

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: HOUSE OR HOME: NUCLEAR FAMILY  
CONSTRUCTION AND FEDERAL HOUSING  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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The federal government's complicity in racial discrimination in the development and administration of housing policy has been well documented, but the government's role in reproducing gendered federal housing policies in the United States has been largely unrecognized in the political science literature. I argue that United States housing policy in the twentieth century is inextricably linked to perceptions of gender and the single family home, and the traditional nuclear family has been rendered a hegemonic entity. The politics of housing cannot be understood without an analysis of the effects that conceptions of gender have had on housing policy and in turn of the effects of such policy on the cultural and social norms surrounding gender.

Contemporary household regulation is the culmination of a gradual process of state-building during which the state came to define and regulate the nuclear, heterosexual family. Nuclear family hegemony began during the interwar period and was institutionalized under the New Deal, became naturalized from the 1950s to the 1970s

through suburbanization and urban disinvestment, and developed into policymaking that was increasingly punitive in the 1990s for those outside the nuclear- and nuptial-family norm. The system of separate benefits for nuclear families and non-traditional households that was established decades earlier made public and subsidized housing ripe for attack in a growing culturally conservative atmosphere. The HOPE VI program and the decision in *HUD v. Rucker* represent various ways in which the government implicated family in its attempts to regulate the homes of low-income, non-traditional households that are often headed by minority single and elderly women. Although current housing policies reflect changed policy commitments from multiple administrations, present access to housing remains family-composition specific. Nuclear family hegemony serves to reify distinctions based on sex; it incorporated women's economic dependence as an essential component of housing finance and endorsed a single standard for what a good family looked like. In drawing boundaries around citizenship through federal housing policy, the state helped to define the very meaning of family in America.

HOUSE OR HOME: NUCLEAR FAMILY HEGEMONY AND FEDERAL  
HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
2010

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## **Dedication**

In memory of EJF, MTF, PAF, and SMF.

For my mother, Mary Ann Fritz.

## Acknowledgements

My beloved brothers and sister-in-law in Avoca, Pennsylvania, even though they never understood why I spent so many years studying and doing low-paying direct services in underserved communities, never criticized my decisions. My nieces and nephews continue to provide an outlet for my sense of wonder. Most of all I thank my mother, Mary Ann Fritz. Despite profound personal loss and economic insecurity, she raised me and my brothers in a loving and secure home. Her experience as a widow and single parent has guided my own feminist intellectual journey. Words do not come close to expressing my gratitude.

My intentional family has provided unwavering support: Kim (Bechtel) Rothermel and her family, Suzanne (Keris) Henrickson and her family, Richard Crespo, Zinta Saulkalns, and Bidisha Biswas. They gave me a place for rest and play when I needed it most. Our many shared moments gave me a homeplace beyond my biological family.

Many other friends brought meaning and joy to my life over the years, including Lisa Mercer, Jeana Simon, Brandy Panunti, Kimberly Baranowsky, Michael FitzPatrick, Benjamin Funk, Telile Bayissa, Nancy Lopez, Marcus Cole, Mercedes Neves, Geetu Ambwani, and Nikhil Kaza.

I was lucky to have Eduardo Frajman, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Jeremy Janow, Julia Jones, Bradley Hays, and Jenny Wustenberg as my colleagues and friends at the University of Maryland.

The staff at Hillside Terrace and my neighbors in the Fairlawn section of SE DC provided a quiet and safe space to live, write, and study.

Marla Brettschneider and Jim Percey, formerly of Bloomsburg University, helped me find a language to express my life experiences and nascent ideas. Their mentorship changed my life. I also thank my committee, particularly Fred Alford and Sonya Michel, for their guidance and support over this lengthy graduate school journey. They helped make this a better dissertation. The late Linda Williams encouraged me and others to work for justice every day.

Fay's story--a former client in Philadelphia who passed away in 1994 after struggling with addiction, physical abuse, sex work, and HIV/AIDS-related health problems--is a reminder of far we have to go. And finally, I am grateful to the many low-income, single mothers I have encountered throughout my professional career as a social worker and advocate. Their resilience, despite life's many obstacles, continues to inspire me.

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vi
List of Illustrations .....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
<i>The Scope of the Problem</i> .....	4
<i>Social Policy History</i> .....	10
<i>House or Home?</i> .....	15
<i>Intersecting Issues of Gender, Race, and Class</i> .....	22
<i>Chapter Outline</i> .....	23
Chapter 2: The Nuclear Family Reframed.....	31
<i>Nuclear Family Hegemony</i> .....	35
<i>Women and Modern Political Theory</i> .....	39
<i>Not Founder nor Citizen: Feminists Challenging Tradition</i> .....	40
<i>Civic Myths and Archaisms</i> .....	50
<i>Family beyond Modern Political Theory</i> .....	56
<i>Sexual Difference and the Public/Private Distinction</i> .....	65
<i>Traditional Nuclear Family Advocates</i> .....	70
Chapter 3: Foundations of Nuclear Family Hegemony .....	79
<i>Part I – Nascent Nuclear Family-Centered Movements</i> .....	79
<i>Maternalist Politics</i> .....	84
<i>Protecting Women or Male Wage Earners?</i> .....	88
<i>Race Betterment and Housing Promotion</i> .....	90
<i>From Restrictive Legislation to Housing for the Nuclear Family</i> .....	93
<i>American City Planning and Zoning: Tools of Nuclear Family-Centered Housing Policy</i> .....	98
<i>Part II – Nuclear Family Hegemony and the American Housing Agenda</i> .....	105
<i>Better Homes and Consumer Citizenship</i> .....	106
<i>The National Housing Act of 1934 and the Federal Housing Administration</i> .....	113
<i>Soldier, Worker, or Nuclear Family</i> .....	122
Chapter 4: Building HOPE VI: Neo-traditional Planning and Urban Renewal.....	127
<i>Urban Theories</i> .....	133
<i>The Public Spatial Turn in Urban Politics</i> .....	141
<i>Urban Renewal and Practices of Displacement</i> .....	148
<i>New Urbanism and the Nuclear Family</i> .....	151
<i>HOPE VI as Gendered Urban Renewal</i> .....	159
Chapter 5: HUD v. Rucker: Constructing the Racialized Family in Federal Public Housing.....	172
<i>The War on Drugs Meets Urban Renewal</i> .....	174
<i>Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker</i> .....	180
<i>Nuclear Family Hegemony and Rucker</i> .....	187

Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	195
<i>House of Cards</i> .....	199
<i>Areas of Future Research</i> .....	202
<i>Women and Housing Tenure</i> .....	203
<i>Housing as a Human Right?</i> .....	205
<i>Theorizing Housing Policy</i> .....	206
Appendix.....	211
References.....	222

This Table of Contents is automatically generated by MS Word, linked to the Heading formats used within the Chapter text.



## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Questions on FHA credit report, 1935

Table 2. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS) - Definitions and Explanations (Abbreviated listing)

## **List of Illustrations**

Image 1. Medal, Fitter Family medal awarded by the American Eugenics Society.

Image 2. Manual cover, School Cottages for Training in Home-Making, Better Homes in America.

Image 3. Pamphlet, House #15, Community Interests Zone, The Town of Tomorrow, 1939 New York World's Fair.

Image 4. Photograph, Demonstration house set in a "neighborhood" with other demonstration houses, 1939 New York World's Fair.

Image 5. Advertisement, Promoting home ownership.

Image 6. Advertisement, Is YOUR HOUSE Also a Museum Specimen?

Image 7. Design Model, A Pattern Book for Neighborly Houses, Congress for New Urbanism.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories, and dreams of mankind. The binding principle in this integration is the daydream.<sup>1</sup>

The federal government's complicity in racial discrimination in the development and administration of housing policy has been well documented (Vale 2000; Schill and Wachter 1995; Massey and Denton 1993), but the government's role in reproducing gendered federal housing policies in the United States has been largely unrecognized in the political science literature. I argue that United States housing policy in the twentieth century is inextricably linked to perceptions of gender and the single family home, and the traditional nuclear family has been rendered a hegemonic entity. The politics of housing cannot be understood without an analysis of the effects that conceptions of gender have had on housing policy and in turn of the effects of such policy on the cultural and social norms surrounding gender. Although current housing policies reflect changed policy commitments from multiple administrations, present access to housing remains family-composition specific, which means gender—alongside the more commonly recognized factors of race and class—is an integral part of the complex policy-making matrix. More specifically, nuclear family hegemony serves to reify distinctions based on sex; it incorporated women's economic dependence as an essential component of housing finance and endorsed a single standard for what a good family looked like. This nuclear family hegemony began during the interwar period and was institutionalized under the New Deal, became naturalized from 1950s to the 1970s through suburbanization and

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<sup>1</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969) p. 6.

urban disinvestment, and developed into policymaking that was increasingly punitive in the 1990s for those outside the nuclear- and nuptial-family norm.

Contemporary federal low-income housing programs continue to bear the mark of early housing programs, characterized by nuclear family and single-family home rhetoric organized around a male breadwinner model, and thus reinforces the nuclear family idea. Although federal housing policies have been shaped by numerous competing interests, the nuclear family has acted as the legitimate norm around which policy has been organized. Both the federal government and the courts have contributed to this gendered structure of housing policy; the federal government, through the creation of public policies and the support of private business interests and the courts through the adjudication of housing-related issues, both of which nurture, tolerate, and endorse gender-stratified policies. Obtaining and maintaining housing in the United States relies on the performance of gender, and more specifically, on the formation of nuclear or quasi-nuclear families.

While it is unnecessary to justify one's interest in promoting *racial* equality in housing, *gender* equality in housing remains outside of the mainstream of what is considered a salient political topic that merits investigation. It is useful to analyze gender and the family in housing policy not only to raise new insights about women and their political incorporation, but also to contribute to our understanding of political institutions and processes in American political development. Furthermore, devolution and the move towards public/private partnerships have a significant impact on social policymaking. With these trends disproportionately affecting women and children, it raises concerns for women's equal citizenship and access to government services

increasingly dominated by the market. An investigation of how United States policymakers have relied historically on shifting images of the nuclear family to create housing policy will help us understand contemporary regulation of low-income women and illuminate how family-centered policies are developing in other policy arenas. It also highlights how housing policy is utilized as a marker for family policies in the United States. Although family-centered policy initiatives are generally associated with conservative lawmakers and right-wing ideology, the initiatives are in fact utilized by policymakers across the political spectrum, as well as by the Courts and social and economic institutions. If stable households and equality of opportunity are fundamental goals of democratic regimes, housing policies that are based on hegemonic norms of gender, family, race, and sexuality cast doubts on the possibility of women's equal citizenship. In order to understand how the nuclear family is implicated in housing policy, it is necessary to explore both the history of government programs, as well as the ways in which ideology related to the home is represented. This necessarily draws on different categories, such as race and whiteness, class, and gender, to highlight these functions.

Like the racialized oppositional categories associated with race and ethnicity (whites as industrious and intelligent and blacks as lazy and ignorant), family bears a similar, yet unique stamp. Our cultural perception of the nuclear family captures the oppositional categories of racial division and the legacy of racism, but also interacts with class and especially gender. Although half of the households in the United States do not resemble the traditional nuclear family, it remains imprinted in our cultural imagination. Two-parent households are viewed as normal, the ideal environment within which to

raise children, and the breeding ground for raising good citizens. These families concurrently operate within a zone of relative autonomy and receive protection and benefits from the state. To the extent that welfare-state regulation occurs, it is often invisible, downplayed, and not viewed as welfare. What is unique is that these households are in fact guided by cultural and social norms, though ones that are supported by government policies. Non-traditional and multi-generational families, on the other hand, are perceived as deviations from the norm, irresponsible, and require intervention from the government. These households are considered unsuitable for citizen development, receive different levels of government assistance than those families viewed as deserving, and therefore are subject to intense government control.

### *The Scope of the Problem*

Feminist political theorists and scholars of women and gender from numerous academic disciplines have encouraged scholars to explore the ways in which family has been naturalized in the modern state and society, and in political science alone, there are recent studies on family with respect to political theory (Holland 2001; Stevens 1999), social policy (Strach 2004), and American political development (Jensen 2003)<sup>2</sup>, as well as in other political science sub-fields. A symposium sponsored by the Women's Caucus of the American Political Science Association meeting in August 2005 discussed using the family as a new lens of inquiry in political science.

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<sup>2</sup> This is an abbreviated list of contributions to the recent family literature in political science. Other classic works by feminists in political science representing the spectrum of ideological persuasions include the following: Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), Martha Minow, "We, the Family: Constitutional Rights and American Families," *American Journal of History*, 74, no. 3 (1987), Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), Bell Hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), and Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

Given the historical relationship between women and the private/domestic sphere and the concern among feminist and race scholars and activists about the growing regulation of poor women through public policies, it is appropriate to explore the centers of power in this regard—the nuclear family ideal and housing policy.<sup>3</sup> At a one-day conference on housing rights in May 2005, sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing warned that homelessness is increasing around the world due to factors such as globalization, privatization of housing, family violence, and the criminalization of the homeless (Kathari 2005). He pointed out, additionally, that United States is among a very small group of developed countries with especially egregious housing policies that disproportionately affect women. Although the federal government supports numerous types of housing through a combination of state subsidies, tax expenditures, and mortgage financing, the single family home remains at the zenith of housing policy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), the overall homeownership rate in the United States was at a high of 66.2 percent in 2000, up from 55 percent in 1950 and 46.5

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<sup>3</sup> Although I do not discuss this project in terms of women's agency and resistance, it should be noted that a number of important studies explore this topic. Rhonda Y. Williams's innovative research illustrates the process by which black women—"public housing tenants, welfare mothers, and nuns"—utilized the militant rhetoric of black power politics to mobilize grassroots efforts to fight poverty, slum living conditions, and poor social services. See Rhonda Y. Williams. *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* (New York, 2004); see also, Robert Feldman and Susan Stall, *The Dignity of Resistance: Women Residents' Activism in Chicago Public Housing* (New York, 2004). On women's activism, see Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York, 1999); Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights–Black Power Movement* (New York, 2001); Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York, 2005); Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 2005); Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia, 2007); Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston, 2006); Kimberly Springer, ed., *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism* (New York, 1999); Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968–1980* (Durham, 2005); and Winifred Breines, *The Trouble between Us: An Uneasy History of White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement* (New York, 2006).

at the start of the century. Thus, over one-third of United States' households fall outside of the primary federal single family housing agenda. For women and minorities, however, the picture is even more sobering. Whites continue to dominate the market with a 71.3 percent homeownership rate in 2000, while Blacks and Hispanics were at 46.3 and 45.7 percents respectively. Asians and AIAN's (American Indian and Alaskan Natives) had the highest homeownership rates for minorities at 53.4 percent and 55.5 percent, respectively. Single mothers of all races had a homeownership rate of only 49 percent, a sharp contrast to single fathers, who had a 69 homeownership rate. Single women without children have a growing homeownership rate, presently at 51.9 percent (U.S. Census 2004).

Research has consistently illustrated extensive levels of residential racial segregation, which many scholars attribute to discrimination in the housing market and lending industry (Ross and Turner 2005; Yinger 1995). Both national- and local-level housing market audit studies reveal that most African Americans and Hispanics encounter discrimination related to housing availability and access to rental and sales markets (Ondrich, Sricker, and Yinger 1998). Although the audit methodology is a useful tool for assessing discrimination faced by those seeking housing, scholars have pointed to a number of disadvantages, including the fact that testing samples do not capture multiple forms of discrimination that become manifest in the housing market (Ross 2002). In addition, far less research has been conducted on other forms of housing discrimination, such as household composition (for example, single woman or single mother with children), issues that are more likely to impact non-nuclear household composition (Tester 2007). More problematic, "race is typically situated, with this



literature, as ‘the’ cause of housing discrimination while other inequalities, such as gender and familial status, are disregarded or hierarchically ordered below race” (Tester 2007, 18). In those studies that do focus on sex and household composition as the source of discrimination, findings show that males are favored over females with and without children (Galster and Constantine 1991) and African American women have the lowest probability of rental access (Massey and Lundy 2001). Studies of sexual harassment in the housing context (Reed, Collingsworth, and Fitzgerald 2005; Welsh 1999) pale in comparison to those exploring employment-related sexual harassment. Housing-related sexual harassment is particularly disturbing, as landlords have extensive access to residents’ private lives, including their homes, children, personal property, and credit. A landlord may also impact residents’ reputation with neighbors and other community members. For low-income women who participate in informal economies (for example, reduced rent or overlooking poor credit in exchange for child care or household cleaning), the potential for landlords to expect and obtain sexual favors is even greater. Gender discrimination in the context of housing is not uniquely about gender; race, class, marriage status, sexual identity, and household structure all operate simultaneously in the creation and maintenance of gender discrimination. These issues highlight an important characteristic of housing: the profound interaction between one’s overlapping identities and their relationship to a dwelling place. While the studies noted above are crucial towards understanding the pervasiveness of discrimination in the housing arena, they paint an incomplete picture of the nature of inequality in housing. Indeed, the focus on private market housing discrimination absolves the government from its role in perpetrating broader gendered and racialized housing practices through policymaking and

overlooks the role of society in general. Inequality is embedded in the very structure of housing policy in the United States and is played out in a variety of feedback loops.

One's housing options are mitigated by a constellation of factors, including income, employment, household circumstances, race, and family composition. In turn, housing location determines one's access to public schools, hospitals and specialized health care, public transportation, banking, parks, child care, grocery stores, and political representation (or lack thereof, as is the case with residents of the District of Columbia and Congressional representation). On a broader scale, housing policy and planning shapes patterns of work, community, and family life, as entire metropolitan regions have been arranged to separate single-family houses from public urban spaces and industry. Despite the increase of women in the workforce, these spatial relations continue to shape gender roles. Theoretically, United States housing policy has deemed the vulnerable to be eligible for subsidized and affordable housing, but demand outpaces supply. In order to develop a sound public policy that serves all groups in a fair and neutral manner, it is important to decouple conceptions of certain types of housing as virtuous from the more important shelter value of housing.

Historian Gail Radford (2000) has pointed out that there is a two-tiered system of housing policy in which market incentives and tax breaks are used to promote the private development of single-family homes for the middle and upper class, while under-funded subsidies and at one time new public housing production are reserved for the lower class and indigent "deserving" poor. Thus, white, middle-class and working-class citizens are given the "right to housing" through a combination of federal subsidies and tax breaks, while everyone else is subject to the unmanaged private rental market or public housing

and must endure intense government supervision as a condition to access low-income housing. This also means an increased hardship for female-headed households, single parent families, and unmarried individuals who need to move to geographically isolated areas to obtain affordable housing (Hayden 1984). Therefore, federal housing policy in the United States has been constructed to serve diverse groups with different types of benefits, and notions of family have been implicated in this construction of those who are considered deserving--either because they maintain traditional nuclear families or can afford to buy into the market--and those who are not.

Throughout the 1990s there has been a wave of literature on housing policy changes, welfare reform, and shifts towards prioritizing market based policy initiatives. Many scholars have sounded the alarm of what these policies mean for our national social and economic commitments and the future of social provisions in the United States. Neil Smith (1999, 1996) argues that the 1990s marked a shift from the Keynesian and New Deal economics towards a revanchist urban regime in which urban policy represents a backlash against liberal and progressive policy making. This movement includes intense policing by the state and neo-liberal market reforms. Smith's analysis is dramatic and insightful, and scholars certainly have reason to worry, but the revanchist ideology that he names has always been present for women and minorities attempting to obtain affordable housing. The severe societal costs of this welfare state dismantling and privatization of housing policy should not be underestimated; however, focusing on recent neo-liberal reforms and devolution obscures the broader issue of housing policy's gendered nature, thus diverting attention from understanding the multiple ways in which housing policy has reproduced class, race, and gender bias since its inception. Women's

citizenship in relation to the right to housing has always been qualified by one's ability to perform well in the market, withstand substandard housing conditions in public housing, or get by with little to no government assistance.

### *Social Policy History*

While there is a great deal of research related to gender and social policy in the fields of history, sociology, and women's studies, political scientists have lagged behind in exploring gender biases embedded in twentieth century public policy and the development of U.S. social policy and the administrative state. This is changing, though a gap remains in the literature so far as gender and the development of housing policy are concerned, as well as how ideological forces related to gender shape public policy. The current view on institutionalized gendered social policy in the United States is incomplete without an understanding of the special role that housing policy plays in reinforcing sex inequality. Nuclear family hegemony is one apparatus that supports other gendered processes and binds them together in an effective system. While housing policy is unique in its disciplinary power and broad societal impact, it interacts with other policy areas, such as family law, child welfare, transportation planning, and drug policy.

