone than it is even in language. So it's a tough thing to put a 15 finger on. It's not something you can legislate out or.. it's just an attitude.
16 A: Mh-hmm. That white to white kind of talking.
17 K: Right. Absolutely. There's an understanding that that's never articulated in any way because there is a preconceived understanding I think.

Keith's description beautifully captures many of the elements of white “terms of engagement.”
In his succinct phrase, “the language between white people” (line 8) relies on certain codes of conduct: “It's assumed that you will already agree with that perspective” (lines 10-11) and “there's a preconceived understanding” (line 18). The tone, the way people talk, all are things that are tough “to put a finger on” but deeply determine the continuation of whiteness. “It's not something you can legislate out” (line 15), which for many whites, is a major reason why white supremacy is a difficult force to name and identify, much less challenge.

As Keith points out, even strangers assume there will be no resistance to moments when whites are interpolated into moments of whiteness. When opportunities arise where whiteness may be called out, named, and interrupted, instead it is usually ignored or minimized by all parties. In the field I was often guilty of this practice. Consider the following from my fieldnotes of an entirely white Halloween party.

Was hanging out with some relative, maybe a sister-in-law of [the party's host]. She told a joke, something about candy at Halloween, with the punchline being, white chocolate for black kids so they have dirty faces. I just kind of looked at her like, uh okay. She busted out her cell phone
which had lots of text forwards. Forwards which were pictures and words. There was one I think with a picture of a caveman that said "a caveman is smarter than a nigger" there was another racist joke as well that I had to read as well as listened to her read out loud. I gave a weak uncomfortable laugh and then got increasingly confused and irritated because after the joke about the white chocolate and the caveman it was pretty clear I wasn't very receptive to these jokes. She shared them a third, and then they finally stopped -- I don't think she necessarily sensed my discomfort, we were interrupted.

In the white code of conduct, whites assume there will be no push back to talk and actions that racialize space and people as nonwhite and reify white dominance through the naming and marking of people and space. At the Halloween party, true to my part in this exchange, I only gave a weak laugh and did not stop the stream of racist jokes or assumed white camaraderie. Although I was irritated and put off by the jokes, I never did anything to seriously jeopardize the relational space the sister-in-law was making with me through the assertion of whiteness. Not only was the constructed and produced space of the party white, so was our relational space. Situations like this demonstrate just how tightly woven whiteness is in every part of social life.

Generally, my stance in Mansfield was that I was there to listen and learn, pushing my personal anti-racist agenda would have foreclosed many important conversations and interactions that I had (Vega 2008 also discusses this personal conflict in her dissertation, especially pp. 47-48 and chapter 3, as does Moss 2003). With informants I knew well, I might challenge their statements and beliefs; with people I first met (for example, I had met the sister-in-law at the Halloween party only minutes before), I often felt it was more important to build rapport, in the case of the sister-in-law, or be a good guest to my hosts or sponsors (as happened at the Halloween party).

But by allowing these comments and acts to occur unmentioned, I and hundreds of thousands of other whites, enable the structures of whiteness to renew themselves over and over. In assuming a shared racial camaraderie, in understanding the nuances of white to white talk, and reproducing it

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61 After this experience I went online to see if I could confirm this joke. I discovered that it too was an entire genre unto itself and was a play off a Geico commercial series. See Angry Black Woman's post for an excellent analysis of the caveman in these ads http://theangryblackwoman.wordpress.com/2007/04/03/geico-caveman-commercials-irk-me/
through silence and acceptance, white supremacy is affirmed and rejuvenated. Whatever my intentions were in the field, my actions still had the same effects—whiteness continued on.

**The Ignorance of Whiteness**

A key component of whiteness, in any variation, is its ignorance. This is not a new observation (McIntosh 1988), but how it interacts with ideas of race savviness is worth examining because even as whites claim to be, and truly believe in their racial acumen, they are also often, glaringly ignorant of their racial privileges and of racial histories of oppression. This disconnect is, at times, obvious through “the language between white people,” but is also visible in encounters with neighbors of color. In being the diametric opposite of self-aware, whites in Mansfield (and elsewhere) regularly made inappropriate comments and inaccurate assumptions about people of color, relying on their whiteness to shield them from the consequences of their racial ignorance (Perry 2002).

For example, during the summer of 2008 I was hanging out at a bar that was usually racially mixed. One night a young, white, local man, Tom, showed up. I had never seen him there, but the bar staff and some other regulars seemed to know him. He was rather drunk and emanating a goofy, happy-go-lucky, stoner persona; he reminded me a lot of the “hippie” kids I went to college with (Bingham 2003, Samuels 2008). I don't recall Birkenstock sandals or a woven hemp shirt, and my notes don't mention his dress, but he certainly seemed the kind of guy to wear such accoutrements (I admit, my notes do make a snarky comparison between Tom and a former acquaintance of mine who religiously wore these kinds of clothes as an index of his liberal alternative lifestyle).

Tom, in his drunkenness, kept telling one black patron how “cool” he was: how cool his hair was, how cool his accent was, and how cool his jukebox choices were. The black man was distinctive for Mansfield standards with an east coast accent and long dreads pulled back. He was also extremely tolerant of Tom, to the point where I actually thought they were truly friends and not newly formed acquaintances. But eventually the patron had enough of Tom's “black is so cool” comments and lack of
self-awareness. After the man escaped to the other end of the bar, Tom turned back to the Olympics that were on tv. His quietness didn't last long. As I returned to my barstool after using the bathroom, I overheard Tom introducing himself to the bouncer—a tall muscular black man with a grill (removable precious metal caps on his teeth). I gathered that Tom was asking the bouncer about his grill: “why do you have that? I’m not trying to be smart, but uh…” Initially I could not hear the bouncer, but based on Tom's response, I assume the bouncer told Tom it was “money” (either in the literal sense of capital or in the slang sense of being really cool). “So it’s like money huh? It’s like your bank? Excuse me I’d like to make a deposit, hah!” From his facial expressions and body language, I could tell the bouncer was trying to decide if Tom was purposefully “messing” with him or if he was being “harmless” and was really just that racially dense. At first I was unsure of Tom's motive also, though as the encounter dragged on, I decided that Tom was sincerely, though ineptly, asking about the grill. After another agonizing minute of Tom making cracks about the grill and the bouncer becoming increasingly angered and unsure of the relational space Tom was assuming and creating, the bartender finally brought the bouncer his soda pop and he left Tom with a look of utter disgust.

In both interactions, when the men's irritation and glares were so obvious that they permeated Tom’s inebriation, Tom appealed to the older black bartender: “Mom,62 you know I don't mean it, right?” The bartender was surprisingly tolerant of his lack of self-awareness, especially since she rarely suffered fools. I assumed she was as annoyed as everyone else, but decided Tom was not threatening enough to call the bouncers in (though clearly they would have been happy to throw Tom to the curb).

Throughout both encounters, Tom was not argumentative or pushy at all. Instead he was tail-between-his-legs rueful: “I’m not trying to be smart”. But he still relied on an enormous store of white

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62 It was common in bars for patrons and bartenders to use the language of family and to sometimes even develop fictive kin relations. Tom and the bartender did not have a fictive kin relationship, but because this bartender was widely known as “Mom” to many of her patrons, Tom likely felt comfortable addressing her with this name.
privilege to have the impertinence to comment on and ask about highly identifiable African American fashions. To profess ignorance of the implications of his question about the grill or his comments about how cool the man's dreads were required almost a willful ignorance (Thompson 2003). Of note is that he never really apologize to either man. Instead he used sheepish statements, “I didn't know any better, I didn't mean it” to distance himself from these comments. Additionally, his appeals to “Mom,” the older black bartender work to further legitimate and excuse his ignorance by interpolating her as an adjudicator of his white racism. In saying “Mom, you know I didn't mean it, right?” Tom was, in essence asking, “Mom, you know I'm not racist, right?” Tom's sense of comfort in talking about African American fashion and his subsequent appeal to ignorance, instead of an honest apology for becoming overly familiar with the men, reveals how heavily he depended on his whiteness to get him through these high stakes situations. Most whites, especially white men, would never have been able to ask such impertinent questions or make such racist comments (despite them being “positive” statements on black fashion and culture) without the constant appeal to their own ignorance.

Whites lacked basic knowledge of issues such as racialized cultural practices to legal decisions that have historically oppressed people of color (for example, many whites are unaware of redlining practices and often assume people of color “want” to live in decaying inner city neighborhoods). However, many white Mansfielders were not just unaware of African American experiences, writ large, but also of their neighbors and coworkers. Basic information about neighbors of color that did not fit with whites' views of blackness or brownness were often ignored or dismissed. For example, early in my research I told a middle manager, who was a white woman, and an office secretary, who was a black woman, that I was interested in living in the Northend. Upon hearing that I was looking for housing there, the white woman turned to the black woman and said brightly, “she can learn about your culture!” The black woman looked a bit startled and said, “but I live in Blue Ash,” a very middle class and predominately white village next to Mansfield. The white woman seemed untroubled by this
information as she continued to talk about how much culture I would be exposed to in the Northend. I was unsettled by the assumption that the black woman must live in the Northend, but was far more unsettled when I learned later that these women had worked together for several years. After three or four years of sharing an office, the white woman didn't know that her colleague lived in Blue Ash? The encounter was extremely uncomfortable as the white manager sought to build white relational space with me by objectifying her coworker and her presumed culture for my benefit; our whiteness was positioned as being magnanimous and generous that we could learn about and talk about blackness (see Kiseling 2001 for similar examples among white fraternity men who mark their whiteness through their presumed knowledge of blackness)

Racial supremacy often gave whites the sense that they could ask any kind of question or make any kind of statement about blackness, brownness, and race-identified culture. At the intersection of race savviness and ignorance is a whiteness that shields whites from the full implications of their racial privileges—whiteness means never having to apologize for mistaken assumptions or overly personal race-focused questions (Perry 2002). But whiteness is not always given a pass. At times, other whites and people of color explicitly name whiteness and highlight its constellation of structuring benefits.

Defending Whiteness

Whites tend not to look kindly on those moments or experiences which explicitly draw attention to whiteness's structuring power, its supremacy, or its privileging benefits. Many white Mansfielders became livid when recounting experiences where their racial identity was explicitly named. By way of example, I recount below one especially candid conversation I had with three other white women about being called “stupid white girl.” I mix transcription, description, and analysis in order to make sense of the complex and multiple processes occurring in this moment and the moments they are describing. I do not have enough data to competently report on white men's experiences and responses to being racially marked, although aspects of the conversation below I had multiple times with both men and
women. I use this particular conversation only because it was one of the most sustained and candid discussions I had on this topic.

During 2008 I was hanging out with Fern, Edwina, and Phoebe, all three white mothers; Edwina was single at the time and had a multiracial child, Phoebe and Fern were both in long term relationships and had white children. Fern and Edwina were in their mid-twenties and working minimum wage jobs, Phoebe was in her forties and earning about $10/hour. All three were employed as low-skilled workers in the local health care industry. Phoebe was a self-identifying hillbilly and although Fern did not usually claim geocultural Appalachian ancestry, she socialized with Phoebe and her extended family and was often treated as an “honorary” hillbilly. Edwina had been born in one of Ohio's larger cities and moved to Mansfield as a teenager; she did not have familial ties to Appalachia.

One night, at a small weekend party, while standing around the food table, Fern began talking about work and told us how one of her co-workers had called her a “stupid white girl.” Fern had told me a version of this story several weeks earlier, but at that time I didn't have a chance to ask any questions. This time, I jumped in and asked why that was so offensive. Edwina seemed to get defensive at my question, as did Phoebe.

Phoebe: Was it a black guy that said that to you?
Fern: Yeah.
<The three women shared a moment of frustration and commiseration together by shaking their heads and huffing in frustration.>
Fern: When he said that to me, I said to him, 'how you know I'm not [racially] mixed or something? He stopped and just gave me this look <Fern twisted her face in a semi-shocked, semi-puzzled, semi-speechless expression.>

[[This rendition of the story actually contrasts with the first version I heard in which Fern only asked that question rhetorically to me and did not ask it of her addressor. The validity of either version is beside the point, the point is the discursive moves she tries to accomplish with this question]].

Phoebe: It makes me so mad because you aren't calling him a stupid..well, you know.
Alison: So it's because you can't return the insult with the same kind of insult?
Edwina: No, that's not it. This has happened to me before. It's because he's calling me stupid
and nobody should call me stupid.

I continued to probe and ask what it was about being called a stupid white girl that was so offensive. I asked what the specific differences were between being called stupid and being called a stupid white girl. After a bit of back and forth among the women, Edwina said that the phrase was offensive,

“because it doesn't matter if I'm white or not, so why bring it up?”

“Why does race matter?” Edwina challenged me.

Fern chimed in, “yeah, because if I said 'you stupid black girl' that would be racist”.

Edwina: Yeah, you stupid black girl has the same connotations as that other word. I don’t use that word. But that’s what it’s like.

