

# A Study on Changing Urban Spaces and the Function of Social Inclusion in a Declining Urban Area

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This paper discusses changing urban spaces and the function of social inclusion in the Englewood community of Chicago. Englewood is located in South Chicago. The community first grew when the railway was extended and German railway workers settled there. In the late 19th century, meat packing became a major industry in Chicago and eastern European immigrants, especially Poles, joined the community. Sixty-third street became one of the main shopping streets in Chicago at the time, but the community has changed and there are now hundreds of vacant lots in the area. White flight and changing demographics occurred throughout the 1960s and since 1970, the area has experienced a population decline. Photographs from that area show an abandoned Sixty-third Street, void of the shops that once made this a vibrant community. Today, there are no jobs in the area and 45% of the families are government welfare recipients.

This study examines the factors that contributed to the isolation of the community from the mainstream of society resulting in its economic, social, physical, and cultural decline, but also examines the factors that are contributing to the new phase of community building that is currently underway. The study used as data sources urban planning records, official and unofficial documents, and photographs from the last century, as well as qualitative interviews of residents of the area during the 20th century in order to reconstructing its history. Through the discovery process, many old photographs were recovered from the Community Center archives. In addition, local residents and workers were interviewed who shared stories of their memories of the Englewood and Sixty-third street area. This paper also describes how the community based organizations and local people are tackling the challenging of improving the area and the nascent results of this new era for the Englewood community. Economic development, job development, the new use of vacant land, and renewed attention being given to the area of Sixty-Third Street by its residents are documented and described. This slow but confident march toward a new future for Englewood merits study not only by this study but for other studies in the future in that the challenge of Englewood will serve as a reference point for other areas facing the challenge of community improvement.