Feminist readings of U.S. social policy and welfare state regimes have shed new light on structural imbalances and bias--based on gender, race, and social class--present in the development of the administrative state in the United States (Boris 1995; Kerber 1995; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Orloff 1993). These accounts either implicitly or explicitly draw from T.H. Marshall's views of citizenship in which full membership in a national community extends from civic and political citizenship to social citizenship, which involves access to basic economic security as a requirement for access to political

and civic rights (Marshall 1983). Scholars who examine national political regimes use a variation of social citizenship to include governance, which is an understanding of the relationships of citizens to political institutions and public policies (Mettler 1998; Skocpol 1992; Skowronek 1982). State-centered theory views the formulation and enactment of social policy as contingent on previous policy precedents and the state structures that implement them (Skocpol 1992, 1980). The determinants of state policy depend on the consequences of previous policy attempts, the capacities of state institutions, and the balance of power among economic and political elites (Skocpol 1985). State-centered theorists do not assume that state structures are neutral mediators of pluralist conflict among competing interest groups. Rather, state structures provide differential access to state power for various agents and political groups. State-centered theorists argue that the feedback effects of previously enacted policies on subsequent policies "reveal how changing political agendas and alternative possible alliances emerge not only in response to new socioeconomic conditions but also on the basis of-or in reaction to-previous policy accomplishments" (Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988, 17). Once instituted, "social policies in turn reshape the organization of the state itself and affect the goals and alliances of social groups involved in ongoing political struggle" (25). According to state-centered theorists, state structures and policy feedback constitute the political processes through which social policies are forged. Furthermore, the creation of public policy in democratic regimes is not neutral, rather, it is has been shaped historically through a web of interest groups, private actors, and the commitments of political institutions. In addition, separate groups (women, blacks, men, immigrants) have been ascribed different civic rights based on the meaning and responsibilities that

have been attached to those groups and the roles to which the groups have been relegated in both private and public life. Public policies have been shaped around different commitments of welfare state regimes. Thus, it is possible to analyze gender in social policy not only to bring new analysis related to women to the surface, but also to contribute to our understanding of political institutions and processes in American politics. Therefore, understanding construction of the nuclear family takes on new meaning for scholars of gender and social policy in our contemporary context.

Most salient to this discussion are sociologist Gosta Esping-Andersen's models of welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990) and feminist critiques thereof (Lewis 2001; Lister 1997; Orloff 1993; Lewis 1992). Esping-Anderson (1990) devised an influential three-pronged typology of Western, welfare state regimes--liberal (English-speaking nations), corporatist (France and Germany), and social demographic regimes (Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands)--which was based on the level of social rights, social stratification, and state-market-family relations. According to Esping-Andersen, the ideal welfare state is one that contributes to decent standard of living for workers, absent of labor market employment. Feminists criticized this notion of "de-commodification," maintaining that it did not appropriately consider the status of women, who were more likely to rely on spouses and parents than paid employment for support (Lister 1997; Orloff 1993). Thus, an ideal welfare state cannot be one in which women are coerced to couple in order to maintain a modicum of stability. In response to feminist criticism, Esping-Andersen adjusted his typology; however, some maintain he continues to fail to address earlier feminist concerns (Christopher 2002). These new feminist

typologies do not, however, take into account social policy provisions outside of income maintenance, taxation, and employment.

More specific to U.S. social policy, Nelson (1990), Mettler (1998), and Novkov (2001) have examined how social provisions have developed differently in the United State based on both the way in which the aid is perceived by policymakers and the public and the groups that receive the benefits. Typically, social provisions developed for men and workers are administered at the federal level with standardized rules, whereas, policies for women and children have been relegated to state administration, permit more extensive evaluation and surveillance, and are assigned based on conceptions of who is deserving and who is not—from ascriptive and social characteristics. Lawmaking, economic conditions, and social institutions are often treated as mutually exclusive of one other; however, the practices work together to shape our social and political reality. Historian Daniel T. Rodgers (2000) summarizes the perspective of scholars studying this perspective from the view from recipients of government assistance:

Up close, the agents of social policy may aid and enable, they may work modest additions of justice, but they also impose discipline. The very act of separating citizens into distinctive social categories—the poor on welfare and the ‘working’ poor receiving merely earned income credits and food stamps, ‘minorities’ eligible for affirmative action programs and ‘majorities’ who are not, persons with ‘families’ and persons who simply live together—serves to divide and survey the recipient’s of the state’s assistance. So do the rules social politics winds around all it touches. The disciplining of mind and body that modern welfare states undertake not only shores up the leading economic interests of the state, it is claimed. It also enables the reproduction of the dominant social arrangements—be they the nuclear family, the prevailing sexual conventions, or the dominant structure of aspirations. Politics as conventionally defined is beside the point; discipline is social politics’ driving motor. (23)

Rodgers warns, however, that these elements of the state are neither natural nor inevitable features of modernity, as some social scientists and other scholars would have us believe.

Historical determinism and liberal expectancy overlook the multiple casts of characters, resistance, and compromises that are involved in shaping social politics.

Eileen McDonough (2009), in her uniquely argued *The Motherless State: Women's Political Leadership and American Democracy*, contends that countries with extensive social welfare policies, gender quotas, or symbolic familial monarchies are more willing to accept women in public office because the state has taken up the maternal role typically associated with women. This, she says, explains how women in the United States have attained a great deal of professional success, but lack electoral gender parity. Virginia Sapiro (1991) argues that interdisciplinary scholarship that focuses on the relationship between women or gender and political institutions in a historical context is most helpful in bringing out insights about gender and politics more generally. Ritter and Mellow (2000) observe that research combining the development of social policy and law, such as that of Skocpol (1992) and Mink (1985), offers the most promising venues for integrating gender to both critique and reinterpret American politics. Instead of the 'add women and stir' approach that is often present in studies of women in American politics, an analysis of gender provides an analytic concept for understanding the nature of political and economic relations and the relationship of women to government institutions and the bureaucracy. Other feminist scholars have sought to give legitimacy to topics historically considered outside the realm of politics and political theory: care (Tronto 1994), dependency (Kittay 1999), friendship (Raymond 1986), and capabilities (Nussbaum 2000). In addition, scholars of American constitutional development have provided new insights into the interplay between gender, bureaucratic government institutions, and U.S. constitutional development (Ritter 2002, Novkov 2001, Siegel



1994). These works are exciting for the ways they provide sophisticated analysis of the intersection of gender and political history, with existing models of constitutional development.

### House or Home?

In 2004, the Center for Urban and Regional Studies and the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sponsored an exhibit on affordable home ownership at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. The exhibit, titled “Stories of Home”, showcased the images of Bill Bamberger, who photographed and collected stories from low-income families struggling to achieve affordable home ownership.<sup>4</sup> One story was particularly telling of the psychological importance of house ownership, even in low-income communities. House owner Pearlie Mae Seals’s comments were included in the exhibit:

I picked this house because of a dream. This house used to run me in my sleep. I could be asleep, and this house looked like it had arms reaching at me, and I would be runnin’ and I would fall in a hole. This house was flyin’ after me. I told my mama about my dream, and she said, “Well, maybe that’s the house for you honey.” I said to mama, “But the house is running after me!” She said, “No baby, take your dream backwards. The house is reaching out to say, ‘Come on, I’ll hold you.’” The next night when I went to sleep, I said to Faye, “Wake me up.” But Faye forgot, and I fell right asleep and had that dream again. This time I told the house, “I’m not going to run no more. We’re just going to fight it out.” And I turned to ball up my fist, the house said, “peace.” And I said, “What?” The house said, “Peace, come in.” “Bull shit!” I said. It said it again. “Peace, come in.” And I walked in.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> William Hamilton. “Four Walls that Changed the World,” *The New York Times*. November 27, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/27/garden/four-walls-that-change-the-world.html?pagewanted=1> (Accessed May 15, 2005). For more information on the exhibit, see <http://www.nbm.org/exhibitions-collections/exhibitions/stories-of-home.html> (Accessed August 1, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Based on author’s notes from exhibit, 2004.

Seals' impressions speak to the importance that dwelling places carry in our lives and imagination. Different building forms produce different meaning. The single family home has, in a sense, become a national monument. Along with the structure of government, economic practices, and political ideology, monuments create and recreate meaning and traditions of identity. According to William Sewell (2005), by exploring monument building and nationalism we can identify the national practices of a culture; they are captured in the buildings society constructs. In the context of house building, this dynamic is even more powerful than the creation of ideology alone because building occupies physical *space*. In addition, single family house building in the United States has historically been viewed as an inane practice. Despite lobbying from the building industry, tax breaks for house owners, intervention by real estate industries, and racial and gendered ideological forces propelling building, on the surface, the structure of a house appears to be absent of any significant political and social meaning. The space that the house occupies and the meaning assigned to it by people is far different however. Shein, in her examination of nationalism and monument building, explores how meaning is constructed across different monuments.

Yet beyond the questions of space, what is particularly interesting about national monuments producing a national meaning, or in Hobsbawm's term, an invented tradition, is that not all national monuments produce the "same" meaning. Different monuments will produce different visions of what the nation is and how an individual relates to it. These differences will often play out in the diverse design choices of monuments. (2007, 41)

According to Savage, monuments have "a curious power to erase their own political origins and become sacrosanct" (1997, 7). Similarly, the single family house conceals the political practices behind it.

Houses in the United States represent status, power, and legitimacy--and in a sense, the single family home is a monument to these ideals. Though for some demographic groups, the home, in all of its structural forms, involves intense government supervision. According to Daphne Spain, "houses are shaped not just by materials and tools, but by ideas, values, and norms" (1992, 111). The single family house is a symbol of a reproductive society, and what is considered legitimate and illegitimate in the production of this meaning, is dependent upon the group being represented and the familial ideology connected to it. Family is connected to home in our social and political imagination and exposes an interesting dilemma in American ideology: the home remains a site of dependence and mutual support and yet ownership of a home reflects a prevailing individualist ethos in the United States. This weaving of personal identity and domestic place (Marcus 1976) is why, Lawrence Vale argues (2000), public and subsidized housing is meagerly funded. The need to acquire housing is viewed as a "private responsibility" that trumps other liberal or communal meanings stamped onto assisted housing (2000, 7). Therefore, Vale claims, to support this cultural pattern of individualism, the mortgage interest tax deduction (which far outpaces assisted housing in federal funding), for example, must remain a silent form of federal aid. Gwendolyn Wright (1980) argues that homes act metaphorically, "suggesting and justifying social categories, values, and relations" (1). Thus, "spatial and good social relations mutually reinforce one another, and if status differences are engendered within the home, they are likely to be expressed outside it also" (Spain 1992, 111). Similarly, according to Mohatny and Martin (1986), home represents a mirror of the global patriarchal hierarchy:

Nevertheless, women's status as measured within patriarchal systems and other disciplining structures, must not be forgotten in attesting to

their creativity in crafting their identities through home. This is not least because women's different positionings with regard to homes' discursive fictions do more than attest to the starkness of such differences; modernist versions of home are subtle truths by which individuals reveal to themselves their places in a global hierarchy. (3)

The desire for an idealized home may even suppress crucial differences in the surrounding communities (Mohatny and Martin 1986). People search out for ideal housing forms at the expense of others who may not access that housing.

Architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright asks, "What does one learn by considering government housing programs as a form of cultural narrative, recounting assumptions about transformation and continuity in the home, along with political and economic realities?" (quoted in Mack 1993, 219). Before images of public housing as blocks and in some cases miles of high-rise buildings and dirty hallways brought fear and disgust to those not living in those conditions, American urban slums consisted of dilapidated shacks and alley dwellers. What remains consistent across the last century, however, are perceptions of the nuclear family sheltered in the legitimacy of the private and autonomous home. Judith Baer (2002) points out that "a society that has shown itself willing to disadvantage, and even punish, people who live outside the conventional family has shown no comparable willingness to lighten the burdens of real families" (127). This picture of legitimacy and order is juxtaposed with an image of both chaotic non-traditional families living in early twentieth century urban slums and those extended families residing in alleged drug filled public housing.

In an attempt to dislodge the homogenous suburban image from our mind, better understand diverse suburbs, and try to build better suburbs in the future, in *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden (2004) explores the complexity of United States suburbs. She

finds that young singles and elderly outnumber married couples with children, and as jobs and affordable housing have moved beyond the city limits, the suburbs are increasingly the destination for immigrants and home to diverse ethnic communities (14). While many contemporary suburbs do not reflect the homogeneity and the traditional nuclear family ubiquitous of the 1950s and post-World War II culture and national identity, government legislation continues to produce this image of the good life for the American public and remains intent on punitive measures and disproportionate regulation for those households that refuse to conform. While the suburbs might be gaining diversity, elements of Victorian Era home-creation, such as the emphasis on home repair, consumer consumption, design, and investment in a house as a primary method of savings, threatens to maintain the visions of the traditional suburban nuclear family as a reflection of the good citizen.

Todd De Pastino (2003) lays out the other side of the story, tracing the consequences of homelessness for men and its meaning for our national identity. In *Citizen Hobo*, De Pastino points out that, “Marches on Washington to revive and burnish this ideal [of home as a central place of being] have become more routine, as groups ranging from the Promise Keepers to the Million Man and Million Mom Marches dramatize local grievances as crises of home and nationhood” (2003, 271). He suggests that one domestic vision has been replaced by a diversity of home ideals, yet this phase marks a different but continued inability to separate home from the “political economies of housing and the entitlement of citizenship” (271). De Pastino contends, “the specter of white male homelessness so haunted the American body politic between the end of the Civil War and the onset of the Cold War that it prompted the creation of an entirely new

social order and political economy” (2003, xviii-xix). Yet scholars need to be cautious to avoid casting alternative cultures of existence as unconstrained states of rebellion against the domestication of industrial and domestic life. Indeed, representations of homelessness rely on conceptions of freedom/lack of freedom and sacred/profane in political and sociological discourse. Political scientist Jeremy Waldron (1993) explores the nature of homelessness in the United States as rooflessness, and asserts that property rules determine where one has the right to exist (309). Avoiding casting homelessness in terms of socio-economic terms, Waldron observes that the right to be is as fundamental as property rights and therefore the right to housing should be the basis for other social rights. Joanne Passero (1996) points out, “only homeless adults who will be housed are those who return to or recreate normative ‘homes’—and the gender roles they imply—in order to survive” (3). “Men who are failed or unwilling breadwinners generally gain only limited access to bare temporary shelters unless they can somehow father a child and form a family,” argues De Pastino (2003, 261). For homeless men, therefore, the nuclear family hegemony renders equally troubling results, “viewed on the one hand as dependent, and therefore emasculated, and on the other as hyper-masculinized, and therefore dangerous, homeless men are generally expected either to take care of themselves on the streets or face incarceration” (261). The state’s coercive power reduces the homeless to subordinate civic status, or bare life. Obtaining and maintaining housing, therefore, relies on the performance of gender, and more specifically, on the formation of nuclear or quasi-nuclear families.

Dwelling is unique in that it is both a physical space and an ontological condition. Dwelling captures personal desire and acts as the household’s relation to society. The

form of dwelling with which one is associated carries social, psychological, and economic messages. An epistemological quality of dwelling places is that they can tend to lead one to take these spaces for granted. Dwelling works in such a way as to become a part of our ordinary world. However, this banality de-politicizes dwelling as it relates to housing policy. It is often assumed that market-rate, single-family houses exist without intervention from the government while affordable and subsidized housing receives significant federal outlays. Housing policy exemplifies the power of the state to define reality. The single family house, like national monuments, produces different meanings and has served the United States' class, race, empire, and domestic ambitions, yet there has been a lack of significant inquiry in political science with respect to the house or home. There is also a tendency in social science to interrogate social and political issues that exist at the forefront of our cultural and social worlds. Dwelling places and the dynamics that created them, including the single family house, have become so naturalized that they are viewed as a less important site for political inquiry. By problematizing dwelling and placing it at the center of inquiry, other social and political relations, including the gendered and racial elements of housing policy that are taken for granted become more visible. It is important to note that this inquiry into housing and gender is not one that focuses on a philosophical meaning of home or the contours of democratic theory. Rather, the goal is to highlight the interconnections between conceptions of house, home, and family, and the policy implications of these relationships.

*Intersecting Issues of Gender, Race, and Class*

Although gender is an important factor in nuclear family-centered policymaking, the policy designs implemented from the Hoover administration to the HOPE VI program implicate race and class as well as gender. Feminist geographers point out that socioeconomic class serves as a “code for race in the national discourse” on public housing (Breitbart and Pader 1995, 1); however, it also acts as code for traditional family, with the consequence of making the gendered nature of the housing programs invisible. What is clear is that from stopping communist threats to fostering economic progress through consumption, the post-war family “rendered any deviation from its norms tantamount to treason” (Kunzel 1993, 163). Kunzel argues the following:

As with psychiatric discourse of white illegitimacy, new fears surrounding black illegitimacy took shape in the larger context of the familial ideology that crystallized during and after the war. It was no accident that the black family should alarm policy-makers at a time when family values were being so rigidly prescribed and the normal family was portrayed as white, middle-class, male-headed, and suburban-dwelling. This hegemonic post-war family both implicitly and explicitly excluded black Americans. (162-163)

This is not to say that non-traditional households are only headed by black women or that minority families are excluded from creating traditional nuclear families. Rather, the fear of women without a man becomes further loaded with racially embedded stereotypes for minority women. In fact, Linda Gordon (1990) points out that highlighting poor, single women as the recipients of state aid distorts the reality of single mothers historically and targets poor women as representatives of social and moral breakdown.

While studies have examined how the role of gender and domesticity shaped postwar politics, “representations of unmarried mothers suggest that race, as powerfully



and pervasively as gender, determined the form and shape of the ideology of the family that stood at the heart of the postwar political agenda” (Kunzel 1993, 165). Ange-Marie Hancock (2004), in the *Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*, examines how the public identity of contemporary welfare recipients is shaped by what she calls the ‘the politics of disgust.’ The result is that undemocratic legislative outcomes reflect the “misperception that they [welfare recipients] are all or mostly single mothers who are poor and African-Americans” (2004, 6). According to Micaela Di Leonardo (1999), underclass ideology and theories of model minorities work together with ideas of “moral motherhood” to “stigmatize poor minority mothers and to discipline those who are better off against making demands” for better social policy, such as federally subsidized child care and better wages (64). By “psychologizing” and “narrating the American temperament,” she argues, these discourses draw the public’s attention away from the unequal distribution of resources in the United States (64). Elizabeth Wilson (1992) argues that hostility towards the city by many feminist scholars and women, primarily related to welfare and safety, “re-creates the traditional paternalism of most town planning” (10). This is the same kind of paternalism drummed up by lawmakers and developers to buttress support for urban renewal projects and recalls how nascent housing movements were shaped in part by activists who shared a maternalist agenda that was in fact a paternalist ideology.

### Chapter Outline

To explore the research question using a critical interpretive approach, this project will examine important housing legislation and housing-related court cases, most of which have not been viewed using a lens of gender and family status in the political

science literature. Housing legislation established policy and set the terms for the political debate; Supreme Court decisions further legitimized proper family and housing structures. To put it another way, how has the federal government responded to contingent gendered ideological messages of the nuclear family through housing policy and how has it relied on that ideology to both frame and legitimize their policy formulas? Here, the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) requires some acknowledgement. Their work emphasizes the significance of political conflict in shaping discursive practices. It has been influential for researchers interested in charting the impact of political ideologies. Laclau and Mouffe do not seek to interrogate specific texts in detail; instead their focus is on the interconnections between different ideological discourses arising from multiple sources of power.

Gender analysis of political history can highlight women-related concerns, as well as illuminate trends and problems in wider political institutions that would otherwise remain invisible. Gender analysis goes beyond the biological determinism of sex differences (the category of ‘woman’) to an understanding of how social roles, institutions, and “perceived differences between the sexes” shape experiences for women and men (Scott 1988, 42). Therefore, reading for gender involves paying attention to the possibility that women and gendered language may have been used to legitimize political institutions and societal norms. Women may be implicated as objects and subjects in the process; the participants, as well as, the meaning assigned to the actors and the process warrants attention. According to Scott (1998), the goal of gender analysis in history is as follows:

Our goal is to understand the significance of the sexes, of gender groups in the historical past. Our goal is to discover the range in

sex roles and in sexual symbolism in different societies and periods, to find out what meaning they had and how they functioned to maintain the social order or to promote its change. (29)

Thus, gender analysis of political history may require normative, genealogical and methodological considerations. Examining perceptions of the nuclear family and family status may move us closer to understanding under what types of ideological conditions states model housing policy, and contribute to the dialogue between whether welfare states model social policy based on institutional designs, economic forces, or cultural values.

In the following chapter I will provide a short history of the family in political theory, with the goal of explaining how family remains relevant to present political inquiries and impacts present social policy development. Jacqueline Stevens (1999), in *Reproducing the State*, asserts that “the modern notion that political authority and familial authority might be separate” started with social contract theory (51). That, along with the continued public/private heuristic, argues Stevens, is a fiction promoted by political scientists which results in further reducing the visibility of familial features of the state (51). It is not possible or necessary towards the overall aim of this project to explore the entire history of political thought. The discussion will focus on both the naturalization of family in political theory and the ways in which theorists have failed to deal adequately with family status. I will examine how this trend has influenced modern political theory and hegemonic familial thought, and the criticisms of it promoted by feminist political theorists. Ambivalence surrounding liberalism and classical republicanism can be seen in the development of United States social policy, in general, and housing policy, specifically.