At the same time that Fern and Edwina were telling me that marking one's race was offensive, Phoebe was saying,

I don’t like saying nigger, but if someone is acting like one, I’ll call them that. That word isn’t just for black people. Whites can be that word too. I’ll use it if someone’s said something to me.

I thought I knew Phoebe decently well at this point and had found her very even-keeled. I was surprised to hear her say that she would quite willingly and so easily “call them that.”

Fern: I don’t care if you are white, Puerto Rican, Mexican, or what your color is, you can be one.

When Fern said this, I wondered how many Latinos she knew since there were so few visible in Mansfield. In contrast to the majority of comments which claim that the speaker is not bothered by race, Fern's comment was distinctive in that she did not use the much commoner phrase “I don't care if you are black, white, purple or polka-dotted...” In other words, Fern was aware of and properly using ethnoracial categories that actually have traction and meaning in the United States.

At this point, I said “really?” indicating that I was skeptical that “nigger” could be used to describe anyone, regardless of race.
Edwina: “All it means is ignorant. That’s all that word means. Look it up in the dictionary.”

I said to Edwina, “no it doesn’t” in a tone that I thought conveyed that I was contesting her assertion that “nigger” only meant ignorant.

Edwina: Yes, yes it does. Look it up in the dictionary.
Alison: Yeah, but it only applies to a certain group of people.
Edwina: All it means is ignorant. Ignorant. But <she collapsed back in a half giggle> I still won’t use the word.

I had clearly touched a nerve with these women. By not offering support to other whites, I was out of compliance with the white terms of race engagement. In fact, I was exacerbating an already stressful encounter by highlighting our whiteness like the black man did in Fern's story. I stopped pursuing the matter because we were at an impasse and our relational space, white as it was, was stretched to the absolute limit. My relationship with all three was still relatively new at the time, and I valued their friendship. I always had difficulty meeting women while doing research and I keenly felt the lack of womanly companionship and support in Mansfield. As women who were close to my age, it was more important to me to drop the conversation than jeopardize our overall relationships.

The conversation moved on to other coworkers for a while, but eventually circled back around to the “stupid white woman” discourse. At this point, Fern had left and it was just Phoebe, Edwina, and myself standing around the chip bowl. Phoebe said that it was the “stupid part” that was most offensive part of the insult.

Phoebe: I mean, I am white. So I'd be like, I'm white, okay. Don't call me stupid.

Edwina: Nobody likes being called stupid.

Edwina said that being called stupid was what angered her the most.

But, race shouldn't matter. So why bring it up? It's like I'm just reduced to my race when you include that.

Certainly, the “stupid white girl” insult is offensive because it makes the discursive move that white = stupid. But such a visceral response to the insult, on the surface, seemed overblown to me,
and my opinion was obvious to the women. Yet almost everyone I spoke to about this kind of encounter was similarly vehement about its significance. In these “stupid white girl” moments and other interactions where whites felt like they were experiencing race-based censure, whites believed that race shouldn't be part of the discussion, per Edwina's “it doesn't matter if I'm white or not, so why bring it up?” Whites were very unsettled by moments that called attention to their whiteness and its attendant privileges and advantages. They felt that not only were they being personally attacked, but they were being attacked over something they “have no control over,” i.e. their phenotype. Because attention drawn to whiteness usually revealed the constructedness and unnaturalness of its supremacy, whites whose race was explicitly marked in conversation often feel trapped, like the rules of the game had suddenly changed beneath their feet. In an otherwise equal dispute, highlighting race, and specifically whiteness, worked as a “trump card”: there was nowhere else to go with the discussion or fight. As Fern and Edwina said “Because if I said 'you stupid black girl' that would be racist.” “Yeah, you stupid black girl has the same connotations as that other word. I don’t use that word. But that’s what it’s like.”

The racial familiarity that comes out of small city space gave white women like Edwina and Fern the experiential knowledge to know how offensive a racializing term like “stupid black girl” or “that other word” would be if used. They all had extensive contact with people of color: Edwina's former partner was African American, Fern lived in a multiracial apartment complex and all three women had African American coworkers. The sting of being racialized was well known to these women. But this racial familiarity also meant that they likely knew that “stupid white girl” was not quite equivalent to “nigger,” despite the fact that many different people told me that “blacks can say that to whites, but if it were the other way around, there would be hell to pay.” Attempts to generalize “nigger” out of a racist register (as all three women do here, also see Carrie in Chapter 4) or to position it as equally offensive as “stupid white person” do not, in the end, work. That frustration, that “gut
response” to being offended, but finding “stupid white” a poor match to “nigger” and recognizing that “nigger” derived meaning from its specific application to African Americans caught whites up in cycles of frustration. In feeling entitled to react so strongly and from the gut, whites relied on their whiteness, even as they believed that it was being attacked and treated with irreverence.

Whites explained the offensiveness of being racialized through discourses of “reverse racism.” I conducted the bulk of my research before the national or local rise of the Tea Party Movement, a movement that has often relied on elements of the reverse racism discourse in its xenophobic, jingoist arguments for meritocracy (McGrath 2010). However, conservative media pundits and their (white) listeners have bantered around accusations of “reverse racism” for several decades (Wise 2002). Certainly terms like “stupid white girl” racialize, but those moments do not amount to institutionalized racism—they do not have the same long institutional history that structurally and systematically disadvantage whites as racism does for people of color.

Yet as Chapter 4 explored, this institutional unbalance was often abstract for whites, especially compared to the lived interactions Mansfielders experienced and told stories about. In response to moments when the suffocating hold of whiteness was named, whites actively worked to protect, police, and assert whiteness. In particular, spaces of whiteness were closely monitored and defended in Mansfield. Social space was such an important vector in Mansfield because of the city's size and the implications of racial closeness.

While living in Mansfield, I would hear every few months, different bars described as “turning dark.” When I first heard this phrase in 2005, I honestly did not understand what the speaker meant, and asked why the lighting matter. Having failed to know this bit of white-to-white talk, the speaker gave me an “are you completely dense?” look and in the language of white people, euphemistically explained that the bar she was talking about was “getting rougher” with people “from the Northend” now patronizing the establishment. In other words, it was beginning to have more African American
customers. In 2008, I asked a different person what he meant when he off-handedly claimed another bar was “getting dark.” I thought I had asked it as neutrally as possible, but the young man gave me such a look, I suspect it was obvious that I wasn't as clueless as I seemed. His face mixed incredulousness that I did not know what he meant, irritation that I was challenging his use of this euphemism and disgust or displeasure that I was injecting “political correctness” into the conversation. He turned away and never answered my question.

White space that is becoming more multiracial is policed not just through racist assessments made to other whites, but also by enforcing whiteness in these spaces. An informant once told me how he and a white woman friend went to a local bar which is known to be a “white bar.” As a black man, Frederick had expressed some reservations about going, but since it was early enough in the evening he said that he thought that he probably would have no problems. Once there, he saw “that it was all white, but there was another mixed couple there too.” He and his friend sat down at the bar and were talking with the bar owners. While chatting with the owners, he watched the mixed couple hang out with their white friends. Frederick told me that he relaxed a little because the group was being nice to the man and everyone was joking around and being friendly.

But then, Frederick said, “as soon as the couple left, not even 30 seconds out the door, they [the remaining group of white friends] started saying, ‘I can’t believe she’s with that nigger, having nigger babies.’ And they knew I was sitting right there! What made me really mad was that the owners heard it all and didn’t do a thing! And they know us! They were just standing there!”

“Oh my god! What did you do?” I asked Frederick when he got to this part of the story. “I was pissed. I was really pissed. I was like, we have to go right now.” Frederick and his friend left. Unsurprisingly, Frederick has not been back to this bar. And based on the bar owners' unwillingness or lack of interest in stopping the racist talk and policing of space, the bar likely remains a very white space. Such dialogues and actions often serve the dual purpose of marking racially egregious
whiteness (i.e. the woman's whiteness), and working as a warning to people of color to respect the boundaries and expectations of whiteness. As I further explore in chapter 6, irreverent blackness and incorrigible whiteness is often heavily policed and castigated.

In some cases, as so often happens in Mansfield and the U.S. more generally, a white space does not even need a white person present to assert and protect whiteness. In an extreme testament to controlling and defending space, Mansfield had a noose hanging on its public Square until 2007 or so. I was alerted to its presence in 2005, but the informant who told me about it, a white man, would not divulge its location, although he did confirm that it was there to serve as a “reminder,” and was supposed to keep African Americans “in line”. Clearly he was protecting someone in particular and the reign of whiteness more generally. Although I looked and looked, I never found the noose during the summers I lived on the Square. Attempting to get confirmation about it from other Mansfielders, in 2008, I finally heard from a friend that a veteran police officer had confirmed to him that the noose had hung, from the inside, against a second story window. It had been taken down in 2006 or 2007. As a silent, but potent, reminder of spatial control, the noose and the story of the noose worked to warn people of color, but also affirmed to whites that their space and whiteness was protected. The noose's audience, so to speak, was both people of color and whites, who received very different messages from the same symbol.

*Subverting and Challenging Whiteness*

Despite all the active maintenance and defending of whiteness in Mansfield, whiteness was often questioned and subverted as well. While racial closeness gave whites an up close view of people of color and many opportunities for personal experiences to shape negative opinions and readings of the situation, there were also plenty of experiences that allowed whites to form more realistic racial worldviews and, in turn, prompt them to loosen their hold on and stakes on whiteness.

In some cases, whites who called into question and depart from the usual scripts whiteness
requires for effective and successful reproduction, were whites who left Bromfield County and then returned. Talking with a small business owner who had moved to the East Coast after high school and returned to the Mansfield area two decades later to raise her pre-teen children closer to her parents, she told me, “I can't believe how bad it is here [i.e. racism]. My girls have picked it up. I said to them we do not think this way.” The business owner said that her time away from Mansfield gave her the distance and experiences to rework her racial worldviews and so when she returned to her childhood home, she was much more sensitive to the protection and assertion of white supremacy than before she left. She was especially saddened and angry at how her kids' childhood experiences outside of Mansfield were not keeping new racial worldviews at bay. What I found most interesting in this conversation was the business owner's willingness to talk about race and specifically, to talk about white racism, especially with her own family. Telling me about the tactics and conversations she had with her children to counteract the new messages they were picking up in school and from local friends, it seemed to me that this business owner was determined to keep whiteness in question, and not simply assumed.

Speaking with a young white man about his experiences of “learning about race,” I found that there were some white parents in the area that were actively talking about racism. This young man had grown up around the state of Ohio, but had graduated junior high and high school from a district adjacent to Mansfield City Schools. He was currently living at home and attending college in Mansfield. Growing up he had had lots of intimate, sincere contact and experiences with people of color, specifically African Americans. He told me that he and his black friends talked about racism and he described a few situations he witnessed his friends experience and which he assessed as racist. He laughed when I asked him if his friendships with African Americans were ever a problem for his family. He explained that he found my question so funny because his older brother had actually started dating an African American woman during late high school and early college (see Mr and Mrs Loving
[1996] for a dramatic portrayal of a white man and African American woman's romantic relationship and marriage). He told me that when it was clear that their relationship was turning serious, his parents sat the brothers down and together talked about race with them. He said his parents were in fact very supportive of the relationship, but felt it was important for their sons to know what the possible responses would be to this interracial relationship. They wanted to know if the older brother could manage the censure and how he would responsibly handle those moments. The young man said that his parents, progressive professors he had met in college, and most importantly, his own personal experiences with friends and neighbors were the main influences which shaped his racial worldview.

In general, I found many young whites, both local to the area and “imports” to be racially attuned. Some of them may have had college courses which had forced them to rethink assumptions, but even those who did not have institutionalized influences such as teachers and critical readings, were often racially aware. Age was certainly a factor—these young people had grown up in the 1980s and 1990s, exposed to multiracial media like BET, MTV, and hip-hop and R&B radio stations (several white informants under the age of 35 cited *The Cosby Show* as an important media influence for their generation). But these young people had also grown up in an era where talking or acting racist was no longer acceptable in polite company (see Frankenberg 1997), and in an era where integration was accelerating due to economic influences and relaxed housing restrictions and increased workplace integration. Certainly there were plenty of young whites who were still deeply invested in the projects of whiteness and unwilling to acknowledge the connections between institutionalized racial power and their phenotype (see Eva in chapter 4 and Edwina, and Fern in this chapter). But I met many more whites in Mansfield who were critically thinking about their whiteness and its role in shaping social relations.

But it young people were not the only ones who questioned and challenged the privileges granted to them due to their phenotypes. For all the years I conducted lengthy research in Mansfield,
the local NAACP chapter had a white woman who was probably in her late 60s, as a vice president. She regularly attended public and private meetings on behalf of the NAACP and advocated for racial justice and equity. She was highly respected within the NAACP and within the black community more generally. Another older white—a man who had immigrated to the United States as a young professional—was a key player in getting a Martin Luther King statue placed on the city Square. Originally the NAACP had lobbied the county and city to rename a street in King's honor. When the city and county refused, the NAACP then suggested renaming a park and again, their requests were denied. According to some sources, this older white professional became the head of a civic group, essentially so he could advocate for the monument. His position allowed him to approve the monument. Without his advocacy, the city would not have agreed to the memorial.