The three subsequent chapters trace hegemonic nuclear family ideology as it relates to housing policy. These three chapters are not intended to be exhaustive of federal housing policy history in the twentieth century. Rather, each chapter offers unique insights into the way in which the nuclear family has been established and implicated in federal housing policy. Drawing on the published work of contemporaries and historical scholars, Chapter 3 has two parts: The first part will introduce how the maternalism of the Progressive era coalesced around a nuclear family ideal as the federal government became more involved in housing policy. Maternalist ideology acted alongside other white, nuclear family-centered movements, including the Better Homes in America campaign, to create an atmosphere in which sex differentiated housing policy would be nurtured and endorsed. Although many political scientists studying social policy often see the roots of public policy in the New Deal period, the interwar period in the United States, as many historians acknowledge, is important as well. With respect to housing, Hoover promoted the dissemination of single family house ownership and the nuclear family ideal through government sponsored housing organizations (Hutchison 2000). The New Deal period saw intense subsidization of nuclear families in the United States. Part two of this chapter will examine one important piece of New Deal legislation, the Housing Act of 1934, which created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), much later known for its infamous racially discriminatory “redlining” mortgage lending practices. FHA worked alongside the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act, known as the GI Bill, passed in 1944, to consolidate the system of long-term mortgages for the construction and sale of private houses. However, the FHA did nothing for low-income families, single women who could not qualify for FHA loans (unless they were war

widows), the non-wage earning elderly or minorities who were officially excluded from obtaining loans through FHA redlining practices.

From the 1950s through the 1970s there was a normalization of nuclear family in housing policy. Nuclear family hegemony became increasingly punitive during the Reagan and Clinton administrations. A system of separate benefits for nuclear families and non-traditional households that was created decades earlier made public and subsidized housing ripe for attack. During the 1980s there were severe cuts in funding for public housing, and funding for low-income housing remained low through the Bush administration. A corruption crisis at the Department of Housing and Urban Development brought more attention to homelessness but also the need for public housing reform. Unfortunately, the political consensus between liberals and conservatives that was required to heal the wounds from the earlier scandal, along with changing attitudes aimed at addressing drugs and crime in and around public housing, resulted in the Housing Act of 1990. The major elements of the legislation included increased use of vouchers and certificates, increased local and private control over housing, encouraged more home ownership for low and middle-income families, and integrated social services into low-income housing planning. One major program that resulted from the new direction in policy, the HOPE program (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) and now known as HOPE VI, was a throwback to the early urban renewal projects. Housing legislation passed during the 1990s paralleled the reform of cash assistance programs with an emphasis on nuclear- and conjugal-family formation, family self-sufficiency, and market-based solutions to poverty.

In Chapter 4, I examine the HOPE VI program, along with new urbanism, an architectural and urban planning movement, to illustrate how nuclear family hegemony, which crystallized prior to the Clinton administration, coincided with political maneuvering and resulted in a housing program that shut out most previously eligible public housing residents from housing. Neo-traditionalism rose to prominence in residential architecture. This architectural concept generated a movement in urban planning that was adopted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development created the HOPE VI program in 1992 with grants first administered in 1993. The HOPE VI program was designed with a number of stated goals: revitalizing severely distressed public housing; increasing home ownership for low-income and moderate income families; reducing the housing authorities' maintenance costs; deconcentrating poverty by creating mixed income and lower density housing; and making public housing and public entitlements a step towards less reliance on government assistance. From 1993 to 2000, the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded nearly \$4 billion to local housing authorities to fund demolition, planning, and revitalization through HOPE VI. Since 1996, although the local housing authorities were required to increase funding through private investment, which necessitates setting aside a large portion of the new or renovated housing for middle income families, many low-income families, and especially single women, are locked out of the new program. These attempts to integrate market rate housing with public housing limits the number of available space for low-income households and the emphasis on home-ownership means that fewer women will be able to access the new properties.

In the 2002 Supreme Court case the *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker* the Court ruled that public housing authorities are permitted to evict tenants when they, their household members, or their guests are involved in illegal drug activity; the Court agreed that such evictions are permissible even if the tenant has no knowledge of, or control over, the criminal activity, and even if the activity takes place away from the housing unit. Chapter 5 explores this decision and how the Supreme Court affirmed the racial and gendered nature of HUD's housing policy, whereby extended family is linked to the housing unit and property interests. Traditional legal scholarship on the topic has overlooked the racial and gendered ideological nature of the decision as well as the way in which family structure was utilized as a method through which to sanction public housing residents related to those who had committed crimes on or near the public housing unit.

In the final chapter I will summarize my findings and discuss their academic and political implications. This study will contribute to the existing literature on welfare state development and bring housing, in general, and low-income women and the built environment, specifically, into the discussion of gender and federal social policy development. Although tracing the development of nuclear family hegemony cannot explain the entire story, it will help create a more complex and nuanced rendering of American political development and gender politics. The narrative I lay out is aimed at understanding the prominent role of nuclear family ideology in the development of federal housing policy. These cases cannot explain all aspects of gender, policy, law, and urban planning; however, they can bring to light previously unexplored issues and suggest an important direction of inquiry. With the current state of the housing market,

the struggling United States and global economy, and the changing face of racialized policy programming, it is particularly important to explore the meanings that surround policy decisions related to housing, planning, and the build environment.



## **Chapter 2: The Nuclear Family Reframed**

The meaning and importance of heterosexual marriage and family remains a highly contested social and political issue. Although the family may no longer be considered a site of extensive oppression and subordination in the United States, it remains a hierarchical structure that defines both women's and men's political, social, and spiritual selves. Family is neither a pan-human universal nor a stable entity. Family and family relations are fluid and contingent. Despite the contemporary diversity of family structures and household composition in the United States, the heterosexual, nuclear, two-parent family is viewed as an essential building block of American society and social policies continue to favor the traditional nuclear family. Feminists concerned with eliminating gender-based inequalities have long been concerned with the role of the family in establishing, perpetrating, and legitimating women's secondary status. This dominance of nuclear family ideology and nuclear family-centered social policy in the United States limits and marginalizes many citizens, including singles, blended families, extended families, single-parents, foster parents, kinship caregiver-headed families, and gay and lesbian families who may or may not seek or be permitted to legally marry. Many non-traditional families support policy changes, such as civic marriage for same sex couples or cash payments for non-adoptive kinship caregivers, which would legitimize their household arrangements in the eyes of the state. However, not all non-traditional families attempt performing as traditional, nuclear families nor seek benefits from the state. Some non-traditional families openly resist homogenizing conceptions of family life, while others may be unable or uninterested in further politicizing their

intimate lives. Narrow definitions of family, such as the traditional nuclear family, are not only exclusionary. The celebration and defense of the nuclear family contributes to patterns of structured inequality: racism, classism, and patriarchal power relations. This raises serious questions about the democratic nature of political and social institutions in the United States.

In this chapter I seek to illuminate the connection between ideologies of family and individuals within the state. The relationship between the liberal autonomous self and the nation/state is mediated by the institution of the family; however, modern political theory, and thus our present institutions, has not settled the place of family in the political. There are two central ideas: 1) Ambivalence surrounding liberalism and classical republicanism as it relates to the structure and ideology of the nuclear family is critical towards an understanding of the functioning of state construction, and 2) American political ideology carries with it elements of nuclear family hegemonic thought, which impacts our political and social institutions, including contemporary housing policy. The modern nuclear family and state are mutually constitutive. Related to these two central elements is the notion of the house as a metaphor for the city, republic, and polis and family as a symbol of reproductive society.

For the purposes of its Current Population Survey (CPS), the U.S. Census Bureau defines family in the following manner:

A family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. Beginning with the 1980 Current Population Survey, unrelated subfamilies (referred to in the past as secondary families) are no longer included in the count of families, nor are the members of unrelated subfamilies included in the count of family members. The number of families is equal to the number of family

households, however, the count of family members differs from the count of family household members because family household members include any non-relatives living in the household.<sup>6</sup>

As demographers hasten to admit, this official definition of family does not easily reflect attitudes about marriage, the roles of men and women, nor family functioning<sup>7</sup> (See Table 2.1). While scholars attempt to find new ways to capture different family forms, the family/non-family dichotomy still exists. Some sociologists have used the term Standard North American Family (SNAF) to describe the “ideological code” that influences how we think about family and relationships (Smith 1993). The media, government, books, and advertising related to the SNAF—all discursive sites--order the categories that are utilized to study families. According to Smith (1993), the implications of Standard North American Family are as follows:

It is a conception of the family as a legally married couple sharing a household. The adult male is in paid employment; his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household. The adult female may also earn an income, but her primary responsibility is to the care of husband, household, and children. Adult male and female may be parents (in whatever legal sense) of children also resident in the household. (52)

The SNAF presents itself as universal and a-temporal. Family forms outside of the SNAF model are viewed as deviant and scholars who employ alternative theories and methods related to family research remain on the margins.

Beyond demography, sociology, and survey methodology, applying a gender perspective to the institution of family challenges mainstream notions about the nature of family functioning in our political structure and imagination. Myra Marx Ferree (1990)

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, *Fertility & Family Statistics Branch*, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html> (Accessed, September 3, 2010). See Appendix for additional definitions.

<sup>7</sup> Suzanne M. Bianchi and Lynne M. Casper, "American Families," *Population Bulletin* 55, no. 4: 2000, p. 3-6 and 14.

observes that “attention to both the structural and ideological levels of analysis requires distinguishing between ‘households,’ which are the co-residential units in which people empirically can be found, and ‘family,’ the ideology of relatedness that explains who should live together, share income, and perform certain common tasks” (870). Ferree continues,

The new gender perspective has shifted emphasis away from socialization and toward processes of categorization and stratification. Gender models also explicitly theorize the connection between structural and ideological levels of analysis. The family, as a cultural system of obligation, a ‘tangle of love and obligation,’ is distinguished from the household, a locus of labor and economic struggle. Neither families nor households can be conceptualized as separate or soli[t]ary spheres of distinctive relationships; both family and household are ever more firmly situated in their specific historical context, in which they take on diverse forms and significance. (879)

Using the term *nuclear family* or *the family* presents some overstatement of the meaning attached to it and misstates the universality of the term’s ideological meaning. I hope to avoid recreating a homogenization of the term. However, it is important to consider the hegemonic nuclear family as both an ideology and conceptual principle. The ambiguity and multiple meanings of the family is part of what this project seeks to engage and illuminate. When I describe family composition in its most neutral sense, I tend to refer to *households*.<sup>8</sup> I use *family* or *nuclear family* in reference to the symbolic, idealized form of two-parent, heteronormative, family relations and the ideology that it represents. The term *nuclear family* may be invoked by certain political parties more frequently than others; however, as both an institution and ideology, the nuclear family go beyond left

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<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in discussing the structure of a built space where households reside, I will use the term *house*. The term *home* is reserved to describe all of the ideas, myths, and aspirations contained in the dwelling place.

and right political orientations, as both sides of the political spectrum either explicitly or implicitly rely on its structure and representation.

### *Nuclear Family Hegemony*

Hegemony refers to “the ability of a particular social class to make everyone consider the group’s interests the universal concern and thus create acceptance of a particular way of organizing society” (Ferber and Nelson 2003, 177). Although used by both Marx and Lenin, Gramsci’s writings on hegemony have been used to explain the production of unequal power relationships in the modern state. Hegemony is established by raising “the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level” (Gramsci 1971, 259). Cultural norms act as an educative force by promoting ways of thinking, acting, and speaking. This hegemonic process is not always self-conscious, but it is coercive (263). Hegemony thrives due to its ability to organize around shifting meanings so that mass subordination is constantly defended, renewed, and modified (263). The common use of the term refers to the processes by which the class interests of the elite are universalized through institutions such as schools, churches, and the family, and thus, internalized by the rest of the population. The values which come to be universalized in the emergent state are not simply those of the ruling class, but are also those of subaltern groups with whom the ruling class has developed alliances.

Despite the usefulness of the concept of hegemony as a tool of analysis for feminists towards understanding how relations of domination permeate various aspects of both public and private lives, in using the term hegemony I am in no way suggesting that Gramsci was a feminist nor that his economic theory is useful for feminism. Gramsci recognized how women’s sexuality plays a key role in subordination; however, his

support of sexual discipline in service of the economy, his deterministic view of progress, and the liberatory potential of industrialization rightly raise red flags for feminist theorists (Holub 1992, 198). Although Gramscian economic theory easily becomes tangled with Marxism and Fordism, his grappling with modernity and the time-specific nature of his thought is wholly relevant to an analysis of the modern, nuclear family.

Sociologist Raewyn Connell's (née Robert Connell and also known as R.W. Connell) influential *Masculinities* (1995) developed a view of the social construction of masculinity and the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Connell sought to understand the reproduction of unequal gender orders, including how dominance and subordination among men and women came to be accepted at different periods in history. According to Connell (2000), hegemonic masculinity is defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (2). Heterosexuality and homophobia are part of the foundation of the hegemonic masculinity: women exist as potential sex objects for men, while men are off limits as sex objects to other men. Although some scholars conflate psychological or biological characteristics traditionally associated with men and social and cultural characteristics, Connell is careful to focus on the relational nature of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is not simply about domination and power. Summarizing the views of a number of scholars in sociology and men's studies,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See R. Connell, "A Whole New World: Remaking Masculinity in the Context of the Environmental Movement," *Gender and Society* 4 (1990): 352-378; R. Connell, "An Iron Man: The Body and Some Contradictions of Hegemonic Masculinity," in M. Messner and D. Sabo, editors, *Sport, Men and the Gender Order* (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics Books, 1990); Connell, "The State, Gender and Sexual Politics"; Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 86; R. Chapman. "The Great Pretender: Variations in the New Man Theme." in R. Chapman and J. Rutherford. editors. *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart. 1988) 9-18; C. Cockburn. "Masculinity, the Left and Feminism." in *Male*

Donaldson (1993), in a less than flattering yet insightful interpretation, notes the following:

In their view, hegemonic masculinity concerns the dread of and the flight from women. A culturally idealized form, it is both a personal and a collective project, and is the common sense about breadwinning and manhood. It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent. It is pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory, crisis-prone, rich, and socially sustained. While centrally connected with the institutions of male dominance, not all men practice it, though most benefit from it. Although cross-class, it often excludes working class and black men. It is a lived experience, and an economic and cultural force, and dependent on social arrangements. It is constructed through difficult negotiation over a life-time. Fragile it may be, but it constructs the most dangerous things we live with. Resilient, it incorporates its own critiques, but it is, nonetheless, 'unraveling.' (645)

Some critiques of Connell's formulation of hegemonic masculinity focus on concerns over lack of agency (Whitehead 2002, 1999), complicity and resistance (Wetherell & Edley 1999), and embodiment (Jefferson 2002); however, few successfully refute the fundamental elements of Connell's theory. Others argue that the entire concept of hegemonic masculinity is a concept that cannot be measured (Speer 2001). If no man embodies these characteristics, can it describe gender dynamics? In response, Lusher and Robins (2010) suggest that Connell's theory holds up, as hegemony is comprised of social structures, cultural factors, and individual which act *interdependently* to one another (5-9). The dynamic may not be easy to demonstrate, but it is the task of scholars to identify examples and describe the interplay of hegemonic features with empirical exposition.

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*Order*: 103--329; P. Lichterman. "Making a Politics of Masculinity," *Comparative Social Research* 11 (1989): 185-208; M. Messner "The Meaning of Success: The Athletic Experience and the Development of Male Identity," in *The Making of Masculinities*: 193-210; J. Rutherford. "Who's That Man'?" in *Male Order*, 21-67.

The hegemonic dynamic described by Lusher and Robins (2010)—local, regional, and global *levels* acting with structural, individual, and cultural *factors*—can be utilized towards understanding the American privileging of the nuclear family. The hegemonic nuclear family presents itself as natural to justify present economic and social positions. Individuals who benefit from this household construction seek justifications for the institution, while economic, political, and cultural institutions reproduce the ideology. An important feature of hegemony is that relationships of power are constantly shaped and reshaped; as a hegemonic formulation, the nuclear family requires constant reinforcement. There are subtle ways in which ideology related to familial relationships transcend the public and private through civil society and government institutions. Planners, policymakers, and courts helped to organize political, cultural, social, and economic relations in such a way as to make the nuclear family appear to be the universal and natural organizer of society. Realtors, religious organizations, civil society organizations, and news outlets buttress these elements with their own supporting ideology. Lusher and Robins (2010) note that ideology is central to Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, and therefore, “At the most basic level, for any group to be dominated there must be a devaluation of that group by the other, and this devaluation, usually on the basis of some observed or inferred characteristic (eg. gender, ethnicity, religion, etc...), must be systematic” (8-9). With respect to this project, those households which fall outside of the hegemonic nuclear family are viewed as unnatural, illegitimate, working against civic priorities, and require government intervention. In terms of space, the hegemonic nuclear family plays out on the local *level* in the form of the single family house.



### Women and Modern Political Theory

It is not possible to explore the entire history of women and gender from the ancients to the moderns, nor is it helpful towards the overall goals of this project. It is important, however, to review some broader themes that run throughout the tradition of modern political philosophy which impact our understanding of the familial. Women are inextricably linked to the political and social family, and in ways far different than men. There have been many assumptions in the tradition of mainstream political thought that pose problems for feminist scholars, ranging from denials of sexual difference in the development of political theory to outright embedded misogyny and gynophobia. When feminist scholars first began to address the Western tradition of political philosophy from a women-centered or feminist perspective, there were simultaneous attempts to either “find” women in texts or categorically denounce a thinker who in another time and place made numerous assumptions about women’s rationality and ability to obtain full citizenship. These critiques remain incredibly valuable towards a more comprehensive understanding of the political theory canon, particularly since there is a great deal left unexplored.

As Ann Phillips (1991) notes, the orthodox political theory canon, with only a few exceptions, appears to agree on one thing—from moral psychology to democratic theory: “whatever else is at stake, gender is irrelevant to the issues and will not affect the arguments on anyone’s sides” (2). In the classical and modern tradition of thought, women were not worthy of mention and if they were it was not in the name of equality, freedom, or the right to contract, but to illustrate their proper place in the political hierarchy. While women are consistently at the center of social, economic, and

reproductive *demands*, they are either formally excluded from theory or subsumed under men (3). Furthermore, theory that was once viewed as having an absence of women is now seen by contemporary feminist theorists as thoroughly saturated by sex. Gender neutrality and abstractions tend to be a guise for masculinist political theory (5). These assumptions of non-gendered, abstract citizenship reinforce the historically dominant (male) hierarchy. Phillips states that the scale of this mythology remains one of the largest tasks for feminists today (6).

*Not Founder nor Citizen: Feminists Challenging Tradition*

In orthodox modern political theory we see a shift away from concerns with the perfection of the soul towards a justification and preservation of the state and a conception of individual rights. Modern political theorists use the state of nature as a conceptual tool to enable one to develop notions of human nature, social and political authority, purposes of political action, legitimate governance, the relationship between the individual and the community, the relationship between the private and the public, and the moral characteristics of individuals. The state of nature describes how people would have reacted in pre-civil society, and according to some is a window into our present condition. The boundaries of contemporary politics are viewed as having been defined by an earlier, symbolic place. The state of nature is a warning against what is possible without civil society and also determines the shape of political legitimacy. In the modern period, human nature is the basis of civic freedom. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and a renewed Machiavelli are frequently used to buttress our understanding

of liberal institutions and values.<sup>10</sup> Through birth-right or natural capacities, individual freedom and equality is described as universal in the story of modern political theory. However, even according to standard interpretations of modern theorists, human nature is sexually differentiated. The bifurcated notions of womanhood/manhood, femininity/masculinity, and exposed/intimate denote varying political conceptions. Moreover, the nature of women's incorporation into citizenship remains contested. If this is the case and civic rights rest on human nature, how might women become incorporated into the civic order? Is women's citizenship different than men's? The 'add women and stir' notion remains a peculiar approach to political equality.

In contrast to property rights theorizing, there is no intellectual tradition in the United States of dealing with housing issues from the perspective of social and political theory. While markets and politics (including race and political party maneuvering) are at the center of most discussions of housing policy, the historic institutional structures of housing policy and the gendered political and ideological discourses that are attached to it are largely overlooked in the political science literature. The deep-seated belief in property rights and inviolability of the private housing market in the United States promoted specific cultural perceptions of the purposes of housing policy. Open and available land, the absence of feudalism, and a modest egalitarianism for white males nurtured a conception of equal access to landownership and housing. Even as property was considered a basic right in the early American republic, symbolically from the

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<sup>10</sup> For Hobbes, see Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Ed. by Michael Oakshott (New York: Collier Books, 1966); for Locke, see John Locke. *Two Treatise of Government* ed. by Peter Laslett. (New York: New American Library, 1965); for Rousseau, see Jean Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract*. ed. by Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) and *Emile or On Education*. ed. and translated by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979); and for Machiavelli, see Niccolo Machiavelli. *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

mixture of labor and land, for racial minorities and women the lack of ownership in relation to personhood and labor meant an uneasy path into the tradition of liberal property rights. The contours of property rights—and ultimately land and housing policy--was further mitigated, first with the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the related land surveys in which visions of the ideal colonial city was substituted with the dream of the single-family house (Hayden 2002) and again in the early twentieth-century with the development of the administrative bureaucratic state.

Moreover, in mainstream liberal political theory the concept of the house or home is conspicuously absent, and possibly subsumed with the concept of the family. As Jacqueline Stevens (1999) observes, whereas the ancient Greeks and Romans crafted explicit connections between legitimate childbirth and citizenship, most orthodox modern theorists relegated family, reproduction, and marriage to the private or pre-political (with the exception of Hegel), all while assuming that the traditional, heterosexual family is the foundation of society and the related blood-ties offer a neutral and rational basis for civic membership. Sex difference is constituted through kinship-based policies, though by ignoring the familial role and concealing kinship.

Significant for this project are the ways in which the institution of family is utilized in modern political theory, particularly liberalism and classical republicanism. While family has been so thoroughly identified as compatible with liberal republicanism, it remains an important consideration for gender politics. Globalization, profound social and familial changes in developing countries, population centers shifting from rural to urban areas, and rights increasingly centered on the individual make this issue salient beyond the United States and other global north nations. The institution of family and the

ontology of the private and intimate realm, however, do not sit easily with liberal political theory. As Jean Bethke Elshtain (1981) notes,

As these thinkers recast distinctions between public and private in order to take the family out of the politics and the politics out of the family, they found that the remnants of patriarchy were not so easily expunged. The image of the human being which emerged triumphant in postpatriarchal political thought was in tension with, yet parasitic upon, the person as family man or woman. (1981, 106)

As an immediate precursor to social contract theorists, some feminists look to Filmer to provide insight into modern policy theory. Elshtain sees Filmer's politicization of the family and familialization of the commonwealth as providing no room for individuals, whether male or female, to conceive of themselves as political (103). She observes that the excesses of Filmer's unreflective familial naturalism are replaced with contractualism and absolute obedience to authority in Hobbes and an excessive rationalism in Locke (106-117). However, Elshtain maintains, neither Hobbes nor Locke adequately countered Filmer's patriarchy, so much so that as they sought to depoliticize the relationships in the family, they integrated a set of assumptions regarding birth, childhood, and women's roles in society. Hobbes' conception of family, like the commonwealth, is dominated by fear, subjection, and obedience (110-111). Hobbes states,

The right of dominion by generation, is that, which the parent hath over his children; and it is called PATERNAL. And is not so derived from the generation, as if therefore the parent had dominion over his child because he begat him; but from the child's consent, either express, or by other sufficient arguments declared. For as to the generation, God hath ordained man a helper; and there be always two that are equally parents: the dominion therefore over the child, should belong equally to both; and he be equally subject to both, which is impossible; for no man can obey two masters. And whereas some have attributed the dominion to the man only, as being of the more excellent sex; they misreckon in it. For there is not

always that difference of strength, or prudence between man and the woman, as that right can be determined without civil war. In commonwealths, this controversy is decided by the civil law; and for the most part, but not always, the sentence is in favor of the father; because for the most part commonwealths have been erected by the fathers, not by the mothers of families. (quoted in Elshtain 1981, 155)

Elshtain, a pro-family feminist, or as some describe her, a family communitarian, is also concerned with Hobbes' lack of morality in his conception of the family and commonwealth and his rejection of the social view of human nature. Locke, on the other hand, creates a public world of rationality, contrasted to the private realm of passion and desire. In the public sphere, this reason served to both break from the authority of the past and create a separation from irrational desire. The private realm, the one occupied by women, however, was further separated from public discourse and action (1981, 116). Furthermore, in terms of family, Elshtain argues, Locke tries to reject patriarchy as having any basis in nature; however, he asserts that dominion over women and children derives from the laws and traditions of man (124-125). Although Locke did insist upon an equal education for girls and boys in the use of reason and asserted that women had the right to earn and make contracts, according to Elshtain:

Public grants of parity to women have gone hand in glove within liberalism from Locke's time to our own, with extraordinary disparity in the distribution of goods and services and in the concrete allocation of economic and social power. Locke's abstract grant of property rights is in some important ways tendentious in a social situation in which in which the female portion of the population is propertyless. If past history is patriarchal—in this Locke agrees—and the chief motive for the formation of civil society is the preservation of property (understood as a variety of 'goods,' not simply economic), it is difficult to see how women can emerge, simply by a grant of formal rights, from a condition of propertylessness and subjection to one of public parity. (122)

Elshtain's comments, while an important contribution to feminist and liberal political theory, have been put forth in the context of her own political agenda. Elshtain believes it is possible to articulate a particular vision of the family that does not recreate the oppression or exploitation of earlier theorists, but can coexist with a public life in which virtue, freedom, and law is central. She believes that the family and childrearing are central to the establishment of basic, human existence and an ethical polity, and as such must be nurtured (347-352). For her, a woman's sex should not dictate what she does in public realms, such as education or employment, but principles of self-interest and liberty should also not become dominant in the family.

In addition to Susan Moller Okin's observations of liberal political theory (discussed later) and Jean Bethke Elshtain's critiques of liberalism, two of the most far reaching criticisms worth considering come from Hanna Pitkin and Carole Pateman. In *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (1975), Pocock describes the circumstances and the Florentine identity under which Machiavelli's thought arose--the "moment". Machiavelli attempted to provide stability in uncertain and violent times. Pocock seeks to illustrate that Machiavelli was a republican theorist (in the tradition of Aristotle) and his thought was consistent with his contemporaries, and thus, it might be possible to ward off some highly critical interpretations. According to Pocock, Machiavelli's *virtù* in the *Discourses* is similar to that in Aristotle's *arête*, but Pocock has been criticized from a number of theorists on that point. For Skinner (1998), while Machiavelli might advocate republican institutions, it is not because he is concerned for the liberty of citizens but security from outside invasion and internal corruption. In *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of*

*Niccolò Machiavelli* (1984), Hanna Pitkin turns away from the focus on *virtu* and turns the lens towards Machiavelli's ambivalence surrounding masculinity, dependence, and self-sufficiency, all of which, she maintains, provides a deeper understanding of his vision of a republic. Pitkin contends that autonomy, eked out from Machiavelli's discussions of self-sufficiency and the danger inherent in needing others, is the unifying thread in Machiavelli's thought. Machiavelli holds a number of truths in tension: what it means to be human, political, and autonomous. She argues that this understanding of autonomy is not the atomistic sort posited by social contract theorists. Machiavelli's insights are dissolved by his metaphorical use of masculinity and femininity in *virtu* and *fortuna*, respectively, so that all three incompatible elements are related to manhood. According to Pitkin, Machiavelli is explicitly misogynistic in his rendering of women: they are dependent, weak, indecisive, easily manipulated, and fearful (1984, 110). Young women weaken men's self-control and older women are manipulative and control men's access to desirable women (132). Far worse, however, is his retelling of the Lucretia story as the prototypical dangerous and seductive woman, despite having been the victim of a rape (112). Although Machiavelli does not directly address the issue of autonomy as manhood, Pitkin's reading finds it as a recurring theme. Pitkin points to two models of manhood used by Machiavelli: the mythical, superhuman Founder and the relational, participating Citizen. Both are utilized as devices to illuminate Machiavelli's vision of political liberty and action, and Pitkin maintains that the only conception of public life, for Machiavelli, is one built on domination, machismo, and misogyny (305). For Pitkin, "Machiavelli's sexual and familial imagery, meant to challenge men out of their concern with private, household matters of wealth and family into the more 'manly' realm of



political life, has the opposite effect, arousing images of domination and submission and undermining that capacity for mutuality which citizenship requires” (306). Thus, “by denying the humanity of women, men are bound to misunderstand their own” (306). Although the personification of “fortuna” as a female is not new, Machiavelli’s version “appears to be the first to use that metaphor as a way of suggesting the sexual conquest of fortune, introducing into the realm of politics and history concerns about manliness, effeminacy, and sexual prowess” (144). Images of fertility and reproduction are frequently set alongside barrenness and entropy. Pitkin points out, according to Machiavelli, “authority is a prerequisite to freedom, in politics as in family life” (247). Therefore, mothers being pushed into the background are necessary for the establishment of republican liberty.

In *The Sexual Contract* (1988), Carole Pateman attempts to explain how traditional birthright is sub-planted by political right through contract. She argues that the story of the social contract establishes not only political right, but also patriarchal right—the power men exercise over women--thus establishing a modern form or patriarchy. With the exception of Hobbes, modern theorists claim that women lack the natural “attributes and capacities as individuals.” Only individuals participate in the original contract. Therefore, sexual difference means political difference. Women are subjects in the original contract, but not parties to the contract. The sexual contract is associated with both the public and the civic realm. Pateman makes a number of claims about the original social contract. Although social contract theory is typically presented as gaining civil freedom protected by the state, Pateman says civil freedom is not universal; the social contract established civil freedom for men, but subjection over

women. Therefore, she says, “contract is the means through which modern patriarchy is constituted” (2). Although contract theorists claim that social contract established a public sphere of civil freedom, Pateman says an entire sexually differentiated society was created with patriarchy expressed in both the public and private sphere (11-12). The private sphere, which includes marriage, was not considered relevant. Patriarchy also spills over into the public sphere affecting issues such as employment and prostitution. Since contract is a primary element of contemporary social association (just like the relationship between husband and wife, and capitalist and worker), Pateman uses the sexual contract to shed light on why problems will occur for women as they engage in contracts (1988, 10-13).

Pateman names three different types of historical patriarchy as she develops her typology of modern sexual contract. Traditional patriarchal thought includes the family, headed by the father, as the model for all power relations (23). Classical patriarchal thought expressed paternal power and political power as identical (24). The fiction in this model, she maintains, is that the family is a natural institution and the father’s power arose from his natural capacities and care. Sons were born into subjection to their fathers and thus into political subjection. Modern patriarchal thought, however, is “fraternal, contractual, and structures capitalist civil society” (25). Pateman argues that “the story of the sexual contract begins with the construction of the individual” (38). Contract theory justifies subjection by presenting it as freedom. Contract theorists claim that individuals are born naturally free and equal. With classic contract theory, previous arguments about rulers acting through God’s will and appeals to custom and tradition, were rejected. A free and equal individual had to agree to be ruled by another and the method to do this

was the contract. Only men have the attributes of free and equal individuals and so relations of subordination between men must originate in contract if they are legitimate.

Pateman offers a novel explanation for how women are left out of the original social contract (47-49). According to Pateman, in classical contract theory the family was no longer the model of political authority. The father or king wielding absolute power was no longer consistent with the modern principles of equality and freedom. A father's natural right over his sons was not political power. Contract is necessary because fathers have been stripped of their political power and need some way to create and exercise political right. Men do not, then, contract as husbands or fathers, they contract as brothers. Civil society might be fatherless, but it is still a brotherhood of men (1988, 78-95). Once they are in civil society, the subjection of women is secured through the marriage contract. If women were in fact as free and equal as the original story purports, they would not agree to a pact that subordinated women to men in civil society. She says that in Hobbes' state of nature, no person would willfully give up one's life, so the defeated man makes a contract to obey the victor. Male individuals will also conquer females who will become servants and are excluded from the original pact. With respect to Locke, Pateman observes that in the natural condition women are excluded from the status of the individual, as only men are free and equal beings. Women are naturally subjugated to men, but they still must enter the marriage contract (52).

These insights from feminist theory help illuminate the potentially problematic nature of both classical republicanism and liberalism. It also raises concerns surrounding rights and responsibilities in the state that are differentiated by sex. The intimate spaces of the household as well as the public do not guarantee the same privacy, autonomy, and

freedom to deliberate for women as they are for men. And yet, these same features remain embedded in American political theory.

*Civic Myths and Archaisms*

In 1873, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Bradwell v. Illinois* (1873) that Illinois had the power to control and regulate the administration of legal licensing for the practice of law in state court, denying Bradwell's Fourteenth Amendment claim and preventing her from practicing law. Myra Bradwell's application to practice law had been denied by the Supreme Court of Illinois because she was married. In his concurring opinion, Justice Bradley noted the following:

It certainly cannot be affirmed, as an historical fact, that this has ever been established [the right of females to pursue any legal employment] as one of the fundamental privileges as one of the fundamental privileges and immunities of the sex. On the contrary, the civil law, as well as nature herself, has always recognized a wide difference in the respective spheres and destinies of man and woman. Man is, or should be, woman's protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life. The constitution of the family organization, which is founded on the divine ordinance, as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and functions of womanhood. The harmony, not to say identity, of interests and views which belong, or should belong, to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband. So firmly fixed was this sentiment in the founders of the common law that it became a maxim of that system of jurisprudence that a woman had no legal existence separate from her husband, who was regarded as her head and representative in the social state; and, notwithstanding some recent modifications of this civil status, many of the special rules of law flowing from and dependent upon this cardinal principle still exist in full force in most States.<sup>11</sup>

The Supreme Court decision went beyond agreeing with the state of Illinois's position in this case, it subsumed women's personhood under her spouse. If we are to follow legal

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<sup>11</sup> *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130 (1873)

theorists in asserting that reality and the contours of rights in the United States are represented in legal decisions, we see how women's relationship to family and the domestic sphere was enshrined in early American law. American political theory has been described by some at the red-headed step child of political theory. Despite interesting debates over gender, manhood, and sexuality that took place at the start of the American republic, most traditional theoretical discussions of the founding period focus on the balance between republicanism and liberalism. From Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* (1944) to Louis Hartz's *Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), early major interpretations of American political thought focus on various aspects of Tocqueville's account of the American republic. Regardless of racial concerns (in Myrdal) or the boundaries between the remnants of feudalism, democracy, and property rights (in Hartz), the egalitarian and democratic notions advanced by Tocqueville remain central to these interpretations. Through the 1970s and 1980s, accounts by Pocock (1975) and others offered a challenge to the dominance of liberalism with an emphasis on "classical republicanism" or "republican revisionism." Emphasizing virtue, the public good, and positive liberty, advocates of the republican tradition sought to unseat Hartzian Lockeanism as the dominant interpretation of the founding period. American political theory and public law has also seen a refashioning of republican arguments based on the privileging of "the public." Most of these accounts, however, categorically disregard gender as salient to a republican revival of the liberal project, while others merely mention gender critiques in passing and offer no way to account for or integrate these concerns.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The term "republican revival" originates in S. D. Gerber, "The Republican Revival in American Constitutional Theory," *Political Research Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1994). Gerber coins the term in a review of

When the lens is pulled back and refocused to include more groups in the inquiry, how then might scholars understand United States ideology? Most notably, in *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (1997), Rogers M. Smith has recast the debate in American political thought through the notion of “multiple traditions.” According to Smith,

Many analysts have since advanced similar interpretations out of the same range of motivations, thereby reinforcing beliefs that American values have always been as these great writers described. Yet all three wrote during periods when the nation was denying most persons access to full citizenship on racial, ethnic, or gender grounds. Their ability to stress the democratic nature of American values despite these facts is vivid testimony to how their comparative baseline of European class politics led them to minimize other types of ascriptive inequality. But each of them did take notice of America’s exclusionary practices, again in influential ways. (20)

Smith’s notion of ascriptive inegalitarian traditions challenges the ubiquity of the liberal tradition (3). Smith maintains that inegalitarianism and illiberal notions such as nativism, sexism, racism, and Anglo superiority are as much a part of the American founding identity as liberalism and democratic republicanism. Awareness of these doctrines can help us identify and address ongoing illiberal impulses in our political lives. More than his “multiple traditions” theory, Smith’s notion of “civic myth” is relevant to this project. Civic myths are used to describe how people form a nation, who is included in membership, and the values attached to the community (33). Smith explains, “Civic

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the work of Cass Sunstein, Bruce Ackerman, and Frank Michelman. In addition to the public law community, see also, Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1990); Stephen L. Elkin, *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic: Constitutional Design after Madison* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Iseult Honohan, “Civic Republicanism,” ed. Tim Crane and Jonathan Wolff, *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2002); Phillip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Clarendon, 1999); Philip Pettit, “Keeping Republican Freedom Simple: On a Difference with Quentin Skinner,” *Political Theory* 30, no. 3 (2002); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

myths inspiring faith that memberships are preordained and blessed can especially foster prejudices that may do more than ‘enlightened reason’ to instill ‘reverence’ for the laws constituting their society” (33). More importantly, “even the liberal and republican traditions stressed in standard accounts of American political culture are themselves not simply rationalistic political doctrines but also civic myths, much more than those accounts generally acknowledge” (36). However, by recasting the multiple traditions he describes as part myth, Smith downplays the extent to which the illiberal traditions gain and carry out power and coercion.

Smith’s critics argue that the “multiple traditions” approach artificially separates discourses that were fundamentally intertwined, holding that ‘liberalism’ and ‘ascriptive Americanisms’ were clearly distinct and inherently incompatible species. Others, such as Nackenoff (2007), assert that the entire notion of the “liberal tradition” may have long since outgrown its usefulness towards understanding American political ideology and development. Catherine A. Holland (2001), while acknowledging the nuance in Smith’s argument and contribution to American political development, maintains that he too easily exonerates American liberalism; he grasps the political tradition but oversimplifies the liberal tradition (xvi). What Smith misses, according to Holland, and reminiscent of Sheldon Wolin and Wendy Brown, is that “precisely those elements that are assumed to have been overcome by the emergence of the late modern state turn out to have been incorporated within it, and held [in] reserve by it, to be deployed in moments of crisis” (2001, xix). Holland asserts,

That the body erupts on the scene of politics in moments of public crisis suggests that it never fully eliminated from liberal democratic order, but is instead reconfigured by and incorporated within it. The body may be made invisible to or transparent within the modern public realm, but it is

nonetheless held in reserve as a political force that becomes visible (or is made visible) in the very moments when order itself is at its most vulnerable. (xiv)

Therefore, the body is more complicated as a political symbol than Smith's version can capture. Holland continues,

To put it another way, it could be said that modern political thought does not fully overcome or abandon its premodern past, but instead recharacterizes elements of the past as archaisms that inhibit and work in new ways within the modern. One way of illuminating modernity's production of archaisms—and more specifically, modernity's production of the body as an archaic figure—is to retell with new emphases and a slightly shifted focus on the foundational modern tales of the origins of political society, namely, that of man's passage from the prepolitical state of nature to an established political order. (xx)

The human body is used as a figure of freedom and sovereignty, but nonetheless, remains a site of subjection and coercion. The language of the body is also represented in constitutions, the law, and through social policy in the modern administrative state. The founding of the American republic carried with it metaphors from liberal political theory. While the founders sought perpetual newness, theories contained and incorporated elements of the past (2). Holland incisively argues that a mythology of pastlessness that was characteristic of the American founders is also present in the writings of late modern political theorists, including Arendt's privileging of natality as the source of beginnings and political action and Rawls' veil of ignorance which artificially obscures social hierarchy and identity (3). Both nation and citizen are seen as being self made.

According to Marc E. Kann (1998), the American founders shared a vision of reigning in democratic disorder through hegemonic gender norms (26). The rhetoric of



republican ideology alongside liberal self-interest served to both eliminate women from political discourse and depoliticize male familial authority. Furthermore, Kann notes,

They promoted hegemonic masculinity as part of their effort to restrain disorderly male passions, temper men's democratic desires, restore fraternal order, and reconstitute political authority. They advanced a coherent conception and language of manhood based on the consensual norms that enjoined males to establish independence, start families, and govern dependents to achieve manhood and procreate new generations. They stigmatized, sanctioned, and reformed disorderly men, whose marginal masculinity associated them with dependency, effeminacy, immaturity, and sterility. They rewarded the complicit masculinity of men who conformed to consensual norms by recognizing their social merit and citizenship. And they promised immortal fame along with social status and political authority to extraordinary men who, like themselves, procreated a new nation and glorious future for humankind. (28-29).

Similarly, historian Linder Kerber notes in *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (1980) that “republican motherhood” was endorsed by the founders as a way for virtuous women raise rational male citizens. While women may become educated, their primary role in relation to the state was domestic and maternal. Ann Norton (1986) has highlighted gendered metaphors used to describe U.S. antebellum sectionalism, with a patriarchal North and feminized and maternal South. Historian Nina Silber (1993) observes that after the American Civil War rhetoric of reconciliation depicted the nation as a household and family whose parts were being joined by Reconstruction initiatives. In the policy arena, most notably the Freedman's Bureau, the black male was viewed as the head of household and was permitted to contract for labor for the entire household. The Freedman's Bureau Act of 1865 (formally known as An Act to establish a Bureau for Relief of Freedman and Refugees) allotted land grants to black males and to unmarried black females a year later through the Southern Homestead Act (Foner 1988, 87). According to Holland, “The family, long suppressed by liberal

modernism as a principle of political organization (if not as an economic unit), returned in precisely that capacity in, during, and as Reconstruction” (2001, 140).