Whites of all ages, but especially those under the age of 50, also regularly told me that they wanted to undo the racist teachings that they had learned from their parents while growing up. One day I told a local woman in her late 40s that I was writing a book about race relations and how they might be changing as the economy restructured. She immediately said, “I used to date a black guy. And I never thought I would. I was scared to date a black guy. I never thought I would. But then I did. And ever since then I’ve been around Blacks more and the closer I’ve been to them, the more I want to know about their culture and their lives and the ways they live”. She said it quite sincerely. While the statement itself is unpalatable in assuming there is a unified black “culture” which is open for consumption (hooks 1992), it seemed to me that the woman meant, “I have been ignorant about people of color and their life experiences and I want to fix that”. When I asked her why she was initially scared to date a black man, she explained that she had been raised in a “really racist” household. She said that when she started dating this boyfriend, her family did not accept her relationship and “they never talked about it. They acted like I didn't have a boyfriend. It hurt me a lot.” Even though the relationship eventually ended, she said that the experience of having her family erase her boyfriend's
existenced and their relationship forced her to question their assumptions and her own. She said that in
developing intimate knowledge of her boyfriend's life and his family, she abandoned much of what she
had been taught about African Americans.

And of course, people of color challenged and subverted whiteness, especially middle class
whiteness. Talking with whites and people of color about the privileges of whiteness and the racism
they had experienced in Mansfield was one way that people of color challenged the societal assumption
of whiteness and its presumed privileges and supremacy. Not only naming whiteness, but speaking and
acting without regard to white racial expectations challenged white supremacy and the claims it made.
For example, enjoying hip hop while driving down Mansfield's main drag, or being affectionate with a
white romantic partner, disregarded whiteness. This irreverence often highlighted whiteness, and by
doing so, undermined it, even if momentarily.

One African American bar owner has said publicly and privately that her business suffered
because she owned and ran a bar in a white majority neighborhood. In late 2008 she told me “If I had
your face [i.e. white face], this bar would be doing great.” But people of color don't just use talk to
resist whiteness. The same owner told me about visiting a nearby bar which was known in the city as
being an all-white space. She said to me “Now we were ten deep and [a white friend] was the minority
in the group. We went down there and had a ball.” She went on to tell me how much fun was had by
everyone, including the regulars at the white bar. The night's festivities reached a peak when she
cajoled the usually gruff white bar owner and several of his patrons to get up and dance with her to the
“Cupid Shuffle” a R&B line dance song that was extremely popular in Mansfield at the time. Speaking
to other people who had been there that night, it was clear that everyone involved, including patrons at
the white bar, were all surprised at how positive the experience was for everyone. Although I do not
know if another mass visit ever occur after this trip (my fieldwork session ended shortly after she told
this story), even the one trip was important because it upset the assumed tenor of the white bar. The
space was no longer white-only, but the multiraciality of it was not as threatening as patrons might have thought it would be.

Although challenging or subverting white supremacy does not necessarily change the structural system of phenotypic advantages and benefits, these departures from racial expectations force whiteness to morph and adjust to changing conditions. While tallying whites in Mansfield along “invested” and “uninvested” lines is too simplistic and misses the complex and shifting ways people shape and maintain race, we can find hope in moments of flux and contestation. For when whiteness is undermined, unexpected changes, for the better, can occur and the defense of whiteness can become less urgent and less important.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to trace constellations of whiteness within Mansfield in order to understand how white supremacy and white racial privilege operates in quotidian small city life. I traced the ways distinctions are made between whites who enact and embody white racial propriety and racial respectability and those who are marked as not, to show how whites constantly monitor and self-monitor whiteness. As a cultural phenomenon that structures social life, whiteness must shift and adjust to changing realities—as Mansfield has become more multiracial and the United States more racially aware, it is, perhaps, not surprising that whiteness has begun to co-opt talk about brownness and blackness. Race savviness and the ignorance of whiteness both derive their power from the assumptions whites make about their knowledge of people of color.

Persistent internal inspections within whiteness and and the border inspections between whites and nonwhites suggests that whites' are still heavily invested in whiteness and their claims to its privileges. The work to permanently change race relations for the better is far from over. Yet, the ways whiteness is subverted, challenged and corrupted suggests how strongly whiteness is contested. This contestation, by whites and people of color, provides more and more opportunities for the creation of a
race-conscious, racist-free world.

The next chapter looks at the ways that whiteness shapes intimate, interpersonal relationships between whites and people of color. In Chapter 4 I established the importance of relational space as a spatial vector in the city, and in this chapter I examined the stakes of whiteness and the ways it shapes small city life. Chapter 6 examines the intersection of whiteness and relational space through the lens of interracial friendships and romantic relationships.
Chapter 6: Interracial Relationships: Experiences of Race in the Context of Trust and Whiteness

“It's been black and white as long as I can remember. When I moved to Detroit in the '80s, I remember thinking how weird it was that it was all black. It's been blacks and whites together a long time [here in Mansfield]” (Mr. Garvey, 60s, African American)

When I first arrived in Mansfield, I was initially surprised by the prevalence of interracial friendships and romantic relationships. Everyday I saw couples and groups of friends grocery shopping, walking down the street, playing with their kids at the park, hanging out on front stoops, attending church, or cheering on children and friends at sporting events. After my initial fieldwork session in 2005, I realized I had gone to Mansfield with the unacknowledged assumption that I would find a small town stuck in a segregated pre-civil rights mentality. As I have discussed in previous chapters, segregation and racism is still a lived daily reality for Mansfielders. However, this has not inhibited Mansfield's many “mixed” relationships. City residents themselves often remark that there is a high number of mixed relationships in Mansfield, especially as compared to its surrounding towns and villages, but also in comparison to larger cities in the region like Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh.

The most visible and socially marked of these relationships are romantic relationships between white women and African American men, but during my years of fieldwork (2005-2009), all racial and gender combinations in friendships and romantic relationships were common to the small city. During these years of research, almost everyone I met participated in an interracial friendship. And while I do not have any official figures of how many interracial romantic relationships there are in Mansfield, it seemed that everyone I met in Mansfield knew of at least one couple.

As demonstrated by earlier chapters, given the history of Mansfield, its particular small city space is a conducive environment in which these relationships arise. Physically compact space, long term economic circumstances that force residents to share workplaces and neighborhoods, and relational knowledge of neighbors, all contribute to the making and perpetuation of meaningful interracial relationships. But stigmatization and resistance towards interracial relationships, especially
romantic relationships, continue in Mansfield and throughout the United States (for the legal regulation of interracial relationships in U.S. history, see Moran 2001). This chapter examines what “mixed” friendships and romantic relationships mean to ongoing, and often competing, racial projects within Mansfield. This chapter focuses on interracial relationships as one site where relational space is built, negotiated, and sustained over periods of time. Interracial relations also produce stories and lessons of race and race relations. As a significant cultural fact in Mansfield, mixed relationships are an important site for making race in the small city.

After a brief review of historically significant and notable interracial relationships in Mansfield, this chapter focuses on contemporary relations. While I mostly examine semi-structured interviews conducted in 2005 and 2008, my excerpted choices reflect years of participant observation, and numerous informal conversations that I participated in or was audience to. The majority of my excerpts are from white women and secondarily, from African American men. As a white woman, I experienced much better rapport or closer relational space with other white women (see my introductory chapter for more details on the demographic range of the informants I consulted for this research). My ability to speak with African American men partially came out of the historical nature of interracial relationships in Mansfield. In interviews I did try to ask white men and women of color about their experiences and reactions towards interracial relationships. Often, they made it clear that this was a topic they were unwilling to discuss with me. This reluctance significantly points to the ongoing complicated nature of interracial relationships. I understood informants' misgivings as a response to me breaking rules of racial propriety for whites, ignoring the white terms of race engagement. Specifically with informants of color, I understood their responses as being annoyed or offended by my (white) presumption to ask people of color racially-loaded questions. The long history of white “expert” research and opinion on people of color makes this response understandable and warranted. The history of race relations within the United States was constantly in my mind during
fieldwork and I hope I have appropriately respected that history in my research and in this dissertation.

Throughout this chapter I utilize discourse analysis to investigate predominant understandings of interracial relationships. I use discourse analysis because this method probes the mutually dependent relationship between Foucaultian discourses (1972) and the everyday talk that gives voice to these ideological structures (Gee 1999, Hill 1998, van Dijk 1996 and van Dijk1999). (See Appendix A for transcription symbols). I argue that the talk surrounding interracial relationships, especially romantic relationships, indexes deeply held anxieties many whites have regarding the continuation and strength of white dominance within the United States. With its especial attention to white femininity and the denigration and fetishization of blackness and brownness, I trace how these discourses use the paired concepts of incorrigibility and irreverence to maintain white racial and gender propriety. I then examine how whites struggle to understand and challenge white racial propriety, but have uneven success. I conclude by turning my analysis back onto the relational space formed in interracial relationships and which is constantly subject to inspection. Inspections by neighbors, partners, friends, and family members often produce uncomfortable and stressful relational space which must be processed—always within the context of larger discourses of race, propriety, and privilege.

Admittedly, this chapter primarily focuses on romantic heterosexual relationships. I do this because the anxieties and talk that surround interracial romantic relationships are much more pronounced and prevalent regarding heterosexual courtship and marriage than friendships (Frankenberg 1993). Concerns about the regeneration of whiteness and procreation often lie at the heart of interracial discourses (Carter 2007). Heteronormativity erases gays and lesbians and their ability and desire to have children. Moreover, many gays and lesbians I met in Mansfield told me it was difficult to be “out.” Although there is less homophobia today than in previous decades, many told me or made it clear that it was still easier to function in Mansfield as “straight” people. None of the out informants I interviewed had been in (or were willing to talk about) interracial romantic relationships within
Mansfield itself. One informant generously shared stories of a long term interracial relationship, however he and his boyfriend never lived in Mansfield when they were a couple.

Except for a brief discussion in the last section of this chapter, I do not focus on intergenerational familial relations (e.g. relationships between parents and children). I primarily focus on peer relations because I feel that I have insufficient data on the intergenerational dynamics of interracial relations. I will say that of the total city population, 3.1% identify as two or more races in the 2006-08 American Community Survey (United States Census 2008a). Nationally 2.2% of all residents identify as two or more races (United States Census 2008e). These numbers locally in Mansfield and nationwide will undoubtably continue to increase in the coming decades.

The few informants willing to discuss their relationships with their multiracial children often stuck to a colorblind discourse—this was especially prevalent among white women in regards to their young biracial children. Some informants claimed they didn't talk about race with their children because the kids were too young. But informants, especially those whose children were school aged or adult, did say that raising multiracial children was a learning experience for both themselves and their children. Many parents with older children said that they worked to have their children “know all their cultures.” Interestingly, I heard this sentiment most often expressed by men of color, especially men of color whose partners were of color but racially different (for example a Latino man whose wife was African American)—although this may be more of an indication of who I was able to talk to and less of an indication of citywide trends. Still, because of the sanctions experienced by participants of multiracial relationships, I usually treaded gingerly around topics of familial multiraciality and interraciality. Despite attempts to ask people about their kin relations, self-identified whites, self-identified blacks, and self-identified multiracial people usually deflected my questions.

In addition to primarily focusing on straight romantic relationships, and peer relations, much of this chapter centers on discourses surrounding relationships between white women and men of African
descent because intersections of whiteness with gender expectations and middle class norms are so pronounced in these situations (Frankenberg 1993). An admitted weakness of this chapter is that I do not explore the experiences of nonblack people of color. This is because there are such small Latino, Asian, and Arab descent populations in Mansfield that I was unable to speak with many people about their dating and romantic experiences. More importantly, I do not want to compromise the anonymity of those nonblack informants of color who did tell me about their interracial romantic experiences— their experiences are so unique that to disguise key identifying elements of their accounts would ultimately change their stories. I regret this limitation.

Additionally, I focus on white-black relationships because they produce anxieties among whites and people of color. However, these anxieties come from very different historically constituted concerns. To be blunt, white Mansfielders, of many different geocultural and class backgrounds, are often uneasy about the loss of white racial propriety or the loss of white privilege and racial supremacy. Mansfielders of color are more concerned with claims of white entitlement and the continued colonization and consumption of people of color and their cultural practices (hooks 1992). These discourses were most often explicit in regards to individual mixed romantic relationships.

But because friends often experience (to a lesser degree) the fraught relational space and societal stigmatization and policing that romantic partners face, I consider both types of relationships. I use “relationships” to indicate friendships, romantic relationships, and kin relations; I always specify when discussing one type in particular. When appropriate and relevant, I differentiate between sexual relations and romantic relationships; I understand romantic relationships to be much more complex, committed, and temporally entangled than sexual relations which may be confined to superficial or brief interactions.