*Family beyond Modern Political Theory*

The economic theory canon is no more forgiving in terms of nuclear family hegemony. On the one hand, there existed the valorization of individualism in neoclassical, market-based theories and on the other, a romanticization of family benevolence and cooperation in socialist economic thought. For some early socialist scholars, such as Robert Owen, natural sentiment would be enough to maintain a cohesive family unit (Folbre 2003, 98). Owen’s vision for industrial society was based on a sense of cooperation and egalitarianism that he attributed to the family. It is evident in this example how Enlightenment ideals incorporated problematic and idealized versions of the family. However, when the lens is turned onto Enlightenment and social contract theory writ large, the paternalistic and familial aspects become largely hidden. Political theorists disregard the family with little explanation. Utilitarian James Mill also advanced a paternalistic theory of family: women’s political rights would be represented by their fathers and husbands (2003, 99). William Thompson, an advocate of social reform, contraception, and women’s suffrage, in conjunction with journalist Anna Wheeler, pointed out contradictions in economic theories which claimed that men could be self-interested in their interactions with each other and at the same time altruistic with regard to their wives and children (2003, 100).

Women fared no better under Marx and Engels’ early scientific socialism, which prioritized class interests over women’s interests. According to Nicholson (1986),

“Liberalism at its base is founded on a reification of the categories of family and state, and Marxism is equally founded on a reification of the category of the economic” (131). Both Marx and Engels half-heartedly condemned women’s oppression, but argued that the source of oppression was private property and the capitalist system; attempting to resolve women’s issues was counterproductive to broader class interests (Folbre 2003, 102). In *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1958), Engels was primarily concerned with the status of men in the family, arguing that male unemployment in some industrial cities created a system of dependency in which the wife was the breadwinner and the husband relegated to domestic duties. Engels added that if the factory system, which created a system of dependency was unnatural, so too “the former rule of the husband over the wife must also have been unnatural” (1958, 194). However, this nod to women’s equality was super-ceded by the class interests of working class men. Since childbearing and child rearing was unrelated to surplus value or creative labor, domestic tasks were relegated to the realm of nature. It was not until 1880s that Engels addressed women’s issues specifically. Engels used historical materialism to locate gender inequality in social evolution and not biological determinism; however, the proletarian family was absolved from gender conflict.

Courses such as *Liberalism and its Critic* and the *Liberal/Communitarian Debate* are ubiquitous in political science departments. Most critiques of liberalism, however, rarely include discussions of gender, race, or sexuality. In *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (1989), Susan Moller Okin offers one of the most comprehensive critiques of liberal political theory and its relationship to the family. In the political sphere, liberals evoke a notion of the political conception of persons such that citizens are understood as

free and equal individuals engaged in the process of public reason in order to develop inclusive principles of justice. These principles are to provide a political framework for questions of basic justice and constitutional essentials which would be applicable to the basic structure of society. The personal sphere, in contrast, is the domain where citizens pursue their own specific conceptions of the good or views of human excellence within the general strictures of the principles of justice. Okin's (1989) criticism falls into two major categories. She maintains that theorists of justice continuation of the "separate spheres" tradition renders the family as nonpolitical (9) and superficial gender neutrality permits theorists to disguise their failure to adequately address socially and biologically relevant features that impact men and women differently (10), both of which result in women's exclusion from the promotion of justice, undermines equal opportunity, and renders a just society impossible without a just family (14). Okin points out, if the internal organization of the family is outside the scope of the principles of justice, and a particular family is based on illiberal and sexist principles, then this must raise serious doubts about whether the female members of that family form can achieve the requisite political conception of self. Contemporary political theorists of justice "assume, though do not discuss, the traditional gender-structured family" and "they often employ gender-neutral language in a false, hollow way" (1989, 8).

At the heart of Okin's criticisms of the liberal public/private distinction is the ambiguity liberal political theory shows towards the family as part of the basic structure of society. The family is both part of the basic structure but also exempt from the principles of justice. According to Okin, most contemporary libertarians', communitarians', and democratic liberals' failure to address the family renders their

conceptions of justice problematic (21). Although moral and social development takes place first in the family (in all of its different forms), theorists of justice rarely acknowledge its importance. Okin notes many contemporary theorists either fail to consider the family altogether or downplay the family as an important political institution (9).<sup>13</sup> Rawls, an exception to this, assumes family is just.

In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), John Rawls asserts that the family is a basic element of society and assumes that the heads of households will decide in ways that will be beneficial to the family unit. Along with liberty, the market, and private property, Rawls includes the monogamous family as one of the major social institutions which distribute rights and duties and through which a persons' ability to thrive is mitigated (7). Rawls acknowledges that these factors impact one's life chances. However, as Rawls develops his theory of justice—justice as fairness—through the difference principle, the family is given scant attention. His assumption of the fairness of the family means that it plays no role in his allocation of resources which are intended to serve the least advantaged and moderate the arbitrariness of nature (101-102). Rawls continues that the difference principle enables fraternity. It is through fraternity, described as both “civic friendship and social solidarity,” that liberty and equality are conveyed in democracy (105). While many scholars criticize Rawls for ignoring family as he constructs his theory of justice, it is evident that family is crucial towards his understanding of the development of his difference principle. However, we see Rawls presenting a

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<sup>13</sup> For other feminist critiques of liberal political theory see, V. Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory - An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1992); A. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); E. Frazer and N. Lacey, *The Politics of Community: A Feminist Critique of the Liberal-Communitarian Debate* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993); R. Lister, *Citizenship - Feminist Perspectives* (London: Macmillan, 1997); and T. Tong, *Feminist Thought-A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

dramatically naïve conception of families and familial decision-making and he has no sense of the economic role that family plays in society. With respect to the family, Rawls notes,

The difference principle, however, does seem to correspond to a natural meaning of fraternity: namely, the idea of not wanting to have greater advantages unless this is to the benefit of others who are less well off. The family, in its ideal conception and often in practice, is one place where the principle of maximizing the sum advantages is rejected. Members of a family commonly do not wish to gain unless they can do so in ways that further the interests of the rest. Now wanting to act on the difference principle has precisely this consequence. Those better circumstanced are willing to have their greater advantages only under a scheme in which this works out for the benefit of the less fortunate. (105)

As Rawls shifts from his explanation of the difference principle to how parties behave in the original position to articulate his notion of justice, he continues using the institution of family as an example of the foundation of justice: “[W]e may think of the parties as heads of families, and therefore having a desire to further the welfare of their nearest descendents” (128).

According to Carole Pateman (1988), Rawls’s task is “to find a picture of an original position that will confirm our intuitions about existing institutions, which include patriarchal relations of subordination” (42). In *Women and Human Development: A Capabilities Approach* (2000), Martha Nussbaum addresses Rawls’s claims about the family being one of the institutions of the basic structure of society to which his two theories of justice apply (271). She observes that in response to his feminist critics,<sup>14</sup> Rawls amends his previous formulation, adding that the two principles of justice do not apply to the *internal* functioning of families. Therefore, the difference principle no longer applies to the distribution of resources within the family; however, principles of

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<sup>14</sup> Largely a response to Susan Moller Okin’s criticism.

justice will provide some basic constraints on behavior (271). Rawls compares families to institutions such as churches, universities, and other civic associations that are governed by rules though may not privilege liberty as part of its internal governance. Nussbaum notes that Rawls remains conflicted on how to address family. She says, “Rawls is clearly torn between the idea that the family is so fundamental to the reproduction of society and to citizens’ life chances that it must be rendered just, and the equally powerful idea that we cannot tolerate so much interference with the internal workings of this particular institution” (273). In some ways this dilemma represents the same concerns many feminists articulate about the family and yet even Rawls’s most understanding response to feminists is based on a traditional conception of family.

Nussbaum continues,

He gives this unit, vaguely specified, a high degree of centrality and support, and he never asks what other affiliative groupings of individuals might, for related reasons, deserve state protection and support. Thus, despite his attack on the private-public distinction, he retains the picture of a society of people divided into nuclear home units that has frequently been used to underwrite that distinction. He strongly suggests that the family has a prepolitical form and that politics can regulate it on the outside rather than constitute it from the ground up – although at the same time he insists that a sphere of life is not a ‘place or space’ exempt from justice. Rawls may also retain, in a related way, a distinction between state action and inaction that suggests that the state is not acting when it does not interfere with the traditional shape of the family, where it would be acting were it to attempt to change modes of family governance. (276)

Unfortunately, as Nussbaum readily admits, her capabilities approach and Rawls’s two theories of justice render similar answers on how to address gender justice. Even as Nussbaum introduces the idea of women’s collectives as a potential social foundation

protected by the state, she seeks to attach special privileges to some family types over others in accordance with the promotion of human capabilities (279).<sup>15</sup>

In a similar though different vein to Rawls, Gary Becker in *A Treatise on the Family* (1981) argues that the family unit's goal is the maximization of utility. However, he maintains that families are held together by altruism, and only later added that other motives such as anger and guilt should be added to the model. He assumes that the head of household will distribute resources and opportunities in a manner that benefits the entire household. Since the family is a collection of preferences and desires, it may be considered as one unit; it is unnecessary to consider each individual in the household. Internal inconsistencies aside, Becker need not attempt to attribute agency to each member of the household. Unlike many political theorists, neoclassical economists are brutally honest about what matters in the market (such as efficiency and self-interest) and what does not (this includes child care, equal pay for equal work, reproductive labor, and the household). To his credit, Becker acknowledges that production occurs in the household. Michele Pujol (2003) observes that the neoclassical economics paradigm excludes women from the public realm of the market; it also silences feminist economists as a legitimate voice of dissent and (22). Other feminist economists assess their goals in the following manner:

Feminist analysis shows that economics relies on highly gendered and raced metaphors, the most famous of which is 'homo economics,' or the rational economic agent, a conception of human agency that reflects a privileged, masculine world-view. Rational agents have no necessary

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<sup>15</sup> For more classic feminist literature concerned with showing the effect of the political domain on the family and the lives of women in general works see A. Dworkin, *Right-Wing Women. The Politics of Domesticated Females* (London: Women's Press, 1983); A. Foreman, *Femininity as Alienation* (London: Pluto Press, 1978); C. Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Paladin, 1979); C. MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989); K. Millet, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virago, 1985); and J. Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974).



obligations or responsibilities and interact contractually with others only when it is in their best interests to do so. Moreover, since neoclassical or mainstream economics is defined by its method of analysis rather than domain of study—conventional economics generally admits only explanations based on self-interested exchange between rational economic agents—it fails adequately to account for a variety of factors germane to women’s (and men’s) lives. (Barker and Kuiper 2003, 2-3)

These criticisms are similar to those expressed by feminist scholars in political science and urban politics. Other scholars, including Anthony Giddens, have theorized the private realm but these interpretations still come up short in speaking to the material circumstances of women’s lives. Giddens (1992) argues that transformations in private life, intimacy, and gender relations represent a democratization of the emotions. “Chosen” relationships are superior to kinship structures because they operate through negotiation and personal values, offering a “pure” relationship rather than one embedded in patriarchal familialism or in the social expectations of modernity. However, it is important to note that this claim seems to uncritically endorse (rather than interrogate) emergent western relationship models that may seem rather less pure to other observers.

Legal scholar Judith Resnick (2003) points to the multiple ways in which the federal government defines family, through federal bankruptcy law, child support provisions related to cash assistance recipients, immigration law, and retirement and pension provisions (132-133): “within the category of the family can be found federal regulation, and within the category of the federal can be found rules of family life” (135). And yet, despite this constellation of federal laws that create and define the family, attempts to utilize the power of federalism to address concerns specific to women’s equality has been met with resistance (Siegel 2002). For example, the Supreme Court held in *United States v. Morrison* (2000) that the civil rights remedy related to gender

motivated violence in the 1994 Violence against Women Act was unconstitutional. In terms of privacy and the law, the contours of family are further complicated. The modern private family is typically characterized as distinct from the state; however, Fineman (2002) argues that the family and state are interactive and define one another (237). The family as an institution is dynamic in its relationship to the state and, therefore, can be reconfigured to reflect specific aspirations.

In *Queer Family Values: Debunking the Myth of the Nuclear Family* (1999), Valerie Lehr warns readers of the dangers inherent in the unqualified embrace of liberalism and rights-based politics. Providing a convincing argument for a radical democratic approach, Lehr encourages readers to question the values and assumptions underlying conventional gay politics. In doing so, she challenges us to widen our vision of "family" in ways that address the complex concerns of not only gay and lesbian families, but all forms of intimate relationships. Lehr critiques liberal, rights-based reform attempts to assimilate gay and lesbian families into the existing judicial system. Focusing on the debate over same-sex marriage, she argues that current attempts at reform are an inadequate means for reconstituting the power structures that silence and subordinate gay and lesbian individuals and the intimate relationships they forge. She then broadens her discussion to explore how the emphasis on rights-based reform has emerged historically within a social and political context that privileges certain hegemonic family constructions over others. She argues that a radical democratic politics would ultimately transform these ideologies so as to provide for both personal security and greater freedom in private life. Lehr's insights are instructive for this project as well. Although same-sex marriage might allow lesbians and gay men to share a host of state-

mediated rights and benefits, such as access to employer-sponsored medical benefits, social security insurance, pension benefits, family estate property transfers, powers of attorney, and custody, it would do very little for lesbians and gay males who are less closely tied to the labor market and its benefits. Same-sex marriage campaigns also bypass more progressive sexual liberation approaches that have been harmed by traditional nuclear family-centered policies. By seeking to extend the privileges of marriage to sexual minorities, liberal democratic rights-based same-sex marriage campaigns reproduce the political and social structure of heterosexual marriage and the traditional nuclear family. Seeking refuge in the private and family highlights how the insidiousness of the hegemonic nuclear family has been extended to mainstream lesbian and gay activism. Efforts to legalize same-sex marriage, although frequently viewed as a threat to the heterosexual nuclear family by traditional family values advocates, may actually buttress the sexual, family-centered state. Following Pateman, the coercive conditions of dependency and subordination that is inherent in contract--in this case, the same-sex marriage contract--would be reinforced.

### *Sexual Difference and the Public/Private Distinction*

For feminists, the failure to explore the nature of the private sphere is a failure of democratic debate. Since women and men are not equally autonomous and free, inequality in the household and family make it difficult to accept that women have equal political rights. Women's perceived nature and sexual difference has largely been the avenue through which canonical thinkers have connected women to the family. What is viewed as political is that which is public: the economy and the state. In much ancient political theory, the city, or polis, is used both as a metaphor for the political realm and a

description of the material space in which the activities of the political are performed.

The private, or the realm of the domestic, familial, and intimate, is considered nonpolitical. Sexual difference, sexuality, and the capacities of women—both perceived and assigned—such as motherhood, is seen as existing outside the realm of the political and is usually invoked to buttress the role of women in the social realm in service of the political, the polis, or the state. Moreover, without recognition of the historically created spheres of family, state, economy, or the intimate, it is difficult to understand their interaction with gender relations.

Classical republican accounts of the public/private split draw heavily on the political ideals of ancient Athens. The public sphere was the domain where free and equal citizens, typically a group of men, with a capacity for deliberation and a capacity to engage in war met to decide matters of state. Strong men ruled the state while women, children and slaves were necessarily excluded for the good of the polis. The classical republican notion of public and private follows a distinction between political association and household, between two different institutional contexts each with their own appropriate set of rules. The family is of little concern to the state (and vice versa) which is properly the concern of the head of the family. The family is an inner sanctum, a place where the head of the household reigns supreme beyond the reach of the state. By comparison, for comprehensive liberal doctrines, the public/private distinction is of fundamental importance because of the role it plays in safeguarding an individual's right to privacy. The individual that is established under liberal doctrines is not gender-neutral, rather, it is based on male standards and masculine tendencies.

According to Pateman and Shanely (1991), “long before the separation of the world of women and the household from the masculine realm of politics and citizenship took its peculiarly modern form, political theorists had set the ‘political’ in opposition to ‘private’ concerns” (4). Feminist theorists have widely divergent views on the contours of sexual difference, capability, and the relationship of the political to the intimate, although all agree that patriarchy might not be so easily expunged. Susan Moller Okin (1979) points out that many ancient and modern political theorists considered women simply in relation to their role in the family and their usefulness in sexual and reproductive roles (9). Thus, this has led to the prescription of a code of morality and conception of rights for women distinctly different from those that have been prescribed for men (9). She notes how theorists have traditionally regarded women’s nature as instrumental--What are women for?--as opposed to men who are assigned innate potential and a host of life possibilities (10). Jacqueline Stevens, in *Reproducing the State* (1999), asserts that “the modern notion that political authority and familial authority might be separate” started with social contract theory (51). That, along with the continued public/private heuristic, argues Stevens, is a fiction promoted by political scientists which results in further reducing the visibility of familial features of the state (51).

It is not possible to recount the entire scope of Jurgen Habermas’ political philosophy in this limited space. I will sketch one of his central themes--his analysis of the public and private spheres--which is relevant for gender theory and theorizing about the family. Habermas (1989; 1984) observes that modernity brings with it the increased rationalization of social life, or what he calls lifeworld, which is distinguished from

systems, or those which function according to an internal logic of end means rationality. The traditional public and private spheres are similar though not an exact parallel to his systems/lifeworld dichotomy. Markets and government institutions operate as systems and structure choices and social interaction. The public form of communicative action occurs and is made possible by the public spheres of participatory democracy, which Habermas describes as public space. In the moment of modernity the emancipatory potential of communicative interaction allows for socialization without repression. Habermas' theoretical formulation has generated a large body of work from feminists critical of what they argue is a tolerance of repressive gender relations. One influential response, in particular, is Nancy Fraser's "What is Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender" (2001) in which she charges Habermas' *The Theory of Communicative Action* with gender-blindness. Joan Landes (1992) observes that Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) is a recreation of the bourgeois public sphere and uncritically accepts the gender ideologies that nourish it.<sup>16</sup> Marie Flemming (1995) presents a similar criticism. She argues that Habermas' assertion that the juridification of the previously informally managed lifeworld (including the family) has failed to recognize how domesticity is centered on relations of subordination. Flemming (1995) also points out that it is not merely the private, but intimacy—gendered intimacy--that Habermas failed to understand. According to Habermas, the structure of modernity is wrapped up in the distinctions between the public

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<sup>16</sup> For other critiques of the public/private dichotomy see Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self- Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), 108-109; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, editors, *Postmodernism and the Re-Reading of Modernity*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

and private. Chantal Mouffe (2000; 1999) and Jodi Dean (1996), proponents of agonistic theories of democracy, offer solutions based on replacing Habermas' model of deliberative public sphere, which they see as rationalistic and hostile to cultural and value pluralism, with conceptions of public politics based on political conflict and contestation. These critics maintain that Habermas' theory is unable to speak to sexual, cultural, and ethnic difference, and on a normative level, they argue that it is not possible to draw emancipatory potential from otherness.<sup>17</sup>

Habermas' failure to attach spatiality to the public sphere has also drawn criticism from some scholars (Low and Smith 2006). They maintain that "the weakness of the public sphere literature may lie in the distance that it maintains from the places and spaces of publicness" and therefore "an understanding of public space is an imperative for understanding the public sphere" (Low and Smith 2006, 6). Theories of the public that are unattached to groups, places, bodies, or institutions—local and global—recreate assumptions of neutral spaces and locations of political power. Furthermore, "abstracting from the location of real events and social relations removes an entire dimension of political relationality" (7). The public sphere is socially produced and the result of political struggle and historical change (7). Returning to the main topic of this project, we see that the theme of the relationship between space and political spheres enables us to better understand the materiality and spatiality of gender dynamics. In this case, it is

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<sup>17</sup> For other agonistic theories of democracy, see Patchen Markell. 'Contesting Consensus: Rereading Habermas on the Public Sphere', *Constellations* 3: 2000, 377–400 and Dana Villa. 'Postmodernism and the Public Sphere', *American Political Science Review* 86 (September 1992): 712–21. On difference and deliberative democracy see Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1996); John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the relationship between the house and the nuclear family that we are trying to better understand. Home building involves spatial, as well as social restructuring, and rests on models of family.

### *Traditional Nuclear Family Advocates*

The post-World War II period is often viewed as “the golden age of families” in the United States.<sup>18</sup> Higher birth rates, larger families, and a stable divorce rate were characteristic of the decade following World War II. Nuclear family advocates suggest that it is the era to which all other decades should compare. According to traditional nuclear family advocates, the period of the 1960s and 1970s began a shift in the cultural and social values in the United States, creating family instability. Women’s sexual liberation, sex and cohabitation outside of marriage, and increased personal liberty in personal life are viewed as negatively impacting families and intimate relationships. The result of which has been, on the one hand, the government providing greater financial support through social programs such as cash assistance where the family wage has failed due to family dissolution, and on the other, individuals are less likely to view the family as a place for citizen’s moral and civic development. For minimal government advocates, it is the role of the family and not the government, to provide economic support. Some family communitarians, on the other hand, maintain that the state support of families will strengthen both nation and civil society. It is not surprising that advocates of traditional family values and the “revival” of the nuclear family focus their lens on a specific period in United States history as the basis of familial normalcy.

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<sup>18</sup> See also Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic, 1992); Judith Stacey, *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age* (Boston: Beacon, 1992).



A number of scholars, including democratic political theorists, have taken traditional family-centered values and extended them to new theories of revitalizing democracy. William Galston, in *A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths* (1998), states that American democracy should prioritize “the likelihood that more children will grow up with their two married parents” (18). His subsequent *Liberal Pluralism: the Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (2002) and *The Practice of Liberal Pluralism* (2005) do not explicitly elaborate on those earlier themes, but both books provide a sense of his guiding philosophy. Galston’s vision of liberal pluralism focuses on the ability for “individuals and groups leading their lives as they see fit, within a broad range of legitimate variation, in accordance with their own understanding of what gives life meaning and value” (2002, 3). While Galston’s *Liberal Pluralism* and *The Practice of Liberal Pluralism* are elegantly argued, his typology remains problematic for women and families. Galston endorses a liberalism that prioritizes diversity by affording maximum “space for the enactment of individual and group differences” (2002, 23). He argues that liberal pluralism “does not warrant the conclusion that the state must (or may) structure public education to foster in children skeptical reflection on ways of life inherited from parents or local communities” (253). That is, a public education grounded in liberal pluralism (and a corresponding focus on expressive liberty) may account for the religiously motivated parental desire to pass on beliefs to one’s children without consideration of conflicting beliefs or values. The liberal priority on diversity and religious pluralism, then, might require accommodation of distinctive and thus potentially illiberal traditions. In addition, if political liberals can

endorse established religion it seems plausible that they can also endorse established heterosexual marriage.

Unlike many other family-centered advocates, Galston deserves credit for attempting to construct a theory that takes the rights of all seriously, groups and individuals, and advances these notions in a highly respectful and non-polemic manner. However, although he has departed from Rawls in many ways, Galston similarly seems guided by the idea that families are an important foundation of civil society and has been unable to adequately resolve this impulse in his political philosophy. In this I see two types of problems. First, Galston's *political* advocacy in both the Clinton administration and on the Council for Families is decidedly pro-family centered,<sup>19</sup> as is his writing on marriage and public policy (1996). Galston's political writing and advocacy make his *philosophical* positions, which emphasize liberal pluralism and are largely silent on family and marriage, seem disingenuous. His emphasis on parental rights in his liberal pluralism typology could be viewed as a coded theoretical play for family in general. If this is the case, then Galston is no different from other pro-family communitarians and with respect to family, his philosophy collapses under his political positions. Even without his political writing to raise red flags, Galston's focus on parental rights as the basis for civic education appears to be an endorsement of a particular form of life and structure of society: marriage, an institution which gains much of its supposed strength and importance from its long history and its traditional centrality, both of which are profoundly patriarchal. As marriage is a legal institution, the law already intrudes on individuals' liberty by defining the conditions under which people may marry and

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<sup>19</sup> See also, William Galston, "Beyond the Murphy Brown Debate: Ideas for Family Policy," Paper presented at the Institute for American Values, Family Policy Symposium, New York, December 10, 1993.

determining the legal consequences of marriage. Furthermore, for most feminists, it does not make sense to say that the personal sphere of marriage (or even parenting) should, as a matter of liberty, be immune from political interference, because the personal sphere is already defined and regulated by politics. While it might be possible to reformulate a version of Galston's argument that resonates better with egalitarian liberal concerns by making the pursuit of gender equality a legitimate part of justice, thus far, such a revision seems outside of Galston's intentions and could only occur with major alterations of his overall typology. It is also possible that children may not be best served by marriage and parenthood as it is presently conceived in dominant American culture. This criticism echoes Okin's observation in *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (1989) that families must be schools of justice such that unjust parental relationships, including traditional marriage, are harmful to children.

Critics of traditional nuclear family-centered policymaking maintain that in addition to the problematic normative nuclear family that is the basis for civil society, this articulation specifically excludes same-sex couples and the non-married from this family-centered vision of a democratic society (Snyder 2002, 167). Taking a broader view of family history in the United States, one sees that the post-World War II economic boom and its related social and political manifestations were neither normal nor a-political. Many scholars consider the post-war period in the history of the family "the great exception" (Mintz and Kellogg 1988). Mintz and Kellogg note that in the United States "the pattern of family life characteristic of the fifties differed dramatically from any that has been observed earlier in our history or since" (178).

The "decline of the family" in American society is a theme that has become the focus of increasingly heated debates by politicians, pundits, and family scholars during the last decade. Supporters of the family decline hypothesis have focused on the negative consequences of changing family structure and they suggest that social norms legitimating the pursuit of individual over collective goals and the availability of alternate social groups for the satisfaction of basic human needs have substantially weakened the social institution of the family as an agent of socialization and as a source of nurturance for family members. According to Popenoe (2002), in the last two decades "families have lost functions, social power, and authority over their members...they have grown smaller in size, less stable, and shorter in life span" (19). Some scholars, politicians, and commentators who support what are viewed as traditional nuclear family values fear that the weakened heterosexual, nuclear family is contributing to a range of social, psychological, and economic ills: parental absence, increased divorce, childhood poverty, over-individualism, and lack of community values (Blankenhorn 1995). The traditional nuclear family is viewed as the "natural" form of social organization. This "family decline" hypothesis is limited, however, by its preoccupation with the family as a co-resident household and the nuclear family as its primary representation. Popenoe defines the family as "a relatively small domestic group of kin (or people in a kin-like relationship) consisting of at least one adult and one dependent person" (1993, 529). Although this might be sufficient as a demographic definition of a "family household," it does not include important aspects of family functions that extend beyond boundaries of co-residence. There is nothing in Popenoe's hypothesis to reflect the function of

multigenerational influences on children, the role of grandparents in socializing, or supporting grandchildren, particularly after the divorce of middle-generation parents.

In response to Popenoe, Judith Stacey (1996) argues that the family is indeed in decline, if what we mean by "family" is the nuclear form of dad, mom, and their biological or adopted kids. Families are changing in both forms and meanings, expanding beyond the nuclear family structure to involve a variety of kin and non-kin relationships. In the last few decades, with the shift to a postindustrial domestic economy within a globalized capitalist system and with the advent of new reproductive technologies, the modern family system has been replaced by what Stacey has called "the postmodern family condition," a pluralistic, fluid, and contested domain in which diverse family patterns, values, and practices contend for legitimacy and resources. Stacey suggests that family diversity and fluidity are now "normal," and the postmodern family condition opens the possibility of egalitarian, democratic forms of intimacy, as well as potentially threatening levels of insecurity. In addition, intense federal subsidization of the nuclear family occurred during the post-World War II era. Transportation policy built highways from central cities to suburban developments and low energy costs saw a rise in car culture. War veterans received low-interest mortgages. Families had few multi-generational responsibilities as seniors became more income stable through elder social policies. Proponents' of traditional family values and the nuclear family response is that recent family decline [in the 1980s and 1990s] is unique and more serious than other historical family changes (Popenoe 2002).

Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families* (1979) argues that the family is the product of modern history, stemming largely from multiple government programs. The

family, according to Donzelot, is a mechanism of social harmony and national productivity. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the family emerged as a link between the public and the private realms, with the private family constituted as separate from the gaze of the state and appearing natural, while the public family is managed by government social programs that address the failure of the family. The family, therefore, became both an end and a means of government. Similarly, McIntosh and Barrett (1982) maintain that the family is as much a collective fantasy as it is an institution, albeit a privileged fantasy that dictates household relations. It is also helpful to distinguish, as Barrett and McIntosh (1991) do, between family as a social and economic institution and the broader ideology of family. These two elements act alongside the actual make-up of family and household composition. It is important to note that these three features of family are not autonomous, as each is marked by characteristics of the other. Together, these nodes act as a “moving resultant, an uncertain form whose intelligibility can only come from studying the system of relations it maintains with the socio-political level” (Donzelot 1980, xxv). As much as family as an institution and often in practice is a site of political inequality, for many it remains an important source of love, security, identity, and community. Recognition of the exclusionary effects of family and its implications is not intended to downplay the very real, comforting role that family plays in many lives.

While a range of viewpoints exist from traditional family-centered advocates, a primary concern is that changes to the nuclear family and their perceived negative social consequences, are cause for concern. Wright and Jagger (1999) note contemporary debates surrounding family are imbued with a sense of crisis and parallel the mythical

panic of the late nineteenth century *fin-de-siècle* era invoking the health of the family and nation. Nuclear family-centered assumptions work its way into various social and political arenas, and sometimes unlikely places. Cynthia Burack (2003) observes that recent social conservative thought, what she calls New Right discourse on families, have attempted more sophisticated articulations of family-centered ideology by replacing “the natural” with a misreading of psychoanalytical theory. Contemporary theories of childhood development and rearing, such as attachment theory (also known as attachment parenting or AP), are rarely criticized for the ways in which they are fully-formed from western, nuclear family norms, assume a heterosexual parental unit, and rely on male breadwinner models of household economic arrangement; however, Burack maintains, New Right social conservatives are using theories of child development to buttress their visions of gender hierarchy and traditional family values (86).

While a number of “pro-family feminists” remain committed to defending women’s roles in the family (McClain 2006; Elshtain 1981), other feminist scholars are less optimistic about maternalist and family-centered politics, and argue that women’s democratic citizenship cannot find its foundation in institutions of inequality, regardless of how loving (Okin 1979). In a related vein, with this project, I argue that federal housing policy—whether explicitly or implicitly relying on the hegemonic nuclear family--has serious negative consequences for many who do not fall within the confines of traditional family formulations and should be a cause for concern for theorists of democracy and social policy formation. Taking gender into consideration does and should change the way we think about democracy. Liberal democracy wants to ignore and civic republicanism wants to transcend local identity and difference. Formal

equalities conceded through universal suffrage have not led to substantial material changes in the lives of many citizens. The deceptive abstractions and masculinity of orthodox modern political theory not only overlooks reproduction, housework, child rearing, mothering, and other features of gender-stratified family life, it integrates sex difference into its various forms and assumes the presence of a nuclear family to soak up latent anxiety and other features of the state that liberal democracy and civic republicanism is not designed to accommodate.



## Chapter 3: Foundations of Nuclear Family Hegemony

### Part I – Nascent Nuclear Family-Centered Movements

At the back and beginning of [patriotism] is the home. Pride of home, reverence for home, affection for home, [and] loyalty for home lie at the very foundation of true patriotism. The home-making propaganda is the best training in national pride that the child or adult can have. Homeless people make poor citizens. Nomads are seldom patriots. Give us a nation of homes, with each family loving and beautifying and developing its own, and there will be small need for teaching patriotism.<sup>20</sup>

The government's role in housing matters dates primarily from two major turning points. First, during the Progressive era, tenement reform laws set the precedent that local government would establish standards and regulate housing safety. Second, during the 1930s, the public housing program, banking reforms, and the Federal Housing Administration (which is the focus of the second part of this chapter) determined the federal role in expanding homeownership and stabilizing the housing and banking industries. Until the Depression, most politicians and social commentators believed that the private market, with a helping hand from private philanthropy, could meet the nation's housing needs.<sup>21</sup> During the Progressive-era, reformers sought to address the problem of dilapidated slums and tenement housing in a variety of ways, but housing advocates who wanted the federal government to play a major role in housing remained in the minority. The economic collapse surrounding the Depression, however, provided

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<sup>20</sup> *American Home* 3 (July 1929):463, Editorial, Quoted in Marsh, 1990, p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> The federal government's role in housing appeared earlier through the Land Ordinance of 1785, the Old Soldiers Act of 1855, the Homestead Act of 1862, all land grant programs, and starting in 1917 through the newly established U.S. Housing Corporation (USHC), by building and subsidizing housing for defense workers during World War I.

“housers” with a political opening to advocate for federal government subsidization of social housing and helping to create a noncommercial sector free from profit and speculation (Radford 1996; Wright 1981). Progressive-era social housing movements, however, were largely built around the gendered ideologies of the time.<sup>22</sup> Notions of women’s proper roles in society, the economy, and the household contributed to the rise of the settlement housing movement and municipal housekeeping. During the Progressive era, maternalist ideology supported the extension of women’s concerns from the household to the larger community.<sup>23</sup> These women-centered movements and their related ideologies, along with developments in city planning, zoning, and protective labor legislation for women, acted together to create the conditions in which early twentieth century American ambivalence towards municipal housing would result in federal policy that centered on owner-occupied, single family houses. In this chapter I trace these

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<sup>22</sup> Discourses surrounding republican motherhood and the cult of true womanhood in the early nineteenth century are widely recognized by scholars as having reified perceptions of gender roles, idealized family life, and promoted a specific form of motherhood as central to women’s lives in the United States. The concept of Republican Motherhood held that the highest duty of women was to raise virtuous citizens for the well-being of the new republic. Although they were restricted legally and politically from the public domain, post-revolutionary American women brought their acknowledged domestic role into the public realm through the image of Republican Motherhood. In this way, women participated in the public sphere but were consigned to the role of keeper of virtue. Virtue in this sense was based on the Enlightenment belief that man had the ability to perfect himself. It was women, as care giving mothers, who were necessary to rear virtuous male citizens. Thus, through Republican Motherhood, nineteenth-century American women were able to accomplish what the Enlightenment had not: to incorporate themselves into the civic culture within the confines of a separate-spheres ideology. See Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). For more on the cult of true womanhood, also known as the cult of domesticity, see Barbara Welter’s influential “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18 (summer 1966): 151-74, as well as the following: Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Glenna Matthews, “Just a Housewife”: *The Rise of Domesticity in America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1987); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); and, Mary Ryan, *The Empire of the Mother* (New York: Haworth, 1982). For male domesticity, see E. Anthony Rotundo, “Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 16 (Summer 1983): 32 and Peter Gabriel Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (New York, 1974).

<sup>23</sup> Maternalism is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

developments to illustrate the foundations of nuclear family hegemony as it relates to the American housing agenda.

A narrative of protecting home and the nuclear family--whether from dissolution of the Union, industrialization, trade unionism, communism, and urban life--has been a common theme throughout United States history. Expectations for national unity were predicated on the assumption that the American home was inherently a site of harmony rather than of discord and differences, as the house can only provide stability and security if it remains symbolically untainted from the problems of the nation, city, and market. Widespread changes at the turn of the twentieth century provoked unprecedented debates over the meanings of home. During this period, Karen Sánchez-Eppler (1992) observes, American literature illustrates how “the metaphor of a national household treats these terms as mutually constitutive: anxieties about the nation produce the idealized image of the home, and visions of home promise to ameliorate national discord” (346). Policymakers, social commentators, and activists addressed the anxieties they felt about change by insisting on protecting the continuity of gendered stereotypes related to family, home, and motherhood.

For middle-class households, the late Victorian period after the Civil War brought more attention to the individualized style of a house. Household interiors were commonly considered as expressions of the woman who inhabited the house. Suburban houses and those on the edge of cities, notes Margaret Marsh (1990, 147), appeared as safe heavens from immigrants swelling the inner cities. Houses served to keep out negative influences and keep women inside. Domestic functions, such as sewing, cooking, or reading, were built into the design of houses. The sitting room, parlor, and

pantry spoke to women's roles in the house. Housing guides published by female decorators, Wright says, "represented particular people and also the particular cultural form of the very privatized nuclear family, which many American's at the time considered God's chosen universal living arrangement" (quoted in Birch 1984, 130). In *City of American Dreams: A History of Homeownership and Housing Reform in Chicago, 1871-1919* (2005), Marjorie Garber observes,

The American conception of homeownership was profoundly transformed in the fifty years after the Civil War. As the nation moved from an agrarian to an industrialized urban society, as immigrants from abroad and migrants from rural regions flowed into American cities, and as reformers sought to improve living conditions in impoverished urban neighborhoods, the ownership of a single-family house emerged as a symbol of what many call 'the American dream'. The American celebration of a particular form of property—the single-family house set on a tidy yard—was neither natural nor inevitable. Rather, it was grounded in changing material conditions of housing and social relations of work in industrializing northern cities, and in struggles over the meaning, form, and function of the family home that divided wage laborers and salaried workers, immigrants and their native-born neighbors, tenants and municipal officials, and African-American and white home owners. The result, no less damaging for its having been unintended, was the emergence of cities sharply divided along class and racial lines, and the expansion of an urban poor who were increasingly shut out of the nation's housing markets. (1)

The middle class house was intended to provide a refuge for men and protection for women.

Amy Kaplan (1998) seeks to shift the lens away from the notion of separate public and private spheres in examining American domesticity towards one that recognizes the ways in which American foreign policy is represented in the geographic and cognitive boundaries of home. In a fascinating article, Kaplan observes that the relationship of nationalism and imperialism to domesticity is one marked by racial otherness:

When we contrast the domestic sphere with the market or political realm, men and women inhabit a divided social terrain, but when we oppose the domestic to the foreign, men and women become national allies against the alien, and the determining division is not gender but racial demarcations of otherness. Thus another part of the cultural work of domesticity might be to unite men and women in a national domain and to generate notions of the foreign against which the nation can be imagined as home. The border between the domestic and foreign, however, also deconstructs when we think of domesticity not as a static condition but as the process of domestication, which entails conquering and taming the wild, the natural, and the alien. Domestic in this sense is related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery. Through the process of domestication, the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed; domesticity not only monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage but also regulates traces of the savage within itself. (582)

More recent cultural history builds on these themes and illustrates how the middle class house in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century served as a site for cosmopolitan domesticity (Hoganson 2002, 57). At the same time that the home was viewed as a place of refuge away from immigrants, the market, and other features of urban life, it captures some global influences of the nation that the home had intended to keep out. Narratives of foreignness and empire are linked not only to production and capital, but to consumption. Mirroring the concept of separate spheres for men and women, though highlighting the permeability of these borders, is the juxtaposition of the domestic and foreign, which in the context of the middle class house, played out through the consumption of international goods (57-58). Elevating the place and role of women and motherhood in the United States acted as a compensatory effort to glorify women's reduced agency. Thus, symbolic sovereignty in the home takes the place of withdrawal from the public.

### Maternalist Politics

Much has been written about the introduction of women into public life through voluntary associational and community service work at the turn of the century and during the Progressive era. Maternalism broadly refers to the ideologies, practices, and state-building strategies employed by groups of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century white, middle class, female social reformers (Mink 1995; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Gordon 1994; Boris 1994; Koven and Michel 1993; Muncy 1991). More specifically, according to Koven and Michel (1990), maternalism encompasses a variety of "ideologies that exalted women's capacity to mother and extended to society as a whole the values of care, nurturance, and morality" (1079). A number of scholars (Sklar 1995; Skocpol 1992) describe how existing social and political institutions shaped, constrained, and produced maternalism. In the realm of public policy, maternalist activists contributed to a variety of initiatives that targeted low-income women and children.

In *Protecting Mothers and Soldiers: The Political Origins of Social Welfare Policy in the United States* (1992), Theda Skocpol argues that that from 1900 through the early 1920s, the United States appeared to be developing an "internationally distinctive" *maternalist* social welfare state that included social provisions specifically for mothers and children and which did not rely on the connection to male wage earners or soldiers for receipt of public social insurance. Maternalists, defined by Skocpol as women activists who sought to extend "the moral values and social caring of the home into the larger community" (51), were so successful in their efforts to promote specific social policies that they helped produce a nascent maternalist welfare state. Skocpol develops an analysis of how, while male, social science-oriented advocacy groups failed to get

social welfare legislation passed in the early 1900s, women's voluntary organizations facilitated successful legislation to benefit poor women and children. Skocpol points out that analysis of U.S. welfare state creation typically adopts one of three models: social welfare expectancy from industrialization (adapted from the European model), emphasis on national values and American liberal exceptionalism (from Hartz), and the gendered nature of the state (social policy as a reproducer of patriarchal relations and domination). None of these models, she explains, takes into account specific U.S. institutional factors, in connection with economic, cultural, and gender structures (1992, 41-53). This burgeoning maternalist welfare state was advocated and administered primarily by female professionals and included minimum wage laws for women and the Sheppard-Towner child and maternal health program. However, Skocpol contends, opposition in the courts and in Congress cut short these programs in the 1920s and the maternalist potential of the American welfare state was never fully realized.