Lastly, this chapter uses interracial and “mixed” interchangeably when describing a relationship between a person of color and a white person. I use mixed in regards to relationships because this
term is overwhelmingly used by Mansfielders when talking about interracial and multiracial situations and people. In this sense, mixed names vectors of difference that significantly impact how a relationship is formed between partners and the response those social actors encounter in their everyday lives. However, unlike many Mansfielders, I do not use “mixed” to describe multiracial individuals because I find the term problematic when applied to people. As Frankenberg delineates, at the base of “mixed” is an implied biological dimension that suggests ideas of absolute racial difference and racial impurity (1993: 95, 100). Similar biologized notions undergird the naming of relationships, but the term also reflects the reality of difference and censure interracial relationships face. For this reason, and to keep with the predominant local term, I do use mixed when speaking of peer relationships.

**Contextualizing Interracial Relationships in Mansfield**

As Chapter 2 documented, mixed relationships have been a fixture in Mansfield for many years. Older Mansfielders in chapter 2, like Mr. Barr and Mr. Chestnutt, recalled interracial friendships during the Great Depression and after World War II. Mixed marriages and courtships have been occurring in the Mansfield area since at least 1920, as indicated by Paul Esperza's marriage to Ada Esperza, a white woman from Tennessee (see Chapter 2). Even as Mansfielders point to the recent visibility and number of public relationships, vis-a-vis other locations in the Midwest and the country, within the last four decades, the historical record shows that mixed relationships of all kinds have been a part of social relations in Mansfield for even longer than many residents realize.

From 1938 to 1957, African American Charles “Bun” Drye, was legendary for being a “keeper of a disorderly house” in Mansfield (“Court Padlocks Notorious Bun's”). Drye owned and operated most of the bars, billiards halls, bordellos, and gambling houses in the Flats. Whites and people of color frequented his clubs and black sex workers in his establishments served johns who were white and of color (see Mumford 1997 for similar examples in Chicago and New York before WWII.). One older white informant told me in 2008 that to initiate apprentices into his (all white) union during the mid-
1950s, “they'd take you down to the jazz clubs and black whores in the Flats for the night.” As I knew that this informant was a provocateur and jokester, I asked him if this really happened because I was unsure if he was goading me and my well-known interest in “racial stuff.” He deflected my questions with laughter and teasing.

Although I never received firm confirmation of this initiation ritual, such activities surely happened. Drye's most infamous gambling parlors and “dens of sin” were shut down in 1957 and he died in 1959 at the age of 52. His estate was valued at $60,636 in 1960, an amount that is close to a half million dollars in terms of 2010's buying power63 (“Drye's Estate Set at $60,363”, Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index Calculator).

According to many older informants and local historians, one reason Bun Drye was so successful was due to his friendship with Tony Mollica. Mollica was an Italian American who ran a number of the bars and clubs in Downtown. Occasional business partners and regular collaborators on many informal projects (like buying off state liquor inspectors), Drye and Mollica mediated local interracial disputes and often represented each other as the situation required. Drye might recommend workers for Mollica's kitchens, Mollica might contract lower distribution fees for beer and soda pop delivery to Drye's establishments.64 According to several older informants, many of Mansfield's bars and clubs were directly controlled by, or reported in some way to one of these two men. Their relationship—part business, part friendship—protected their local holdings and enforced neighbor-like relations among black and white Mansfielders.

In 1962 the men's public bathroom on the Square, which was located underground, was the target of a month long police sting operation. With a cameraman hidden in the utility closet and filming the bathroom through a two-way mirror, the Mansfield City Police recorded three weeks worth

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63 $443,996.87
64 My thanks to the director of a local museum for this information and an informant who, as a teenager, delivered Coca-Cola to bars and restaurants in the Flats and Downtown.
of men cruising and having public sex. The 16mm surveillance film not only documented men engaging in homosexual sex (which was scandalous enough), but it also documented interracial sex, as well as cross-class sex and sex between young and old men (cf. Chauncey 1994). The multiple and intersecting taboos broken by the men were beyond the pale (ex. the psychiatric community listed homosexuality as a mental disorder until 1973). The bathroom was closed immediately and the newspaper issued a series of op-eds on the “sex deviates” (Skilled Police Work). The incriminating film was used in court to charge over 30 men with indecency and sodomy, which at the time carried a mandatory one to twenty year state penitentiary sentence. Most men served one to two years in a state prison in Youngstown, Ohio, although some were able to serve their sentence in Mansfield at the Ohio State Penitentiary (formerly the Ohio State Reformatory). At least one man was incarcerated for nine years (Jones 2008). The very public court hearings destroyed the personal and professional lives of all the men involved, and by extension, other men in Mansfield who desired gay sex.

The covertly-shot material eventually became an instructional film, *Camera Surveillance*, distributed to hundreds of police departments around the nation by the Highway Safety Foundation which was headquartered in Mansfield. Ostensibly it taught safety forces how to conduct surveillance, but it enforced heterosexual, racially proper, norms of sex through humiliation and served as a very public warning that homosexual encounters (especially interracial encounters) would be severely disciplined by the state. The footage also made the rounds in various elite cocktail parties in Mansfield, becoming a medium through which to monitor and shame neighbors. For all viewers, it provided a voyeuristic view of gay sex, particularly at a time when gay pornography did not exist (Jones 2008).

The film and the subsequent court trials also physically changed the landscape in Mansfield—the bathroom opening was capped and covered over with grass just months after the sodomy charges were issued. A very large sandstone monument commemorating Korean War veterans now sits where
the original opening was located—there is no indication in the topography that a bathroom even exists underneath the square (see image 6.1). After falling into obscurity, the footage was rediscovered forty five years later by artist William E. Jones. With minimal editing, the film, under the name "Tearoom", was screened as a “found footage” film in the 2008 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art and several other major art shows around the world. As an art piece, the film is now valued at a quarter of a million dollars and considered an important experimental film that recovers gay history.⁶⁵

In 1972, a 52 year old white man⁶⁶ who ran one of the most successful post-war, locally-owned, factories in Mansfield was shot while in the Northend on a Thursday night at one in the morning. By this point in the city's history, the Northend was identified as the “black part of town” and the apartment building which he was shot outside of was Mansfield's first public housing buildings. He lived in the outskirts of Mansfield with his wife and three children, making his presence in the Northend so late at night unusual. Informants and local historians explained to me that the night he was shot, this local captain of industry was returning his 19 year old African American paramour to her home after an evening together. He was shot by the young woman's boyfriend and a woman friend. Paralyzed from the chest down, the local magnate recovered enough to continue building his company, making it one of the few industries to still turn a profit in Mansfield in the twenty first century. The girlfriend and her friends were incarcerated.

Although five years early, in 1967, the Loving v. Virginia case had found all anti-miscegenation laws and statutes unconstitutional (Mr and Mrs Loving 1996), interracial relationships were still rarely socially acceptable within the United States. In Mansfield, the sentiment was no different. The

⁶⁵ My thanks to Kevin Jerome Everson for screening a copy of Tearoom for me and for providing me with such rich information on the history of film and filmmaking. Props to Kevin for also teaching me about the place of found footage in today's contemporary experimental and fine art scene.

⁶⁶ As the philanthropic foundation established by this industrialist continues to benefit the city, I do not identify him by name.
interracial, age-discrepant, cross-class, nature of this relationship—as well as the shooting itself—scandalized Mansfielders, and provided rich gossip material for months. His wife never discussed the incident publicly or with friends. From the night of the shooting to his death in 1987, the local newspaper steadfastly labeled the incident as a “robbery attempt,” (Taylor 1972). Perhaps unconscious of the implications, but likely not, the magnate built new manufacturing facilities on the Company Line in 1975 (see map 2.3 and chapter 2 for more details). Although the Company Line was one of Mansfield's first black neighborhoods, it had been completely bulldozed in 1972 as an urban renewal project sponsored by the federal government. However, in building his plant there, this business man reworked a historically black domestic space into a white-run corporate space.

Just four years after Martin Luther King, Jr's assassination in 1968, and nine years after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, multiple fights broke out in the city schools during the 1972-73 school year. These fights almost always divided along racial identities and were frequently over racially inflected incidents. These fights culminated with a week of unrest in 1973. The “Senior High Riots” as many people call it, began after two senior high school students, a young black man and a young white woman, began dating publicly. (At this time Mansfield had one senior high school with grades 10-12 and two junior high schools with grades 7-9.) As one informant told me,” this boyfriend/girlfriend thing pissed off some whites so much that a drunk hillbilly shot [another black youth].” The youth was shot in the leg on his way to a Friday night high school football game and was not the part of the couple, but a friend. The shooter hopped a train out of town and wasn’t caught till Sunday night in a town several counties away. The slow police response in finding and arresting the shooter incensed the African American community and its allies.

All the following week fistfights broke out in the senior and junior highs and a junior school student was stabbed. During this week and throughout the rest of the school year, the junior high schools and senior high school were frequently in lockdown, with students being racially separated:
white students were corralled into classrooms and locked in, while African American students were left in the hallways. Students who were neither black nor white, but for example, Latino, were frequently in limbo during these moments and their racial identities, politics, and allegiances explicitly questioned by students, teachers, and administrators, as well as by county sheriffs and local police who were called in to end the fights. Multiracial, Afro descent, students, then as now, usually identified themselves as African American and were treated by teachers, administrators and the state as being nonwhite.

Despite the extremely contentious, and at times, dangerous nature of interracial romantic relationships, many Mansfielders in their forties and fifties date 1973 as a watershed moment for interracial romantic relationships in the small city. While discussing the Senior High Riots during an 2006 group interview, Thurgood, a middle class black man in his mid-fourties, told me “Mansfield has a lot of interracial relationships. It’s been like that for a long time.” He and the other two interviewees thought the historical presence of mixed romantic relationships in Mansfield had led to their contemporary prevalence. They all agreed that the (public) knowledge of even one couple made it easier for other couples to publicly date and marry.

Thurgood's point was echoed in numerous interviews, including one I conducted the year before in 2005. Booker, an African American man in his late forties told me,

It’s not just the younger kids either […] Oh yeah, all my- mostly all my friends {in their forties and fifties}, you know, are in some kind of relationship with someone of a different, different race. Um. It’s standard. It’s just a standard thing here. Which is great. […] You come to parties at all my friends’ houses, I will guarantee you that you will have, at least a-, no you will have a 50/50 mix. And it’s, it’s great. But, seeing like the older generation, you know, it’s still stuck, so. You gotta wait for that part to be dying out now.

Despite Thurgood and Booker's assessment that interracial romantic relationships had become more normalized, they were both quick to tell me that mixed relationships were still not completely accepted. As Booker's comment suggests, disapproval still remains strong; note that the mixed parties Booker attended were held in the privacy of his friends' homes, not in a public location.
In the group interview I conducted with Thurgood, a white woman brought up “the stare” which she and her black fiancé regularly received. Her fiancé dryly explained that “every now and then we get 'the stare' which is not the stare of awe. There's more of a reserved look. It's just like, 'hey, I don't appreciate seeing you [two together] here.’” Informants who went to high school in the decades after the 1973 riots told me of individuals who were hassled and shunned because they were dating “outside their race.” Despite the continued stares, harassment, and discrimination, many residents whose children and grandchildren are now in mixed relationships identify the Senior High Riots as a turning point.

Even prior to 1973 when mixed romantic relationships began going public, whites and people of color in Mansfield were friends and socializing. Many informants spoke of living next to racially different neighbors in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Sports teams often brought together young adults, especially boys, from across the city. (Title IX which legislated against gender discrimination in education and school sponsored sports was not passed until 1972 and not implemented nationally in any serious way until 1978 [AAUW 2010]). One African American man explained that during the late 1960s “we were friends because of common interests, but also because we needed each other for protection. When I did cross country, my white friends would protect me when we ran in Little Kentucky. When we ran in the Northend, they depended on me. We understood that we needed each other.” Friendships in Mansfield were able to and continue to competently acknowledge racial difference precisely because shared interests, workplace experiences or common experiences more immediately shape the relationship.

In analyzing contemporary friendships and romantic relationships among white Mansfielders and Mansfielders of color, it is important to recognize that interracial relationships have been publicly occurring for a long time in this small city, long before even Mr. Garvey of the epigram would remember. Equally important to the analysis in the following sections is that much of Mansfield's
interracial history has been forgotten, or purposefully covered over, like the tearoom on the Square. This constantly erased history, this amnesia of “race relations” in the small city (much less national histories of race relations) enables whiteness to treat interracial relationships as new crises and aberrations that must be “dealt with,” instead as what these relationships are: an ordinary and enduring part of city social life.

**Protecting Against Incorrigible White Women and Irreverent Black Men**

One way Mansfielders (and others in the United States) contain interracial relationships and destabilize their legitimacy is through the use of discourses that stigmatize white women and condemn men of color (Frankenberg 1993: Chapter 4). In reducing a relationship to a pat set of seemingly self-evident explanations, it is easy to vilify its participants and dismiss the relationship.