Some gender scholars (Ladd-Taylor 1994, 1993; Koven 1993; Koven and Michel 1993) argue that maternalist activism was more varied and complex than Skocpol's account identifies. Historian Molly Ladd-Taylor (1994) claims that maternalism embodied four elements:

1. that there is a uniquely feminine value system base on care and nurturance;
2. that mothers perform a service to the state by raising citizen-workers;
3. that women are united across class, race, and nation by their common capacity for motherhood and therefore share a responsibility for all the world's children; and
4. that ideally men should earn a family wage to support their "dependent" wives and children at home. (3)

This definition, Ladd-Taylor argues, would exclude those feminist and African American women's groups which advocated women's economic independence from men and

rejected the family wage system altogether. Linda Gordon (1994) points out, however, that maternalism was a hegemonic approach that encompassed multiple interpretations; many different advocates and women's groups relied on maternalist rhetoric, but within varying contexts and emphases.<sup>24</sup> Skocpol claims to be attentive 'gender structures,' which, no doubt, contributed to the development of the welfare state; however, her analysis rests on the exclusion of white middle and upper class women from traditional politics. Nackenoff (1999) contends, "while maternalism opened up some opportunities to radically revision the state, relations of dependence and asymmetry that were so prevalent in much of its rhetoric were not liberal relations of equality" (165). Skocpol's view does not sufficiently account for the degree to which maternalism may have been a mask for paternalistic activity on the part of the state. For the purposes of this project, it is important to re-examine maternalism in light of the housing policy literature, in which discussions of gender are surprisingly absent.

In *Dividing Citizens* (1998), Suzanne Mettler points out that "while historical institutionalists have done much to explain the origins or determinants of public policies, less attention has been given to the civic and social consequences of policies" (4). Mettler contends that structural arrangements, such as civic status, social status, political rules, and governing arrangements contribute to patterns of governance for citizenship and

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<sup>24</sup> Linda Gordon (1994) points out that highlighting poor, single women as the recipients of state aid distorts the reality of single mothers historically and targets poor women as representatives of social and moral breakdown. Reformers relied on these negative perceptions to gain popularity for their programs from politicians. Single mothers were more often employed outside of the home; therefore, the rhetoric from reformers regarding women's position as caretakers in the home was unrealistic moralizing. In addition, the charity-oriented model of maternalist social welfare proposed by many reformers defeated more radical notions of women's economic independence from men. The implications of these reform policies are dramatic given the weight to which Skocpol gives these policies as potential models; however, they ignore a host of actual social and economic conditions or an analysis of gender structures which is attentive to race and class.



provides the best explanation of how governing arrangements affect citizenship. She explains that most pre-New Deal social provisions for women typically arose at the municipal or state level and did not involve the federal government; white men obtained national citizenship with benefits incorporated into federal institutions, while women and minority men were subject to labor and social policy generally administered by states or through grants-in-aid programs. Thus, early government social provisions for women remained *local and traditional*. According to Mettler (1998), “beginning with the New Deal, most women remained beyond the purview of the new liberal realm of citizenship” (24). Mettler describes how states had the tendency of incorporating women based on non-liberal criteria which viewed women as “role-oriented” or “relational” instead of as abstract liberal individuals. In addition to the ideological distinctions that qualified women for social provisions, state programs were administered differently than federal programs. For state-administered programs, women were not complete rights bearing individuals, as the benefits came with supervision and were based upon dependency and protection. Mettler identifies state social provisions as “semifeudal” because of the ascriptive characteristics that qualified persons for benefits and because of the parochial ways in which the states administered the programs. Consequently, Mettler argues, “the major route through which women did gain access to the national realm of citizenship in the New Deal was through incorporation on a distinctively non-liberal basis” (25). Although the local/federal distinction that Mettler highlights is applicable in terms of social insurance policy, it is arguable whether the same model applies to housing policy.<sup>25</sup> Mettler’s instincts, however, about women’s incorporation on a non-liberal basis are consistent with analyses with this project. In sum, maternalist movements did

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<sup>25</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

not open up citizenship to women on the same terms as men. These movements reified women's sex differentiated position in the realms of the social and political.

*Protecting Women or Male Wage Earners?*

From teaching women the best way to clean or manage grocery shopping, Progressive-era-styled scientific home management invoked a strong sexual division of labor inside the house. The home economics movement became even more influential during the interwar period, and in 1917 the Smith-Hughes Act provided federal funding for the establishment of home economics programs in schools (Apple 2006). This home economics and professional household administration also reduced popular participation, as experts assured households that liberation would come through following their advice and not by challenging household roles and conventions (Birch 1984, 135).

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, the agrarian two-parent farm model was gradually being replaced by the two-parent male breadwinner model; however, at the turn of the century this model only accounted for just over 50 percent of all families (Hernandez 1993). By 1920, married women wage earners increased dramatically, making dual-earning families the dominant household model (Scharf 1980). During the same period, the Census Bureau reported that more Americans lived in urban than rural areas. With the onset of the depression, increased unemployment and job competition created public animosity against married women's wage earning. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, public school systems, the federal government, and private corporations began restricting married women's employment (Goldin 1990; Foner 1980). During the depression, male unemployment and women's increased earnings to keep households afloat threatened the erosion of male identity,

undermining the breadwinner model of family/state economics (May 2008). However, despite the hardships of the Depression, “some observers even saw a silver lining in economic hardship, since it revived the economic functions and social importance of kin and family ties” (Coontz 1992, 13).

Efforts to enact protective labor laws for women began in the late nineteenth century and crystallized in the early decade of the twentieth century. In 1908, the Supreme Court reversed its 1905 decision in *Lochner* and decided in *Muller v. Oregon* (1908) that Oregon’s law that limited the workdays of women in laundries and other specific occupations was constitutional. Eileen Boris (1994, 119) notes that Louis Brandeis’ brief for the National Consumers’ League (NCL) relied on the idea that protective labor legislation contributed to women’s overall health, as well a notion of women’s place in the domestic sphere. The Court determined that the state’s interest were to be prioritized over women’s liberty of contract because “as healthy mothers are essential to vigorous offspring, the physical well-being of woman becomes an object of public interest and care in order to preserve the strength and vigor of the race”.<sup>26</sup> Fewer than ten years later, in *Adkins v. Children’s Hospital* (1923), the Supreme Court held that the District of Columbia could not enforce its minimum wage laws in which employers were required to pay men and women at the same rate set by the District.<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Mettler (1998) observes that protective labor laws “reinforced the separateness of woman and men in the workplace, institutionalizing occupational segregation by gender” (36) and led women into an unfortunate paradox: women were “protected” by states through

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<sup>26</sup> Justice David Brewer, Opinion, *Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U.S. 412 (1908)

<sup>27</sup> For an excellent discussion of women’s protective labor legislation from 1897 to 1923, see Julie Novkov, “Liberty, Protection, and Women’s Work: Investigating the Boundaries between Public and Private,” *Law & Social Inquiry*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 857-899. Novkov discusses how both state and federal courts developed understandings of liberty for women that differed from those for men.

labor law legislation and denied freedom of contract, while simultaneously not afforded the same protection as men of minimum wage laws. Mettler also notes that New Deal programs that sought to address joblessness did so based on the family wage ideal: government officials assumed that programs for men would indirectly benefit women and children (1998, 45). Along with maternalist movements for mothers' pensions, protective labor law advocacy and court decisions adhered to ascribed roles for women and men based on their sex.

### *Race Betterment and Housing Promotion*

In the 1920s and 1930s, American popular marital and sexual advice literature argued that the foundation of white civilization was the normal, heterosexual couple (Carter 2007). These features of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century acted alongside scientific racism to connect whiteness and heterosexuality with nuclear family normalcy. American eugenics was developed within a series of organizations in the early twentieth century, including the American Breeders Association and American Eugenics Society. Eugenic thinking underscored the Progressive Era discourse of psychopathology and social problems. In *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (2005), Wendy Kline argues that a shift occurred in the eugenics movement, from negative eugenics in the 1920s which was characterized by forced sterilization, immigration and marriage restriction, and euthanasia, towards what is labeled positive eugenics in the 1930s which sought to promote pronatalist, family-centered measures. Central to this image of positive eugenics is the image of the good mother, what Kline calls the "The Mother of Tomorrow." This prototypical good mother provided a gendered and racial representation of American

progress. Robert Rydell (1984) argues that eugenics theories and ideas about race and heredity were spread and popularized through “the nation’s exhibition culture”: fairs, contests, museums, and expositions. Fairs were one way that (racist) pseudo-scientific theories about race and ethnicity were filtered to the wider public. “Fitter Families for Future Fireside Contests,” also known as “Fitter Family” contests sponsored by the American Eugenics Society, were held at state agricultural fairs across the United States in the 1920s and the Children’s Bureau held “Better Baby Contests.” Contests were typically held in the livestock area of the fairgrounds. Applicant families were judged based on their eugenic worth, including healthy family history and talents such as musical ability. Applicants completed paperwork in advance and underwent medical examinations and psychiatric evaluations at the fairs. Family members with a score of B+ or higher received a bronze medal.<sup>28</sup> Despite increased public pressure over the contests and exhibits, eugenicists were active into the 1940s, including a prominent race-betterment contest of “Typical American Families” held in conjunction with the 1939-1940 World’s Fair in New York City (Wolf 2009). The contest, sponsored in part by the Ford Motor Company, sought applicants from each state in the country. Winning families, all white with two parents and two children, were given an automobile and a one-week “vacation” to New York City in which they resided in a Federal Housing Administration-built house on the fair grounds. The families could be observed using appliances produced by corporations exhibiting at the fair through first-floor windows of the houses. The “Typical American Families” contest brought together both racial and gendered elements of American family life, while connecting the image of good families with domesticity, consumer culture, and the built environment.

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<sup>28</sup> See Image 1.

In 1935 the American Eugenics Society established a housing conference to influence community planners to design and build family-oriented suburban communities (Lovett 2007). While evidence of the direct impact of the eugenics housing conference on U.S. housing is nevertheless limited, a number of influential housing policy and planning experts were either supportive of the conference goals or noted their parallel interests. Edith Elmer Wood, housing activist and anti-tenement crusader, advocated for housing reform that emphasized health and nuclear families, and openly supported the goals of the American Eugenics Society as they related to housing (Lovett 2007).

Historian Laura L. Lovett (2007) maintains,

What is important to note is the way in which a faith in positive modeling around the family was taken for granted. Promoting an ideal of the suburban family as one with three or more children coincided with promotion of homes of a certain size and communities with family-friendly features. Eugenics and housing ideals were understood as mutually reinforcing, but the means to their implementation was understood in terms of promoting an ideal as much as actual legislation of support for housing. (160-161)

Suburban developments were viewed as the appropriate environment in which to raise “a normal sized” and “well-reared family” (Lovett 2007, 104). These arguments were extensions of the nativism popular at the turn of the century, as fears of race suicide became popularized alongside anti-immigrant rhetoric, as well as maternalism that focused on women’s proper duty in service of the state.

Marital sexuality was expressed as a microcosm of political and social values inherent to American democratic ideology (Carter 2007, 14). Marital sexual self-discipline and “normal” family life--monogamy and heterosexuality--was identified with white civilization and the common good. Sex education was one method of teaching

whiteness and self-control (15). Indeed, Carter maintains, “normality gathered much of its meaning from its indirect reference to modern whiteness as a set of universal values (15). Similar to some views of anti-miscegenation laws, regulating sex was less important than regulating the boundaries of race-pure wedlock and reproduction. While there has been much scholarly discussion of the policing of interracial relationships during this period and explicitly racist literature, looking to white-on-white, heterosexual marriage is also instructive towards understanding how familial, sexual normalcy was established and promoted.

#### *From Restrictive Legislation to Housing for the Nuclear Family*

Prior to the emergence of federal health and sanitation standards, cities and state governments passed legislation and local ordinances to address municipal problems. During the Progressive era, city officials and state legislators sought ways to curb substandard housing and related health and sanitation problems (Henderson 2000, 45). The resulting restrictive legislation, which grew largely from the work of health and housing reformers, represented a significant extension of the government’s police powers. In order to address the problems faced by the urban poor, many of whom were new Americans, progressive reformers organized schools and settlement houses and established procedures and model codes that would be administered through municipal agencies, which in some cities were directed by those in political patronage positions. Restrictive legislation was promoted on the one side by male Progressive housing reformers and on the other by female settlement house workers and community workers in the new field of social work, both of which advocated for urban reforms in a way that promoted nuclear family hegemony.

The settlement housing movement was based on the idea that social reform had to begin with individuals who needed help overcoming conditions created by circumstances that were beyond their control.<sup>29</sup> The major purpose of settlement houses was to help assimilate and ease the transition of immigrants into the labor force by teaching them middle-class American values; however, wage laborers and native-born household members living in tenements were also the foci of settlement house worker interventions. The settlement house movement in the United States channeled the energy and talent of white, middle class, educated Progressive women who were largely locked out of traditionally male-dominated professions and leadership positions (O'Connor 2001). Scholars suggest that these reformers, paradoxically, based much of their advocacy work for women and children on the assumption that working-class women fared better in the domestic sphere than in the harsh modern industrial workplace (Gordon 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Muncy 1991). Central to this movement was the idea of the extraordinary power of domestic environments to bring about social change. As such, settlement house planners and workers were concerned with more than architecture:

These concerns encompassed the role of the government to provide certain social services or to direct the economy; the definition of a good family

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<sup>29</sup> There is significant literature surrounding the settlement house movement and the development and professionalization of social work as a profession. The debates and contested ideologies that were a part of these developments are beyond the scope of this project. For more detailed studies, see Laura S. Abrams, "Guardians of Virtue: The Social Reformers and the 'Girl Problem,' 1890-1920." *Social Service Review* 74 (3): 2000, 436-52; Joanne L. Goodwin, "'Employable Mothers' and 'Suitable Work': A Re-evaluation of Welfare and Wage-Earning for Women in the Twentieth-Century United States." *Journal of Social History* 29 (2): 1995, 253-74; Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); and Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For a particularly fascinating reading of the settlement house movement and the motivations of social reformers, see Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). Lears uses *Twenty Years at Hull-House* and Addams' work to discuss his concept of anti-modernism in relation to what he calls the "Arts and Crafts ideology" of late-nineteenth-century America. Lears argues that, because Addams and the other Arts and Crafts ideologues sought personal fulfillment through pre-modern work rather than new ways to improve the degrading and alienated forms that modernized labor was taking, they capitulated to "capitalist cultural hegemony" p. 80.



life; the possibilities for upward mobility; the benefits or dangers of mixing different classes, races, or ethnic groups; and the complex relationships of women and their homes, encompassing paying for the dwelling, cleaning and beautifying it, making a pleasant place for family life, and being able to leave it for work or other activities outside of the home. (quoted in Birch 1984, 128)

Similar to health reformers from the previous decade, who contrasted month-to-month tenancy in tenement buildings to the healthy living of house owners, turn of the century housing reformers were concerned with the impact of poverty on urban life. Settlement house workers hoped to improve living conditions among the poor, but also carried forward a broader agenda which included advocating for kindergartens, playgrounds, and municipal regulations, and against child labor and for women's protective labor legislation (Garb 2005, 148). Settlement workers had a vision of an American way of life in which the family home buttressed the health, morality, and proper raising of child-citizens. Settlement workers feared that overcrowded units and unrelated lodgers whose wages helped with household expenses threatened sexual purity and the privacy of the family (168). This new rhetoric of nuclear family privacy targeted both middle class and wage laborers. Although these reformers did not view home ownership as the main solution to urban poverty, Garb observes that the language used by settlement house workers overlapped with that of businessmen promoting house ownership: "by defining the home as the source of social order and promoting family privacy, urban reformers contributed to a remaking of the homeownership ideal" (149). These home-centered articulations of proper family life, Garb says, would have far reaching consequences for the ways in which the United States would develop housing reform in the twentieth century (2005, 149).

In addition to settlement house workers, housing reform was carried out in tandem with local municipal health and sanitation experts. Living in rental dwellings was portrayed as unhealthy, unstable, and dependant on the whims of landlords (Garb 2005, 65-66). Tenement house laws were enacted in large cities across the United States from 1867-1901; however, it is arguable whether these regulations lead to even a modicum of improved living standards. Restrictive legislation might make some buildings safer, but it did not increase the supply of affordable housing (47). In order to address the lack of affordable housing, some housing reformers, including Charles Abrams, supported model tenements (47). This compromise was intended to be a way for private business to build housing within the guidelines of restrictive health and safety codes, without involving public funds. Abrams concluded, however, that “legislation could prescribe what was not to be built in the future, but it could not eradicate what had already been built in the past” (quoted in Henderson 2000, 47). Even more problematic was the fact that restrictive legislation could not produce more housing. Another housing reformer, Lawrence Veiller, helped form the New York City Tenement House Department, but he opposed model tenements housing laws as well as publicly funded housing strategies (48-49). He believed that the laws of supply and demand would be disrupted through municipal housing, exacerbating housing problems. Thus, state regulation, not large-scale municipal housing, became the path forward.

Although restrictive legislation did not get new housing built, it profoundly affected the nature of how the rights of renters versus homeowners would be viewed in society, and in turn, how the relationship between the government and the intimate would be managed in the future. In Chicago, for example, since multi-unit buildings were

considered industry, tenements and other structures that housed multiple households (whether they were multi-family buildings or single-family houses that were known to have been subdivided to accommodate more than one household) became subject to health and code inspections by the city's Department of Health. With the exception of building regulations and fire codes during the construction phase, single-family houses incurred no similar public health interventions from the city (Henderson 2000, 68-69). This distinction between the property rights of house owners, landlords, and rental tenants assisted in grounding the government's legal claims to intervention in the lives of the poor and wage laborers, based solely on their differential residence. Rental unit and tenement inspections also permitted government intrusion into the intimate space of the household, thwarting the traditional concept of the head of household supervision. Owner-occupied, single family houses, however, remained free from overt government intrusion. Paradoxically, the advocacy of settlement house workers and other maternalism-focused movements established a space within which educated, professional, middle-class women could work outside of the household themselves. They may have been barred from other male-dominated professions, but in addition to nursing and teaching, their contributions to social work, home economics, settlement work, and advocating for social provisions for low-income women and widows provided paid employment. However, their charges may not have had the same opportunities, and the caring- and domestic-centered movements in which they were engaged further embedded middle-class notions of women's work and sex differentiated roles in society.

*American City Planning and Zoning: Tools of Nuclear Family-Centered Housing Policy*

In *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Era*, Daniel T. Rodgers (1998) notes that in the first decade of the twentieth century, municipal progressives in the United States were influenced by European models of municipal collectivism, housekeeping, and ownership (133). Planners and city officials traveled to European cities to study city administration and urban planning. There was a sense that cities could provide utilities, police services, transit (at the time streetcars), public parks, and allow for productive industry--all in an effort to direct their own urban fate and foster civic life (143-144). Advocates of urban good government during the Progressive-era in the United States, Rodgers points out, were working under very different institutional circumstances than in Germany, England, and Scotland (154-155). In American cities, he maintains, “the early rise of a white, male, democracy created a system more porous to those who saw city office as a field for private profits and more inclined to treat public positions as a short-term investment, whose profits were to be taken as quickly as possible” (155). Compromises between municipal progressives, old school entrepreneurs, and urban party machines resulted in half-hearted municipal ownership of government services, such as a city owning street car tracks but not the trains that operated on them and private utility enterprise with regulatory commission oversight (156). Rodgers also raises an interesting question: Were the broad range of services that were provided in European cities at the time possible because of “European elites’ success in staving off formal democracy for so long?” (158). Regardless, this vision of American municipal ownership as the realization of democracy contained significant non-liberal elements. At the same time, concerns over city space, planning, and design as

it related to housing and social welfare were dominating industrial cities on both sides of the North Atlantic. Even before World War I, European cities were addressing these issues with forums on model housing design, zoning, and street layouts. With respect to zoning, Rodgers (1998, 186-187, 197) argues that the European model which sought to prevent property's speculative element and decongest inner cities, was remade in the United States into a system dominated by real estate interests, absent the municipal housing element characteristic of zoning and planning in many European cities.

“That the core values of a society should be written in its street designs and public buildings, its shelters and cityscapes, was a conviction deep in progressive culture on both side of the Atlantic,” observes Rodgers (2000, 106). Lawrence Veiller, one of the founders of the National Housing Association, promoted anti-tenement legislation and model housing buildings codes, nevertheless objected to municipal ownership (194). Florence Kelley, former settlement house leader and head of the National Consumers' League which sought better working conditions for women, organized one of the first city planning exhibits in the United States (163). Kelley and other settlement house workers also resisted municipal house building in inner cities, purportedly based on health and sanitation grounds (195). Even as many social reformers became more involved in housing issues, the American model of housing provision and shelter remained ambivalent towards publicly planned and built housing. Examples of cooperative living, semi-philanthropic housing models, and other European-styled housing communities which never fully took hold in the United States, can be found scattered across the states, driven by local labor leaders and cities to house workers (197); however, these local housing experiments gained little traction in the Progressive era. Furthermore, city

planning and housing provision were separated in the American context so that city and town planning was viewed as a public concern, while housing was considered an issue to be addressed by private industry (196). Thus, Rodgers concludes, “monumental street planning and zoning made it through to prewar America; public assistance for cheap, decent housing did not” (198).