Most discourses start from the premise that white women who engage in interracial romantic relationships are psychologically damaged and that black men are opportunistic, taking advantage of white women to fulfill their sexually insatiable desires. Below I reproduce excerpts from an interview with Collette Willy, a 45 year old white working poor woman. While her talk was perhaps the most explicit and sustained of all the conversations I had on this topic, I could have very easily used excerpts from a number of different interviews that, at times, almost repeated verbatim what Collette told me.

1 Collette: White girls have black boyfriends to get attention, to rebel. What better way
2 to piss off your racist father than to date a black guy?
3 Alison: Do you think that black men and white women, or what you were saying,
4 black boys and white girls might be together because of love?
5 C: Nope. No, I don’t think so.
6 A: Why?
7 C: <Silence, working mouth, but no words coming out.>
8 A: Because it’s not natural?
9 C: It’s not natural. I think it happens with women who have no self-esteem, who don’t
10 think they are pretty. I know that one girl down the street with the black baby, she’s
11 fourteen, remember. She told me that she thought she was fat and ugly and nobody
12 paid attention to her. And he [i.e. the baby’s father] did. And things went farther
13 than she wanted, but she didn’t want to lose him and be alone and not have anyone
14 tell her she’s pretty, so it happened. And now she has a baby.
15 A: Uh-

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16 C: They say, ‘once you go black, you never go back’.
17 A: What? Like after that, white women will never date- what
18 does that mean?
19 C: Well once you go black, you’ll never date a white guy, because what white guy
20 wants to raise a black baby.
21 A: Oh? You don’t think so?
22 C: No.

[[Later on Collette told me about using cocaine while living away from her family when
she was in her early twenties. She summed up her story by saying]]

23 C: I felt like nobody cared about me, like my family didn’t love me. I’ve always
24 been a heavy girl and I really had low self-esteem then. Wow, I’m surprised I didn’t
25 end up with a black baby (hhhhhh)!

Her use of infantilizing talk in line 1 and line 10 (i.e. girls) suggests that white women in
interracial relationships are psychologically underdeveloped. Not only does Collette position white
women in mixed relationships as psychologically immature, but damaged as well. In lines 9-14 she
attributes a neighbor’s pregnancy to her alleged low self-esteem. Her assumption that interracial
romantic relationships occur simply out of spitefulness (lines 1-2) or desperation (lines 11-14, 19-20,
23-5) and not because the couple has a meaningful or healthy relationship is a common one (lines 3-5,
16). Another informant, a retired white man in his late 60s, claimed that only “dog ugly” white women
are with black men because “white men won't have them. They're too ugly.” I regularly heard whites
claim that only overweight white women date and marry black men (like in line 24), supposedly
because thin women don't have to “settle.”

Believing that interracial relationships are reducible to sex and regularly result in unwanted
pregnancies (lines 12-14) position white women as agentless victims. Additionally, men of color,
especially black men, are rendered hyper-sexualized, insatiable, and predatory (lines 12, 24-25)
(Collins 2005). These kinds of discursive moves have a long history within the United States, and
influences how men of color are treated in the workplace, in the legal system, in the education system,
and in all social situations (Moran 2001).
Almost all discourses surrounding interracial relationships also obsess about the children which are always assumed to come out of the relationship. Collette reveals the base anxiety whites have about interracial romantic relationships—they produce “black babies” (line 10, 24-25). Bi- and multiracial people in Mansfield often identify themselves as “mixed” and are usually identified by others as “mixed” in an acknowledgment of their multiracial heritage. On the rare occasion I did hear whites (though never blacks) call a multiracial person “mulatto” or “mulatta” but that term, interestingly, was almost always applied to a multiracial person the white speaker did not know personally. In fact, it seemed like I only ever heard it applied to famous black-identified actors and actresses, indexing a legacy of racially qualifying actors of color (Mask 2009). My sense was that the terms “mulatto” and “mulatta” had fallen out of usage in Mansfield.

Besides being an offensive throwback to 19th century racial categories (Moran 2001), one reason “mulatto” has little play in Mansfield is likely because in the daily life of racially inspecting neighbors, the racially complex background indexed by the term is generally subsumed. When Mansfielders are spoken about in relation to family members they become racial essentials—the neighbor is a white girl with the black baby (line 10), Collette, a white woman, might have ended up with a black child (line 24). Relatedly, I have heard, on occasion, the children of a black man differentiated by race: “I'm talking about his black kid, not the white one”—the white child being born to a white woman and the black child to an African American woman. And once I spoke to a black woman at a public function who told me in the course of our conversation about local public assistance services, “my white daughter—her daddy was white—has a lot more medical problems than my black daughter. I had her when I was 36, so maybe that's why she's got so many problems.” In these instances, race is used as shorthand to untangle the complicated relations inherent to most families in the U.S. However, the fact remains that multiracial children are racially essentialized in these conversations.

Through the ongoing endurance of the “one-drop” ideology, white women jeopardize their own
whiteness and the whiteness of their potential offspring by participating in interracial romantic relationships (lines 19-22). To be clear: improper white femininity threatens “the race,” therefore proper white femininity must be enforced and monitored (Frankenberg 1993). Collette's supposedly self-abasing joke, “wow I’m surprised I didn’t end up with a black baby, ha ha!” affirms Collete's white femininity and simultaneously secures it through white woman-to-white woman policing.

Although interracial romantic relationships are usually discursively framed as a lapse of judgment among women before they grow up and become “responsible” or “settle down” with a white man, their irreverence toward white racial propriety is still racially egregious. Within the racial reckonings of many white Mansfielders, mixed relationships are so threatening because they permanently damage white women’s racial, class, and gender success in the future, per Collette’s “what white guy wants to raise a black baby?” (line 19-20). Since these discourses assume that no respectable white man would want to raise a black baby, the implication is that white women are only supposed to be with white men. Sexual involvement with men of color and their projected children sully white women.

Unlike other research which claims whites are racially “darkened” through their contact with people of color (Hartigan 1999, for historical studies see Brodkin 1998), I found during research that white Mansfielders retained the privileges and entitlements their phenotype produces.67 Whites do not become “darkened” or “not-white” or lose their racial privileges. However there are racially inflected ramifications for whites, especially white women, when they participate in racially egregious mixed relationships (Frankenberg discusses this as the “rebound effect” of racism 1997: 112-113).

Here I’m talking with Julia, a white professional woman, about other whites’ reactions to her mixed friendships and African American boyfriend:

1 Julia: They just put me in different categories.

67 I might add that I didn’t have to do fieldwork necessarily to reach this conclusion.
2 Alison: what category?
3 J: They don’t think as highly as me
4 A: Why, because you’re not from [Mansfield area]? {Or
5 J: {Well
6 A: for} other reasons?
7 J: That, and I mingle.
8 A: Oh I see. So, you’re not, like you’re not, at the same level?
9 J: Yeah, I’d be below them.
10 A: Are you like getting darkened because you hang out with people of color?
11 Like racially darkened?
12 J: Mmm, no, no I just think they.. I think.. the few reactions I’ve experienced.
13 They look down their noses. I mean like I feel, I feel like dirty. By the time
14 they’re done. Like they think I’m unclean.

Whites, who in the common euphemism, “mingle” (line 7), are categorized as being different from respectable, proper whites (lines 1, 3, 8-9). These policing techniques, which can make white women feel physically uncomfortable or defiled, (lines 13-14) have the effect of classifying white women as incorrigible.\(^68\) This type of white, particularly white woman, is discursively positioned as delinquent or unruly in the classical “matter out of place” (Douglas 1966). She is beyond redemption. However—and this is the key element to racial and gender incorrigibility—white women are still white enough to warrant censure and disciplining (lines 10-14). She doesn’t lose the membership benefits of being a white, but her irreverence towards expected understandings of white racial propriety is racially degrading or “dirty” (line 13).

These policing techniques have the effect of also classifying black men as irreverent or not giving proper respect due to whiteness. As racially marked and institutionally subordinated people, black men are expected to show respect to whiteness, and especially to its representations in white women (Dorr 2004). When whites perceive people of color to be challenging racial respectability, black men (and women) are no longer minding their place. Thus, whites usually frame the intimate bonds made between white women and men of color as bucking received notions of racial, class, and gender respectability.

\(^{68}\) Merriam-Webster defines incorrigible as “incapable of being corrected or amended: as a(1) : not reformable : depraved (2) : delinquent b : not manageable : unruly c : unalterable, inveterate”.

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But as Julia discusses below, women often challenge attempts to regulate and police their sexuality.

1 Julia: Yeah, I have heard that from white guys, who are my friends, who are not happy 2 with the ide-, when I’m dating a black man. And they say that, um, the only reason 3 black men, or the main reason that black men want to date white women is for power. 4 They want to take the white man’s power. 5 (h) You’re kidding me, right! White women are white men’s power? That’s a good 6 one. Cu(h)z we’ve(h) bee(h)n, we’ve be(h)en stomped on for so long. Bu(h)t we’re 7 your power? 8 Alison: Yeah right. 9 J: Or why would they would need to see it [i.e. Julia dating an African American] as 10 their own failure? You know? It doesn’t have anything to do with them who I date. 11 A: Mm hmm. 12 J: But yet they take it so personally who I date. 13 A: White men? 14 J: Yeah, white men.

While Collette, a white woman, was doing the intraracial policing in my other example, partially as a way to assert her own respectable white femininity, in this example Julia identifies white men as the primary monitors and arbitrators of her racial respectability (lines 1-3). In discussing how upset her white men friends become over her dating choices, Julia is reporting on the deeply felt anxieties white men are experiencing about their own masculinity and racial power vis-à-vis African American men (lines 9-10). This is not to say that all white men in Mansfield or in the U.S. disapprove, police, or feel threatened by interracial romantic relationships, but rather I want to highlight how white masculinity in a multiracial context is defined through white women’s sexuality and the sexuality of men of color (Dorr 2004). Men often consider woman of their own race, “their women” especially in a multiracial context. Therefore, the surveillance of white women’s sexuality then is as much about reinforcing and defining proper femininity and sexuality as it is about defining and defending white heterosexual male racial and sexual respectability (line 12).

Additionally, white women are expected to police themselves. In an example of self-policing

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69 My thanks to Professor Alejandro Lugo for reminding me of the racial and gender politics involving in inspecting multiracial relationships.
white femininity, and from a very young age (Kenny 2000), I recount a story70 told to me in 2006 by a white working class couple in their early 30s.

The husband's best friend was an older black working class man and a regular visitor to their house. The couple's three children loved “Uncle Tony”71 because he often had a story for them or a practical joke to play on their parents which always delighted the kids. One night, Uncle Tony stayed later than usual and it was almost time for the children to go to bed. The oldest daughter, a pre-teen at the time, became increasingly nervous and agitated as the night became later and darker. Eventually it came out that she was uncomfortable with having a black man in her white family’s home at night. She wanted Uncle Tony to leave because black men “weren't supposed to be in the house” after dark. Her parents chided her for having such ideas about Uncle Tony and told her that she was being ridiculous. The daughter was unhappily sent to bed and the couple awkwardly apologized to Tony who, according to the couple, took the incident in stride and defused the situation with a joke.

When I asked the couple why their daughter thought that black men could not be in the house after dark, they said they did not know where she had “learned this rule” and said that her younger siblings certainly had no problem with Uncle Tony being at their house at night. They had very little explanation after that, and after I probed a little more, it was clear that I was making them uncomfortable with my nosy questions. I was never able to ask the daughter about the incident either.

Admittedly, this is a very partial and unreliable story. (Did Tony really just laugh the incident off? Were the parents really clueless to who taught their daughter this “lesson”?) But for all the lacunae it has, what is clear to me is that the daughter felt her white feminine propriety threatened. Being on the cusp of becoming a young teenager, and thus a (hyper)sexualized subject, the presence of a black man in her home may have felt transgressive and threatening. An ideology of proper white

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70 I did not record this story which is why I do not have it blocked out in lines like previous examples.
71 I understood “Uncle” to be used here as name of respect for an adult close to their parents and not a disparaging name. However, the historical resonances with whites' overly-familiar use of “uncle” for adult black men can not be ignored.
femininity produced by media, white-centric renderings of U.S. history, family storytelling, and observations of others negatively responding to mixed couples, conditioned the daughter to believe, despite experiences to the contrary, that black men are dangerous at night, and white women in particular must be protected from them. Moreover the parental admonishments individualized Uncle Tony as safe, but left other black men to be ambiguously included or excluded.

The policing of white femininity has implications beyond strained friendship or familial relations. In recent years, there has been an increase in housing discrimination claims against landlords who refuse to rent to mixed couples or white women with multiracial children (2006 and 2008 personal communications with Bromfield County Fair Housing Officer). Racially irreverent actions are punished, with often very real economic, political, and social effects.

The excerpt below is from my interview with Booker who is a middle-aged, professional class black man. After Booker told me that all his friends were “in some kind of relationship with someone of a different race” (see “Contextualizing Interracial Relationships in Mansfield,” this chapter), I asked him if he thought some of them might be willing to talk to me. He hesitated, and after bit of hedging, said no. Later in fact he did connect with me a white woman who had lived with a black man for several years, and a black man who had been married to an nonblack woman of color. When I asked Booker why his friends would be reluctant to sit for an interview, he told me:

Booker: You will find that there’s a lot of professionals that are [involved in] interracial marriages around [here], but they keep it very quiet, I think a lot of people worry about th- <3 second pause> I don’t know if you will get repercussions.. you may.. you may not. In a job environment. I don’t know.

Alison: If you are in an interracial relationship? Would it- will sanctions differ along gender and racial lines? So for example a white woman who is married to a black man or ah, a black woman to a white man, and then, uh-

B: I think it’s a lot less than it used to be. I know that, it was really interesting… {{unclear recording}} There’s a couple that I know. He is a very well respected [professional]. White. He’s actually [a western European nationality]. White. [Nationality]. Umm that had, well actually he is one of the partners, and this is a very large [professional] company, and he left his
wife and wound up marrying this one black female. And I know from a guy that was a good friend of mine that the company had heard about [the mixed marriage] and was trying to get him to find out if this was true. And all this other kind of stuff. And [the friend] be all: ‘Yeah it’s true, but what, what you gonna do about it?"

A: Yeah! what’s it to you?

B: Yeah, you know? And obviously they [i.e. the company] didn’t follow up. I don’t know. I didn’t hear of any repercussions at the time.

A: That was local case?

B: Mm-hmm. Oh yeah. Very.

While interracial romantic relationships may be prevalent in Mansfield, clearly they are still not completely accepted, and many people still keep their relationships private for personal, economic, and political safety. I hardly need mention Emmett Till, and other African American men who lost their lives to white supremacist violence because they interacted with white women. Such extreme measures to maintain white women's racial propriety, and by extension, whiteness itself, speaks to the ongoing risks of participating in interracial relationships with whites.

**Contemporary Situations: Fetishizing Blackness**

In racially irreverent moments, blackness is threatening and menacing, but also exciting and alluring (hooks 1992). In this way, white supremacy simultaneously degrades and fetishizes blackness. Both framings work to dehumanize African Americans in particular, and people of color in general through a fetishization of nonwhiteness. Often the fetishization and consumption of blackness works at cross wires with expectations of white feminine propriety. This contradiction was voiced especially vividly during a group interview and shows how difficult it is for whites to maintain a consistent racial worldview.

One evening I interviewed four white women who had been friends for several decades. All were “imports” in their late 50s and early 60s. Many had come to Mansfield for their first or second professional jobs after college. Three had worked in or continued to work as white collared
professionals in the education and human services sector; the fourth had been an administrative assistant in this field. As the interview wined down, I asked my usual final question: “is there anything you wanted to tell me that you haven't had a chance to say?” After the women made some follow-up comments regarding previous topics, Cassie said,

1 When I heard you talking about interracial-or whatever. I still have, you know. <2 second pause>

2 I make fun of [another interviewee] for being prejudice. And I'm sorry, I do. Because I know I have prejudice. I still do. I mean, when I think of kids doing that [[i.e. dating 4 interracial]]. I think, you know that thought automatically comes up like, <said with 5 mixture of disgust and dismissal> 'Ohhh. Oh you know. This isn't {{unclear}}.”

6 But I'm the one who would really like to have a black boyfriend. So it's very mixed. 7 Obviously. I mean. I really would [like a black boyfriend]. I've had a couple. Very 8 short lived.

9 Olivia: You've had a couple? 10 Cassie: One. Two. 11 Several women together: You had two at once? (hhhhhhh)!

12 Cassie <ignoring the joke>: Isn't that contradictory though? That I have these old 13 things from childhood, or you know. That, you know, that <same disgusted and 14 dismissive tone as before> “oh mixed marriages.” But I mean- and even when I see 15 one, I question it. But personally, I would love to have one.

16 Olivia: Would you get married {{unclear recording}. [[Essentially the question was 17 would Cassie marry an African American man, or just date him.]]} 18 Cassie: <1.5 second pause> Yeah. Either one. Yeah, if I really loved the guy.

[[more teasing; unclear recording]]

19 Alison: Why do you want a black boyfriend? Or do you just want a boyfriend in 20 general?

[[women all have a good laugh at Alison's faux-pas question]]

21 Cassie: I want a black one. I really do. For some reason. Their spirit. Yeah, I- you 22 know.. I had one. You know, he really wasn't a boyfriend. But, I loved.. We'd go 23 dancing. And he'd get on his knees and woosh across the floor. He was so alive. 24 And he was so much fun.

This interview excerpt was so fascinating to me, for many different reasons. The interview
moment reveals the self-awareness whites have of race and racism, and their ability to critically interrogate racist discourses (lines 12-13). This interview also demonstrates that whites are self-aware of their privilege and of whiteness's strangling hold (lines 2-3), even if they are unwilling or unable to maintain their critical interrogation (lines 13-15).

Cassie explicitly acknowledges discourses of white racial impropriety and irreverence and her own adherence and perpetuation of these ideologies (lines 3-5; lines 12-14). Yet, even as she sees interracial romantic relationship as illegitimate or delinquent (lines 5, 14), she still wants to participate in such a relationship (lines 6-7, 14-15, 21). The many fillers of “you know” and self-interruptions (ex. lines 13-14) indicate how uncomfortable Cassie felt in talking about her desire. This uncomfortableness likely stemmed from multiple sources: the taboos around older age and sexuality leave older women to not feel sexual desire and certainly not a racially egregious desire like the one Cassie is admitting to. The other women in the room (myself included at times) further minimized and deflected the implications of this admission through teasing and laughter.

Although my second question in line 19-20 was grossly inappropriate given our age difference and superficial acquaintance (I was at least thirty years her junior, and we had just met that night), Cassie's response highlights some of the positive stereotypes whites hold of African Americans. I had asked this question because Cassie's use of “one” (line 15: “I personally would love to have one;” line 22: “I had one”) sometimes made it difficult for me to determine who or what it was that Cassie desired. Did she want an individual (i.e. a black boyfriend), or did she want a relationship, in particular a relationship that was exciting because it was unfamiliar and transgressive (22-24)? Ultimately, in both scenarios, Cassie's stance reduces black men to their racial identity and suggests that as long as the man is African American, any man will do (lines 6, 21-24). Cassie bases her desire on positive experiences she had previously with men of color (per the discussion of neighborly experiences in Chapter 4), but the end result is the same. Men of color are interchangeable and dehumanized in these
moments of black exoticization. Moreover, her phrasing of “I want one” and “I've had a couple” has the unfortunate effect of making African American men sound like objects to possess or own. Although this talk is in line with potentially race-neutral sex talk, and therefore may not be as racializing as I interpret it, Cassie's choice of words still objectifies the subjects of her desire.

While Cassie focused on cultural attributes she thought African American men (exclusively) possess (lines 21, 23-24), I also heard throughout my fieldwork years white women say they preferred men of color because they found “dark” men physically more attractive. However, the fetishization of black culture and the physical attributes of people of color was not just limited to white women: white men and nonblack men of color also fetishized blackness.

Charlie, a white man in his early twenties, told me that he had dated all sorts of women, but that he had recently dated several of African American women in a row. He explained during our interview, “I want to only date black women. I'm doing my part as a white man to break down racism.” This view not only fetishizes blackness, but also multiculturalism—a discourse that pays lip service to cultural differences, without acknowledging the power differentials that exist among culture, racial and/or ethnic groups (May, ed. 1999). Charlie's belief that individual relationships alone can “break down” racism is another common tenet of multiculturalism; a problematic platform because it often prevents any serious dialogue on the systematic and institutionalized nature of whiteness and racial oppression. Moreover, the emphasis on interracial contact, particularly as framed by Charlie, positions whites as magnanimously joining the anti-racist fight (i.e. “doing my part”). Let me be clear, multiculturalism is not the same as anti-racism (Kubota 2004).

But, I don't want to dismiss the transformative potential of intimate interracial space because I believe that it is a key part to combatting racism. For example, during our interview Charlie told me in detail about ending a friendship with a longtime white friend who would not retract or stop racist talk. Charlie explained that his other close friends came from a variety of racial backgrounds and that those
important relationships motivated him to tell his white friend to stop his anti-black and anti-Latino talk. While Charlie at times acknowledged that much more would need to happen socially before interracial dating generates racial harmony, he also explained that he would have never ended his relationship with his white friend if it had not been for his experiences and relationships with his friends of color and anti-racist white friends. Still, individual relationships can not overcome centuries of racialized power inequities that have been legally, economically, politically, culturally and socially codified.

Whites in mixed romantic relationships, as well as friendships, are often aware of the degradation and fetishization of blackness and brownness in U.S. society, even if they themselves also participate in these discourses. Several white women I met expressed during interviews frustrations over they ways family members stereotyped their African American partners as “thugs” or “gangsters.” That still didn't prevent these same women from also reproducing stereotypes about dysfunctional African American families or the sexual promiscuity of black men. (For more on this point, see the conclusion to Chapter 4 regarding conflicting racial worldviews and the individualization of trusting experiences.)

Still, knowing how other whites view their relationships often significantly influenced participants' understandings of their relationship. For example, Sarah, a white professional class middle aged woman I interviewed, told me that she didn't leave her failed relationship to a man of color for over eighteen months because she didn't want the break up to confirm her father's racist beliefs (a similar scenario can be found in Frankenberg 1993 pp 116-118). Some whites in mixed relationships, like Charlie, Sarah, and Julia (from the previous section, “Contemporary Situations: Protecting Against Incorrigible White Women and Irreverent Black Men”), see their relationships as being political. Even if they themselves don't believe they are acting politically, they understand that the relationship is politicized by society at large (Moran 2001, Mr and Mrs Loving 1996).
**African American Responses**

Like the whites mentioned above, African Americans often understood mixed relationships, especially kin relations and romantic relationships, as being politicized. And like the white responses I detailed above, African Americans had a variety of responses and takes on interracial relationships. Older African American women who were in school before the 1960s civil rights movement were often uncomfortable with white women expressing their attraction towards black men. In general, however, they were quite accepting of white women into their families (Charlie notwithstanding, white men involved with black women are still a relative rarity in Mansfield). Still, African American women would often make comments that policed white women, especially younger white co-workers, friends, and neighbors. For example, while sitting in a bar and hanging out with several acquaintances one evening, a reality television show came one that featured an attractive black man. Ellen, a white woman in her early 30s, began drooling over the tv star and making comments like, “he's so fine! Look at those arms! I'd love to have them around me. Hot!!” Zora, a black woman in her 60s, was in the group as well and as the Ellen's comments became louder and siller, Zora began shushing Ellen: “oh, now stop that. You're being ridiculous. Hush now.” While Zora was obviously annoyed with Ellen's theatrics, it seemed to me that she was especially put off by the ways Ellen was viewing the tv star as a desirable sex object. I too was uncomfortable with the ways Ellen had felt entitled to comment on the man's black body, but Zora was doubly offended. For Zora, Ellen, as a white woman, didn't have the right to make sexual claims on or desire this black tv star.

Another time while I was out with a good friend of mine who is an African American man, I happened to see Zora at a bar. Zora had been quite pleasant to us, but I found out later that she had disparagingly said to a mutual friend of ours, “I didn't think Alison was like that,” i.e. “into black men.” While my friendship with my guy friend was purely platonic, seeing the two of us together at a bar, deep in conversation raised suspicions for Zora. I heard different African Americans make similar
comments about several different white women over my fieldwork years. Such comments maintain racial boundaries through comments on racial propriety, especially white feminine racial propriety and black masculinity. However, these kinds of remarks come from a very different place than when whites say similar things (which often occurs). For African Americans, these remarks comment on the ongoing sense of entitlement whites feel they have to black bodies, black culture, and blackness.

African Americans in Mansfield told me that they sometimes “get shit” from friends and family members for dating whites. Black women in particular experienced great censure. In contrast, black men who dated interracially often excused themselves—and were consistently excused by whites, especially white women—for dating white women because black women are “hard ass,” “have a lot of baggage,” “bitchy” (such vicious stereotypes are not new [hooks 1981]). Even as men of color are often positioned as sexually rapacious, whites read their association with white women as reaffirming the superiority of whiteness. As Moran discusses in, Interracial Intimacies, accounts of inter racial marriages (and romantic relationships more generally) “assume[] that the person with a devalued racial status aspires to assimilate through intermarriage” (2001: 114, emphasis added).

For black women, there is no equivalent “they have a lot of baggage” discourse which explains why black men are poor choices and white men are reasonable potential partners. Instead, discourses surrounding women of color and white men focused on women of color wanting to “act white” and not individual desires. Talking with a black woman informant whose sister “only” dates white men, my informant said that her sister was regularly accused of “acting white” or “wanting to be white.” The sisters had grown up in a predominantly white town before moving to Mansfield as young adults and my informant told me that her sister was simply more comfortable socializing with white women and men. Culturally her sister and her white boyfriend had similar interests and held similar beliefs. While the sisters never felt like they were “acting white” or “wanting to be white,” my informant did self-theorize that her family maintained middle class values which were often read as white values. An
entirely different set of discourses surrounds women of color and white men although whiteness is still enacted and reified through these interracial relationship discourses.

One Afro Latino man I spoke with also said that he felt more comfortable socializing with and dating “the preps and Abercrombie crowd” (i.e. middle class whites) because he had grown up in a middle class white and Latino city in the southeastern United States. He said that when he moved to Mansfield, he was shocked by the pressure family members and coworkers put on him to “act black” and socialize only with other African Americans. He said (as other Afro Latinos have told me) that Mansfielders often ignored or minimized his Latino heritage and his preference for Latino and white cultural practices.

People of color who date, socialize, or acknowledge chosen or blood family bonds with whites are often subject to “selling out” discourses. In these discourses, people of color who “sell out” are positioned as being disrespectful or irreverent towards their race's needs and expectations. While whites are concerned with racial propriety in order to keep whiteness “pure” and dominant, racial propriety among people of color is concerned with maintaining racial and cultural identities and practices, in the face of the overwhelming presence of whiteness. Within Mansfield men of color, especially black men who date “outside their race,” were often seen as cutting themselves off from “advancing” the race. Women of color were often positioned as being shameful of their race when they date white men. Mansfielders of color usually recognized that their neighbors read their mixed relationships as “selling out”. They often said that they didn't care, though they were aware of the talk. Interracial dating then becomes an issue of racial propriety and racial and cultural continuation for people of color too. I am not condoning these stances, but recognizing what the existing discourses are in Mansfield, what they mean, and what Mansfielders felt their implications were, enable us to understand what the stakes are for all residents as interracial relationships continue to be recognized as a normal part of social urban life.
It is clear then, that interracial relationships, especially romantic relationships, are politicized by a number of different groups for many different reasons. Interracial relationships unsettle dominant notions of racial propriety (for both whites and people of color) and thus questions of racial hierarchies. But of all the whites who I talked to about their mixed relationships, Charlie and Sarah were two of the few who acknowledged that their relationship held much greater cultural meaning and social significance simply by the nature of the relationship. However, individual relationships alone can not "break down" racism.

Most individuals in mixed romantic relationships and couples that I talked to, strongly adhered to a colorblind discourse. Informants would often, unprompted, tell me that "we don't see color" and that "I only see my boyfriend for who he is, not what race he is." While the intended goal of this statement is to advance a multicultural agenda, in fact, this colorblind discourse often works to keep whiteness, and its related ideologies of racial propriety, hidden.

I want to be clear that while there are certainly individuals who only date "across racial lines," I'm not suggesting that all couples in mixed relationships participate in (mutual) fetishization. People's desires are more deeply rooted than in skin color and attraction is sparked by more than pigmentation. But I found it incredibly striking, if not disingenuous, when informants would tell me that they "didn't see race" when they considered and interacted with romantic partners (Moran also discusses this phenomenon in 2001, especially 116-125). For all the race talk that goes on in Mansfield among mono- and multi-racial groups, I had difficulty believing racial worldviews and discourses some how stopped or was suspended in the most intimate of relationships. In biding my time and asking careful questions, it was clear that couples might tell me that they didn't see race—or more specifically racial difference—but in practice, they did see it and were very aware. For example, the couple who explained "the stare" to me in the group interview (this chapter, "Contextualizing Interracial Relationships in Mansfield") initially told me that their relationship was so strong because "we don't
see color”. However their story about “the stare” suggested they were aware of their racial difference and the responsibility they had to each other in acknowledging how they were differently racialized.

More to the point of fraught relational space (as explored in Chapter 4), participants in mixed couples would tell me about partners pulling, what I call, the “race trump card” during fights. I analyzed the “race trump card” in more detail in Chapter 5, but I bring it up again because informants reported that phrases like “stupid white girl,” “white trash,” and “nigger,” were used by couples in tense relational moments. Such moments also occur in interracial friendships. Despite what participants in interracial relationships may want to believe, race is still a strong mediating vector in their friendship or romantic relationship. The same can be said of monoracial relationships, although the shared racial vector is more often assumed than acknowledged. Until racism and white racial supremacy end, interracial relationships, particularly romantic relationships, will always be politicized and hold greater meaning that just “two people who care for each other.”

Clearly this complex terrain should show us that mixed relationships are not the way out of white supremacy. Interracial romantic relationships in and of themselves can not and will not dismantle white supremacy within the United States. However, disputing and challenging the assumptions that ground whites’ discourses about mixed relations reveals the constant labor required to cover over the inconsistencies and holes in middle class white dominance.

**Fraught Intimate Space in Interracial Relationships**

To return to the fact of intimate relational space and the discourse of selectively seeing race, participants in mixed relationships—romantic or friendly—tend to have a much more race conscious worldview. Although racial awareness is no guarantee for race-neutral or anti-racist worldviews, whites tend to sense when friends of color are uncomfortable and the reasons why.

When friends of color—or children of color—complain to their white friend or parent about the racism they experienced at the store, in school or in a social setting, white friends see it and can
empathize. Admittedly, they also can dismiss and ignore other moments of racism because their whiteness gives them the power to decide what is and is not racist (See chapters 4 and 5 on this issue). However in friendships, relationships, and family bonds, negotiation and learning occurs. During our interview, I asked Julia (this chapter, “Protecting Against Incorrigible White Women and Irreverent Black Men”) if she and her friends of color ever had misunderstandings because of their racial differences. She said to me:

Umm. Not big ones. I mean we talk about-I mean-like that whole political thing [in reference to talking about the 2008 democratic primaries]. But that isn't. That's not really a misunderstanding. But, I mean, we've debated racial issues before, you know. And they've made me see things a little more clearly from, from their point of view. But that's a little different. But as far as big arguments, no.

Later in talking about where she and her boyfriend socialize, I asked if she ever considered whether a particular bar or restaurant was “too white” for them to go to. She told me “Oh yeah, I have a lot of biker friends. But I would never, never, take him [her black boyfriend] to a biker party.” Having “crossed the racial line all her life,” Julia had learned over the years from friends and intimates of color what places and situations would likely make her current boyfriend uncomfortable or feel unsafe.

In friendships and relationships, uncomfortably fraught moments can be simultaneously painful and productive. One African American informant told me of reluctantly going to, in his terms, a local “hillbilly” bar with his white girlfriend. He had told her that he would be uncomfortable there, but she assured him it would be fine. After overhearing an extremely racist conversation occurring farther down the bar, the couple left and during the drive home had a tense conversation about racism and white privilege. The informant said “my girlfriend is a little naïve. She doesn't always understand how a place with a lot of white people might make me feel uncomfortable. That night she finally started to get it.” During this difficult conversation the couple relied on the trust that was built into their relationship to understand each other's perspective. While race and racial worldviews are constantly learned and re-energized, uncomfortable moments like these can dramatically modify racial
worldviews. Experiential knowledge from interpersonal relationships and listening to friends and family tell stories about their racialized experiences, can significantly influence the ways whites and people of color understand race and racism. Friendships and relationships create a space—an intimate relational space—where people can talk about race relations and their place in these social relations.

In the space of interpersonal relationships, racial knowledge is contested and shifts. I had many conversations with people, and not just whites, who have reconsidered their racial worldviews, after having a definitive interracial experience. Many talked about a “change of heart” which forced them to not only reconsider how racialization and racism affected other people, but how it affected them and what their role was in the situation. Trust within relational space has the power to transform or at least modify even the most entrenched racist worldview.

The space, generated by interracial friendships and relationships, to talk about racialization, racism, and white privilege is so important because more and more families are becoming multiracial. Especially in Mansfield, thinking of one's world as only white, or only black, is simply unrealistic. The ability to talk about race, and being forced to talk about race is so important, especially for whites, because the United States is a multiracial society and will continue to grown as one. There is no denying societal changes. Still for all the hope that interracial relationships may provide—friendships, romantic relationships, kinships—major advances are still needed. Middle class whiteness continues to get expressed, reinforced, reasserted through assessments of incorrigibility and racial irreverence. This is because structures of whiteness and middle class privilege make the the terrain of intimacy unequal and uneven. Relational knowledge and space is uneven and fraught for similar reasons, although experienced differently by different people.

**Conclusion**

Despite their historic presence, interracial friendships and relationships have not been without censure, as my interviews with Thurgood, Booker, and others suggest. As these informants, and the
others I have quoted in this chapter, express, interracial relationships are sanctioned through multiple, but related, discourses and actions. Silence is another way interracial relationships are kept hidden or viewed as deviant: I had difficulty recruiting people, in particular older, middle class people of all racial identities, for interviews on this topic.

By “figuring out” interracial romantic relationships through discourses of white feminine propriety and racial propriety for men of color, white Mansfielders are able to make sense of and promptly dismiss the legitimacy of mixed relationships. In pathologizing men of color, white women, and their romantic relationships through these discourses, whites attempt to defuse their anxieties over the “source” of white children, and thus new iterations of whiteness. But as blackness is denigrated, it is also fetishized, becoming an object of fascination and desire. In terms of mixed romantic relationships, discourses of psychological damage, incorrigibility, and sexual deviance are applied to both men of color and white women, but to different effects. White women's irreverence towards white propriety deems them incorrigible, or beyond reform. Men of color's irreverence towards white propriety leads to lost job opportunities, harassment, and sometimes even death (see James Byrd, Brandon McClelland [Hales 2008] and Anthony Hill [Copeland and Bello 2010] as several of the many victims of white supremacy).

These discourses all work to contain mixed relationships—working to make them seem like unique and isolated aberrations, instead of what they often are—meaningful relationships that are aware of, but not beholden to, racial difference.
Conclusion: Lessons from Mansfield

My dissertation has examined how Mansfield's socio-spatial dialectics of cityness, class, and whiteness simultaneously produce projects that reinforce social disparities and moments that resist hierarchies of privilege. By ethnographically analyzing small city neighborly relations and notions of trust, I have sought to complicate and expand dominant representations and theorizations of “the city,” capitalism, and U.S. racial formations. Focusing on race, space, and class in Mansfield has enabled me to sketched out the ordinary uniqueness of one small city and by extension, gesture towards the webs of “contestation and uneven power relations” in which many small Rustbelt cities sit (Robinson 2006: 110). I do not want to claim that small cities are always the “canary in the coalmine,” however, their vulnerabilities and strengths do often bring regional and national processes into sharper relief, while also departing from these processes in revealing and enlightening ways.

By documenting the destabilizing effects of current economic restructuring processes among small city residents, Chapters 2 and 3 highlighted the socio-spatial particularities of global and neoliberal capitalism and nuanced dominant narratives of deindustrialization. In Chapter 2, I examined the historical factors which led to Mansfield's rise as an industrial manufacturing powerhouse. I argued that the city's geographical location in the nation; its physical location near waterways, sand quarries, and fertile farmland; and its location on significant railways made the city attractive to capitalists and workers alike. The presence of Westinghouse, GM, and other major manufacturers drew immigrant workers, African Americans from the southern United States, whites from Appalachia, and “native” whites from major northeast and midwestern metros. Yet the presence of all these different people with different skill sets and backgrounds also recruited industry to the city.

For all the dangers that factories posed to blue collared workers, they still willingly fed industrial fires and inhaled toxic chemicals in order to provide their families with middle class comforts such as detached single family homes, safe cars, and strong educations. Chapter 2 suggested that, in
Mansfield, middle class subjectivities were never just tied the workplace, but also formed out of the consumer goods and sense of financial security the office and factory enabled residents to achieve. Although Chapter 2 detailed how class stratification became racialized in Mansfield, I also explored how, in the 20th century, industrial manufacturing created a large multiracial blue collared and white collared middle class. Because small city space often brought residents into close proximity of each other, the city was often integrated in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Racial worldviews developed out of these neighborly relations; sometimes these worldviews accurately captured the complexity of difference and sameness, other times neighborly closeness generated experiences that seemingly “confirmed” racist and bigoted opinions of ethnoracially different neighbors.

Chapter 3 followed the arch of global capitalism to the present and focused on the rise and predominance of the healthcare industry in Mansfield. I argued that although factory closures in the 1980s and 1990s drained large amounts of community wealth out of the Rustbelt, the “playing field” was not leveled for Mansfield's rich and poor. Neoliberal global capitalism continues to fuel and exacerbate class inequities in small cities. While many blue collared middle class families and working class families have become increasingly insecure financially as high paying, long lasting jobs have become scarcer, the intensification of the medical industrial complex has maintained the small city's middle and elite classes.

This chapter illuminated the opportunistic nimbleness of capital in the reconstitution of middle class and elite class statuses, especially among international and domestic people of color. I argued that while neoliberal capitalism continues to take advantage of historical hierarchies of race, it also seizes new opportunities created out of economic instability. The case of Mansfield complicates many urban studies of race and class in the United States which position people of color as mostly living in poverty. The experiences and contributions of middle class people of color to the making of a city's cityness, particularly for a small city, can not be ignored.
In exploring the intersections of race and class in Mansfield, this chapter also raised questions about the categories of subjectivities anthropology often uses. A plethora of local terms, such as “import,” “local,” and “foreigner” index the complexity of race, place of origin, occupation, Bourdieuan tastes, and income under neoliberal capitalism. Moreover my own ways of naming the spectrum of class positions in Mansfield—for example: “middle class elites” or “white collared professionals”—reflected the inadequate language anthropologists and informants have in discussing differences in access to power, financial security, and changing social relations.

Chapters 2 and 3 historically and ethnographically provided a cultural analysis of the ways lived experiences and structural reconfigurations of class alter other intersecting cultural formations, such as whiteness, the spatialization of difference, and notions of neighborliness. By locating my analysis of capitalism in a small city, this dissertation contributes to studies of capitalism and class by highlighting the effects of capital change on the middle class, and the spatial consequences of economic restructuring, particularly as they are experienced in an understudied urban setting.

Having traced in Chapters 2 and 3 some of the significant contours to the economic and class terrain in Mansfield, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 detailed how racial worldviews are made in Mansfield by analyzing the role of whiteness in framing social relations. My analyses illuminated the hairline fractures in middle class white dominance and the constant labor that is required to cover these moments of contestation. In examining these issues from the perspective of the small city, these chapters also highlighted the tension between trusting neighbors and inspecting neighbors. These chapters chronicled how Mansfielders tack between the desire to trust and feel close to their neighbors, and the urge to police and distance themselves from racial, class, and cultural difference. In effect, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are studies in feelings—focused on the conflicting emotions Mansfielders daily experience and draw upon as they navigate racial structural inequalities that benefit or disadvantage them in felt and consequential ways.
Chapter 4 considered, in depth, the role of neighborliness and trust in making racial worldviews. In this chapter I argued that residents evaluate social interactions through assessments of “relational space”—the sense of interpersonal closeness or distance between people. In examining how Mansfielders calculate the emotional and physical space they daily create with their neighbors, I argued that small city residents read race, class, and other vectors of difference through notions of trust. Although interpersonal experiences often layer upon each other to sediment into a worldview, nuanced understandings of difference can be decisively short circuited when trust is significantly reorganized or relational space unexpectedly shifted. For whites, in particular, individual negative interactions often have lasting consequences which override a collection of race-neutral interactions; whites often cite these individual experiences as compelling reasons for their distrust of people of color.

Like relational space, storytelling is another significant way through which Mansfielders make race understandable. I also examined storytelling in Chapter 4 because informants often explained that stories—informants' own stories and “other people's stories”—guide their understandings of the city's racial terrain. I argued that stories, particularly stories about race, are important to study because stories presume (and are often granted) a status which place them beyond interrogation. Although stories and storytellers are always open to question, in reality, stories often circulate as untouchable evidence. This positioning is troubling as stories rarely reveal or acknowledge the assumptions that can undergird them. Storytellers, particularly white storytellers who tell stories about race, often provide only one version of the story and discount other perspectives which might highlight their racial privileges. I used examples of stories and assessments of trust in Chapter 4 to suggest that researchers and activists alike under-consider the significance of this tendency to muster one story or inflate one negative experience to represent an entire universe of racially-inflected experiences.

In Chapter 5, I examined how whiteness, particularly middle class whiteness, operated in Mansfield. Whiteness, as a racial identity and as a historically constituted structure of racialized power
and privilege, affected not just people of color in Mansfield, but also whites. In my analysis, I spent time describing how white residents “inspect” the “internal frontiers” within whiteness. I suggested that in policing the racial propriety of “marked” whites (e.g. ethnic whites, Appalachian whites, and poor whites), middle class whites construct their own respectable whiteness through opposition. Neighbors constantly monitor and self-monitor whiteness to protect the conceit that white supremacy is natural; deviations reveal tensions within whiteness and thus, the utter constructedness of U.S. racial hierarchies.

This chapter also examined how whiteness shifts and adjusts to changing realities, which include an increasingly multiracial small city. Middle class whiteness has always operated in relation to nonwhiteness, but to advance current racial hierarchies it now explicitly engages and incorporates blackness and brownness. For example, I used discourse analysis to examine the ways whites use “race savvy” talk—or the ability to talk about blackness, brownness, and racism writ large in unapologetic, supposedly nonracist or informed ways—to perpetuate whiteness. I found that some whites used “race savvy” talk to castigate other whites as “racist” and to index their own cosmopolitanism and presumed lack of racist beliefs. Additionally, strategies such as jokes, institutionalized funny spaces, ventriloquism, and appeals to human nature all co-opt blackness and brownness to affirm whiteness. Chapter 5 suggested that these moves regularly left the speaker's investments in whiteness unexamined and positioned the white speaker as the final arbitrator of any instance of racism.

Affirmations of whiteness were regularly part of the small city social landscape because the structuring power of whiteness—its supremacy, and its privileging benefits—were constantly under threat of being exposed. When people of color questioned, challenged, or subverted the supremacy of whiteness, whites reacted swiftly and strongly to cover over the cracks exposed in these moments. But some whites also participated in undermining the privileges of whiteness. Categorizing individuals as unilaterally “invested” and “uninvested” in whiteness simplifies an extraordinary confluence of social
structures, lived experiences, and changing emotional interpretations of these realities. My research in Mansfield showed that whiteness is not monolithic, and whites (and people of color) have a variety of responses to the manifestations and privileges of whiteness that can change over time and in different circumstances.

Chapter 5 concluded that whiteness still operates as the primary organizing mechanism in Mansfield's race-based relationships. Yet, although whiteness overwhelmingly structures small city life in Mansfield, this chapter suggested that it must constantly renew and adjust to changing social realities. Internal inspections within whiteness, border inspections by whites of people of color, and extreme defense measures, point to the extraordinary efforts required to maintain the baseline of U.S. racial projects in the face of economic instability and challenges by people of color and anti-racist whites.

The final chapter of this dissertation analyzed how whiteness shapes intimate, interpersonal relationships between people of color and whites. “Mixed” relationships, as they are most usually called in Mansfield, are an important site where relational space, and thus racial worldviews, is built, negotiated and sustained over periods of time. In Chapter 6 I recounted historical antecedents to demonstrate that interracial romantic relationships have long been a fact of small city life. I then turned to contemporary discourses surrounding mixed relationships to analyze prevalent notions of gender expectations and racially proper and improper behavior. The privileges, assumptions, and dictates of whiteness are never absent from interracial relationships or the discourses that surround them. My discourse analysis showed that racially egregious behavior, such as interracial dating, is both condemned but also desired by whites.

I argued that mixed relationships are regularly pathologized and ostracized by small city neighbors because mixed relationships often disrupt and dispute the assumptions grounding whites' notions of racial superiority. Residents often use (or are subjected to) discourses of *incorrigibility* and
irreverence, which position their mixed relationships as outliers that can be contained and dismissed. Discourses of incorrigibility and irreverence presume whiteness should be always respected; any action which is perceived to compromise or challenge white racial propriety is heavily monitored and often sanctioned. Discourses of irreverence usually position African American men in particular, as ruthless victimizers; white women are also seen as irreverently and flippantly treating their whiteness and the racialized superiority they represent, but they are simultaneously understood to be redeemable, or savable from their racial “indiscretions.”

Despite the tensions that surround interracial romantic relationships, I argued in Chapter 6 that mixed relationships in and of themselves can not and will not dismantle white supremacy within the United States. However, the discourses surrounding mixed relationships reveal key pressure points which white racial supremacy works hardest to defend. As a significant cultural fact in Mansfield, Chapter 6 makes the claim that mixed relationships are an important site for making race and for understanding race relations, in the small city.

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My research in Mansfield contributes to studies of whiteness and U.S. race relations by examining from multiple angles, the ways whiteness structures social relationships among neighbors. By analyzing how whiteness, especially middle class white dominance, responds to pressures which seek to undermine its supremacy, my dissertation offered a small city-specific view of a larger phenomenon. In particular, the small city setting highlights the tension neighbors often feel as they build and negotiate relational space with one another. The propinquity, or physical closeness, that small cities engender can help lead the national dialogue on race as all Americans work to understand and take advantage of the increasing multiraciality of the United States.

Since completing intensive long term field work in early 2009, many changes have occurred in Mansfield and Ohio. Economic recovery from the 2008-2009 Great Recession has been slow, and
Mansfield has faced some setbacks. In June 2009, Mansfield's GM plant shuttered forever—it is still without a new tenant as of early 2011. The Sunshine College of Nursing is in talks to expand its teaching facilities and thus enrollment numbers, however no ground has been broken yet. Job recovery has been slow in Mansfield, as it has throughout the state and deindustrializing region.

Barack Obama was sworn into the presidency a week after I left Mansfield. As has occurred in much of the country among conservative communities, Obama's health care reform which extended elements of health care coverage to all Americans, was panned by Mansfielders for its ideological implications and less for its real programs. The dissatisfaction voters felt in the 2008 elections was channeled into a rising support for third party candidates and anti-incumbency trends during 2009 and 2010. Skepticism and frustration with the Recession political landscape translated into a right-ward shift in Ohio state elections in 2010—the governor, House and Senate are now comfortably Republican, while they had been barely majority Democrat when I was doing fieldwork.

These shifts, small and large, have continued to shape Mansfield's social life. And while ethnography and anthropological theorization can not predict the future, these forms of analysis can help us anticipate the ebbs and flow of social life in small cities and in the nation. One of the greatest strengths of ethnography and anthropological analysis is that practitioners often record the layers of multifaceted social relationships and interpret the implications of these complex situations. In doing so, the sociocultural analysis of quotidian and spectacular cultural processes can complicate the dominant narratives that we—anthropologists and non-anthropologists—tell ourselves about ourselves and our society.

Small cities in particular offer much to social theorists. As I have argued throughout this text, the small city is important because it amplifies social processes occurring everywhere. In applying an ordinary cities approach and discourse analysis to what I observed and experienced in Mansfield, I began to approach the larger questions about social life that anthropology seeks to understand. An
ordinary cities approach allowed me to get into the stories that I heard in the field—to treat them as unique but also part of the universe of cityness. Discourse analysis enabled me to read the locally significant meanings of trust and neighborliness through the structures and lived realities of race, class, and space. These approaches produced nuanced accounts of race, class, and space that provided alternative stories and suggested that racism and classism, while structurally enforced, are not inevitable in the United States.

What I have found through my research is that small cities hold great potential for all of us. Small cities, such as Mansfield, tell us what neoliberalism and global capitalism do to communities, how whiteness impacts social relationships, and the importance of space in shaping urban life. Small cities provide U.S. policymakers, activists, and scholars a clear picture of the challenges facing us as we continue to fight for economic and racial justice, but small cities also show us the possibilities and potentials we have.
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Appendix A: Transcription Symbols

<   > non-contextual elements like change in tone of voice, elapsed seconds of silence.
[
] pseudonym, clarification in text
{
} verbal overlap between speakers
.. long pause
[....] jump in interview
- self interruption, cut off speech ex: self interrupt-
“ ” speaker is quoting another speaker
{{}} unclear recording
[[ ]] contextualizing information

(hhhh) laughter
Appendix B: Maps and Images

Map 2.1 Regional Map. Mansfield sits halfway between New York City and Chicago.
Map. 2.2 Current day City of Mansfield.
Map 2.3 North Mansfield neighborhoods.
Map 2.4 South Mansfield neighborhoods.
Image 2.1 Teddy Roosevelt in Mansfield stumping for reelection in 1912. Running on the Bull Moose or Progressive Ticket, he ultimately lost the election to Woodrow Wilson. His visit came on the heels of President Taft's visit to Mansfield. (photo courtesy of Timothy Brian McKee, *Mansfield*. 2007. p.47)
Image 2.2 A representative page from the 1930 Census. The final entries on this page are the Chavez family and two of their three boarders. Their neighbors include whites from Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Virginia, and monolingual, non-English speakers from Germany, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.
Image 3.1: NAFTA corporation located in Mansfield's Foreign Trade Zone.

Image 3.2: Medical Spa in Mansfield.
Image 3.3: Medical Spa

Image 3.4: More lots available in the new medical complexes developing along South Bricklayers Road.
Image 3.5: All-in-one site for cancer treatment (with the phone number of 1-877-4Hope-RX).

Image 3.6: Mansfield seller auctioning hardware.
Image 3.7: Mansfield seller auctioning designer clothing. “NWT” (i.e. new with tag) garners higher prices.
Image 6.1: Monument above the men's bathroom on the Square.