Not all scholars agree with this assessment of early city planning. Historian Robert B. Fairbanks (1998) agrees that in the early part of the twentieth century the emphasis on housing as healthy dwelling gradually shifted toward a broader community-building endeavor (36). Although housing reformers had historically understood the connection between the social and shelter value of housing, there was a change in the way in which housing reform was viewed. A preoccupation with the poor was replaced by standards and planning that would benefit metropolitan regions (59). Overcrowding and lack of sanitation in poor immigrant-occupied tenements were still viewed as an unhealthy environment in which to raise good citizens, but housing reformers began to extend policies beyond model tenements and tenement regulation to comprehensive neighborhood and city planning, which included zoning ordinances, support for community amenities, and continued efforts to shape residents’ moral, health, and social well being (37). Fairbanks examines the dynamics of the city of Cincinnati and generalizes his findings across other major cities in the United States. The emphasis on homogenous neighborhoods, Fairbanks notes, did not necessarily mean parochial attitudes dominated planning, as is the consensus with many housing scholars (1998, 53). Reformers who supported homogenous neighborhoods sought to encourage civic pride and citizenship through shared values (53). However, this shift also meant that housing

reform would no longer focus on the poorest and most precariously housed and even Fairbanks admits that severe housing shortages remained (60).

For most housing scholars, however, the introduction of municipal zoning intertwined moral character and house form, elevating the status of the owner-occupied, single-family house while decrying the dependency associated with rental multi-family units and tenement buildings (Vale 2000, 116). Zoning legislation provides evidence of changing social dynamics in relation to gender and housing. Housing was no longer simply a commodity; it was considered a social good and essential towards proper state functioning. Urban planner Constance Perin (1977) views the cultural meaning of zoning as one in which the technical concerns of land are value-laden: defining and classifying American land with specific tasks are akin to making moral judgments about social and cultural categories and the proper relationships among them. Zoning ordinances and comprehensive municipal planning became a crucial part of the housing reform agenda in the early twentieth century. Starting in the late 1600s, cities passed nuisance ordinances as part of early efforts to make sense of land use and to separate certain undesirable industries from residential neighborhoods (Vale 2000, 116). The first large-scale zoning regulations were passed in California and New York after the turn of the twentieth century, both largely efforts to contain immigrant-owned and operated businesses from residential neighborhoods (116). This impulse to restrict specific racial and ethnic groups would subsequently become codified in federal housing, in part through red lining and other racial segregation policies within the Federal Housing Administration.

In California, according to Seymour Tool (1996) in *Zoned American*, zoning ordinances were directed towards Chinese immigrants and laundry businesses and in

New York against Jewish garment factories. In some states cities could limit the amount of multi-family housing built within city limits. In addition to excluding all non-whites and immigrants—with the exception of domestic servants—zoning restrictions amplified the nation’s perception of the normal home, with the mortgage paid by the male breadwinner who had desirable employment, and established a concrete distinction between those who could afford a single-family home and everyone else. A number of states had been seeking to address zoning issues in the courts when in 1926 the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of municipal zoning.<sup>30</sup> Zoning’s purpose was “no longer to disperse overcrowded, over[-]factoried lower Manhattan so that its working population could breathe” but to “keep lower Manhattan in its place” (Tool 1996, 186).

Marc Weiss notes in *The Rise of the Community Builders* (1987), in the 1920s and 1930s:

Where residential areas were planned and built up with expensive single-family houses, protection to facilitate or to preserve this particular form of high property values was considered to be a worthwhile objective; in middle-income residential areas, promotion of higher-density, higher-value multifamily apartment buildings, hotels, stores, office, and other residential and commercial uses was combined with the necessary protection of those uses from industrial “nuisance” encroachment; in low-income residential areas, promotion of industrial uses was the primary objective, with absolutely no protection of the local working-class population. (11-12)

In time, zoning would become the best asset for realtors and businesses. In the private market, restrictive zoning practices sought to reify the connection between house design and moral character through codes that excluded rental and commercial housing from planned areas, while promoting the single-family home and the nuclear family (Vale 2000, 116). The Supreme Court played a significant role in reproducing this white heteronormativity and nuclear family hegemony in its 1926 decision in *Village of Euclid*

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<sup>30</sup> *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.* 272 U.S. 365 (1926)



*v. Ambler Realty Co.* (1926). The Supreme Court decided that the realty company's property interest and ability to develop land was trumped by the government's police power. Therefore, the community could prevent the realty company from developing apartment buildings and any other properties for business purposes, maintaining the value of their houses and keeping out those perceived as undesirable. Surprisingly, it was the realty company which argued that the zone for single family houses in Cleveland prevented low-income families from accessing Lake Erie (Vale 2000, 117). In response, the Court maintained that apartment buildings should be viewed as a form of businesses or trade that could be excluded from areas considered residential, i.e. single-family house neighborhoods. Michael Wolf (1989) asserts that *Euclid* planted four seeds in the American zoning soil: exclusion, anti-competitiveness, aestheticism, and parochialism. The effect of the decision meant that high-income families would be protected by municipalities by the designation of being "residential areas" while lower-income neighborhoods had no similar protection (Vale 2000, 117). The culturally and morally preferred single family house received the greatest protection of the law.

There is an assumption built into the exclusive single-family residential district that a parent, almost always the mother, will be at home all day and available to take care of her children while a wage earner will commute daily to work in a central business district or office park (Warner 1962). Despite changes in the meaning and structure of family life--the increase of double wage earning households, suburbs that have become more ethnically diverse (and thus diverse in terms of household structure, i.e., more likely to contain extended families, same-sex couples, and non-conjugal family members), and

commuting patterns that rely less on transportation to central business districts<sup>31</sup>--zoning laws remain basically unyielding in their nostalgic interpretation of correct community land use patterns. This preoccupation with segregating nuclear families is a dominant social norm that is central to the disciplinary power of municipal planning. In her seminal work on the discriminatory elements and gendered assumptions of zoning practices, Marsha Ritzdorf (1988; 1987; 1986; 1984) concluded that there is an almost universal acceptance among men and women, both planning professionals and community residents, that the nuclear family unit, living in a single family detached dwelling, is the only acceptable lifestyle to which one should aspire. Current residential land policies in many communities, Ritzdorf notes, prohibit the combining of home and work, prohibit the location of childcare, shopping, or services in residential neighborhoods, forbid the remodeling of large single family homes into more than one unit, and exclude other forms of affordable housing such as modular or manufactured units. Nuclear family hegemony, as it relates to municipal planning and land use, therefore, recreates notions of proper family composition and residential location.

Subsequent federal affordable housing policies would see public housing built in geographically isolated sections of cities. As the federal government committed funding to transportation arteries outside of urban areas and subsidized suburban development through house mortgage insurance and down payment assistance for war veterans, there was a parallel disinvestment in urban centers. Urban renewal (or displacement) of the 1960s and 1970s took shape differently than urban planning of the last decades of the twentieth century that saw public housing developments demolished and rebuilt as mixed

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<sup>31</sup> There is an important growing literature in the field of feminist transportation planning which is interrelated with zoning and municipal planning issues, but beyond the scope of this dissertation.

income communities; however, the drive to segregate households that do not conform to specific standards of family remain consistent. Municipal zoning ordinances spatially direct our lives by assigning and passing judgment on the very composition of our intimate household arrangements and our support systems. In time, federal interest in housing tenure would firmly set the national housing policy trajectory toward homeownership.

### *Part II – Nuclear Family Hegemony and the American Housing Agenda*

Private property is not a fetich [sic] in America. [ . . . ] Our development of individualism shows an increasing tendency to regard right of property not as an object in itself, but in the light of a useful and necessary instrument in stimulation of initiative to the individual, not only stimulation to him that he may gain personal comfort, security in life, protection to his family, but also because individual accumulation and ownership is a basis of selection to leadership in administration of the tools of industry and commerce.<sup>32</sup>

The first part of this chapter focused on turn of the century and early twentieth century family-centered ideologies and how these gendered assumptions were central to the work of social reformers and non-government actors. The hegemonic nuclear family provided an ideological backdrop for federal policy as it began to take shape during the interwar period in the United States: on a social level it nurtured specific notions of household arrangements, on a spatial level it provided legitimacy for municipal land use policies, and on an economic level it supported a male breadwinner model of family economy. As middle-class American consumption increased, nuclear family hegemony would also connect house building and purchase to consumer citizenship.

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<sup>32</sup> Herbert Hoover, *American Individualism*. (New York, 1922), pp. 36–37.

The second part of this chapter shifts towards an examination of nuclear family-centered assumptions embedded in early federal housing policy. A number of single family house purchase-promoting professional groups and business organizations were embraced by the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor during the interwar period. The Better Homes movement, an outgrowth of the Better Homes in America organization, highlights the connection between nuclear family promotion, federal government-sponsored programs, patriotism, and a consumer-based citizenship. The Better Homes movement and similar campaigns provide an important link between the interwar period and New Deal housing policy, more specifically, the promotion of single family house financing and ownership through Federal Housing Administration policies. After 1934, the Federal Housing Administration and other federal housing agencies would promote a Fordist regime of mass production and consumption all centered on an idealized version of the nuclear family and single family house.

### *Better Homes and Consumer Citizenship*

Like other hegemonic formulations, the nuclear family requires constant reinforcement. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, a number of government-sponsored programs and advocacy from professional business associations contributed to consumer-oriented citizenship based on the nuclear family and the single family house purchase. In 1918, the U.S. Department of Labor launched the Own Your Own Home campaign, a real estate marketing campaign. The Own Your Own Home campaign, originally promoted by the National Association of Real Estate Boards in the aftermath of World War I, was taken over by the U.S. Department of Labor. The program was largely promotional; there were no financial incentives offered to prospective home buyers or builders. The

Department of Labor handed out "We Own Our Own Home" buttons to schoolchildren, sponsored lectures on the topic at universities, and distributed posters and banners extolling the virtues of home ownership and pamphlets on how to get a house loan. Using masculine and patriotic appeals, campaign materials asserted that a man must provide for his family by "building a home" or risk losing "his patriotism of practicability" (Hutchinson 1997, 189). Masculinity and the protection of one's family through homeownership became equated with patriotism, the protection of the republic, and thriftiness. At the federal level, leaders produced how-to manuals to promote ownership and supported local initiatives that served similar purposes. Pamphlets and other materials that appealed to women's traditional responsibilities to the family and home, though in a new form as a household technocrat, were distributed to women's and service organizations (189). At the same time the federal government was promoting market-driven home ownership, modest government financing to address critical housing shortages during World War I was raising anxiety levels in the business and manufacturing community. The threat of socialism and widespread opposition from professional business organizations and manufacturing interests ended federal funding for residential construction in 1919 (Hutchinson 2000, 85). The Department of Labor ended its official relationship with the Own Your Own Home campaign; however, realtors and manufacturers continued to promote the campaign through model homes, advertising, and other commercial displays.

During the same period, the Department of Commerce conducted research on home construction, produced educational materials, and sponsored expositions on house building. Herbert Hoover was appointed Secretary of Commerce in 1921, much to the

pleasure of the business community. Encouraged by Progressive era housing reformers (noted previously) as well as the Department of Commerce under Secretary Herbert Hoover, municipalities continued adopting zoning regulations and standardized building codes. In 1921 only 60 cities had zoning regulations; by 1930 the number had risen to three hundred (Taylor 1931, 764). By 1928, building codes had been adopted by 200 cities and six states (762). Under Hoover, there was also a significant expansion of the federal government's role in promoting material goods and consumption. In 1922, the U.S. Department of Commerce joined forces with the house promoting non-profit organization, Better Homes in America, Inc., to launch the Better Homes in America campaign (Vale 2000, 126). The idea for the Better Homes in America campaign came from Marie Meloney, editor of the mass-circulation women's magazine *The Delineator*. Meloney proposed to Herbert Hoover that *The Delineator*, as well as other media outlets and professional organizations could be utilized to disseminate information on home life (Hornstein 2005, 128). Hoover recognized the potential for using advertising directed at women to mobilize his vision of homeownership. Responding to debates among housing reformers and Congressional leaders, federal policy was delivered through the Better Homes movement. (See Image 2.) Hoover believed that cooperation between businesses, voluntary associations, and the federal government, not direct government funding, should aid Americans in obtaining houses. His "cooperative associationalism"—linking non-profits with state interests—remains one of the primary features of American housing policy (Hutchinson 2000, 87). Drawing on notions of individualism, civic republicanism, and Christian domestic morality, along with Progressive era ideology, Hoover brought the suburban house national attention (83).

The organization's goals were to encourage "better living conditions... by holding up high standards in home building, home furnishing, and home life and urging 'old-fashioned thrift' for homeownership, the improvement of home lots, the promotions of home gardens, and the dissemination of information for home makers of moderate means" (quoted in Vale 2000, 126). The Better Homes campaign sought to publicize the need for better houses, improve housing standards, and allow more public participation in the process. Building single-family houses would support the construction industry and manufacturing interests, and help promote professional groups, such as architects, real estate agents, and home economists (Hutchinson 2000, 84). Constructing single-family dwellings also assumed land use patterns and transportation to employment that required use of an automobile (84).

In terms of women and the nuclear family, the Better Homes campaign promoted the making of the modern housewife who would be trained as an expert and armed with the latest laborsaving technologies, creating a "discriminating consumer and moral arbitrator within a defined architectural setting" (Hutchinson 1986, 168). The campaign built a model home on the Mall in Washington, DC in 1922 and sponsored annual contests for model demonstration houses throughout the 1920s. Local Better Homes committees across the country built demonstration houses to "to show the best that each community is doing to promote and strengthen the wholesome, normal family life" (quoted in Hornstein 2005, 129). Hornstein concludes that the model houses, by combining technology with thrift, were monuments to the new American middle class family (129). Middle-class women were drawn to the vision of the home as women's workplace: "if only the home could be standardized both as a commodity and as a site of

production and consumption, Hoover envisioned savings enough to drive housing costs to levels in reach for nearly every family” (2005, 129). The Better Homes movement illustrates Hoover’s conflation of efficiency with morality and responsibility to the nation through consumption. His vision of the economy was one in which a breadwinner was employed outside the house and an unpaid housewife/mother labored within. American manhood, which had taken a hit during the Depression, needed to be asserted in new ways. Hornstein and others contend that homeownership was in “some respects a compensatory project for the damage wrought to American manhood by the Great Depression, a goal heavily fortified in national policy despite vigorously pursued alternatives” (118). Men’s symbolic citizenship derived from partnering with a woman, procreating, and working in waged employment. Advertisements for the Better Homes campaign promoted the domestic roles of middle class women and intensified the image of the male breadwinner, elevating the nuclear family living in a single-family house to a place of national prominence, all of which would gain more importance in the post-World War II period in the United States.

The broad constituency and public/private alliances of the Better Homes movement made it extremely successful. After residential construction dropped during the Depression, as president, Herbert Hoover would draw on strategies from the Better Homes campaign to promote consumption and American housing. In 1931, President Hoover organized the Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership. The goals of the conference, Vale states, “represented a platform for Hoover’s own views about the connection between the single-family home and good citizenship, ideas he had publicly expounded for many years” (2000, 126). While homeownership was promoted, tenancy



and multi-family housing were simultaneously disparaged in the federally supported campaigns. Prominent land economist Richard Ely favored homeownership in his policy promotions (Weiss 1987, 117). Like Hoover and other leaders, Ely maintained that homeowners made good citizens. Ely and his staff's research was some of the most widely used in the nation in the early years of land studies. Besides being disseminated in the institute's own *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*, Ely edited textbooks on land economics, and he and his staff provided expertise at the 1931 presidential conference and advised organizations from NAREB to the U.S. Department of Commerce—thereby embedding their arguments into most of the housing networks around the country. Ely's former students and staff members went on to participate in the founding of the Federal Housing Administration and Federal Home Loan Bank Board in the 1930s (Weiss 1987, 117-119).

Historian Richard Harris (2009) observes that between 1920 and 1950 in the United States there was a significant rise in anonymous house purchases. Until World War I, the purchasers of speculatively built housing were often investor-landlords, rather than owner-occupied house buyers. In 1923 Richard T. Ely described the standard method of financing owner-occupied house purchases: “The family would first buy the site, gradually pay for it, then . . . mortgage it through a building and loan association or otherwise . . . construct the home with the aid of the mortgage and gradually . . . extinguish the mortgage” (quoted in Harris 2009, 526). During the 1920s, a rise in speculative building meant that builders began to undertake building as well as land subdivision and with anonymous homeowners in mind they developed the model home as a sales tool. Buyers now purchased and financed both the land and buildings as a

package. These new types of land speculation, however, required financing. This need would be satisfied with passage of the Housing Act of 1934.

The single-family house also bridged the gap between personal responsibilities to the family and national duty during wartime. Advertising played off of personal obligations, usually to the family, to sell people on the duties of war. Wartime advertising also gave a particular cast to the idea of the citizen-consumer (Cohen 2003, 62-109). The strict conservation of national resources began in the home with victory gardens and the salvaging of scrap. The ordinary citizen came to understand personal consumption in national and patriotic terms. Moreover, the planned consumption of postwar products guarded against a return to depression, something that ads relentlessly reminded people on the home front (Fox 1975). By engaging the obligation of the citizen-consumer to stave off postwar depression, wartime advertisements elaborated a message that was already deeply inculcated in advertising culture and brought out by war production, namely, that business and politics in American democracy were inseparable. The war made the relationship explicit by calling on the citizen to carry out a patriotic duty as a consumer. This form of advertising, in which a product became associated with a state of being, a sensual pleasure, or an anticipated standard of living, featured prominently in campaigns of the period. Historian Roland Marchand (1985) has analyzed the business strategy, showing how advertisements used allegories of uplift and parables to preach a kind of salvation through consumption (164-167). The political underpinning of the citizen-consumer was explicit: "Drawing by analogy upon the political concept of citizenship, [advertisers] constructed an image of a market democracy, in which advertisers appealed to constituencies of consumer citizens and won

election of their brands as popular products” (1985, 63-64). That this would be done in the name of the post-war house is not surprising, given the importance of the building industry to the economy and the symbolic importance of the house to American ideals of citizenship, independence, and individuality.

### *The National Housing Act of 1934 and the Federal Housing Administration*

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established by the National Housing Act on June 27, 1934. The FHA followed a string of legislation as part of Roosevelt’s New Deal that was directed at addressing the housing industry which had been dramatically impacted by the Depression (Henderson 2000, 101). FHA greatly expanded 1933 legislation establishing the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which had set up low-interest loans to help mortgage-holders refinance their house mortgage in an attempt to prevent foreclosure. The HOLC assisted house owners threatened with foreclosure by transforming short-term loans into long-term mortgages. The agency was designed to purchase the mortgages of house owners at risk of defaulting, and then refinance the loans with more advantageous terms made possible by its government backing (Henderson 2000, 101). The 1934 legislation, however, was centered on home-ownership ideology and effectively restructured the private housing market, both of which contributed to a gendered and racialized division of housing accommodation. Nuclear family hegemony became inextricably linked with federal housing policy; it was codified in legislation and sanctioned through the writing of administrative rules. The stated goals of the FHA legislation were to facilitate house financing, help stabilize the house mortgage system, and improve housing standards. Depression-era job loss and income reduction had led to high foreclosure rates and a

reduction in private housing and nearly collapsed the housing industry. The FHA created federal mortgage insurance (for creditors) and created new loan policies based on low down payments to be paid over long periods of time, rather than earlier balloon payments. This program expanded the number of working and middle-class families who could afford a house, accentuating the push towards federally subsidized house ownership for working families. The FHA legislation also established a loan insurance program to rehabilitate properties, created federal charters for private mortgage associations that would purchase government-insured mortgage loans, and established a federal savings corporation to insure deposits of qualified savings and loan associations (Hays 1995, 81). The program was designed to stimulate house building and to alleviate unemployment that was especially high in the construction industry following the depression.

Federal Housing Administration programs fundamentally restructured the house mortgage market in the United States. The Federal Housing Administration did not build houses or loan money. FHA programs insure mortgage loans made by banks and other lenders. This federal insurance against loss would induce banks to lend money for home mortgages. This policy design guaranteed broad political support from interest groups, such as the real estate and banking industry, which were historically opposed to federal government intervention in the housing arena. Prior to the Federal Housing Administration, balloon mortgages were the norm and required prospective home-owners to have a down payment of 30 to 50 percent of the cost of a home in order to secure a loan; however, FHA-secured loans introduced the low down payment home mortgage which reduced the amount of money needed up front to as low as 10 percent. The agency

also extended the repayment period of home mortgages from 5 to 10 years up to 20 and 30 years (Hays 1995, 85). This reduction in monthly mortgage payments helped to prevent foreclosure, often made buying a house cheaper than renting, and allowed families with stable but modest incomes to qualify for a mortgage. Under the FHA, government-backed loans also resulted in lower risks for the lender, so interest rates on mortgages went down. In 1938 Congress established the Federal National Mortgage Administration (FHMA), also called Fannie Mae, which fostered the creation a secondary mortgage market and increased capital flow for mortgages. FHA worked alongside the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, commonly known as the GI Bill, passed in 1944, to consolidate the system of long-term mortgages for the construction and sale of private houses.<sup>33</sup> After World War II, neighborhood developers built to FHA standards with two primary reasons in mind: With FHA approval, the developer could qualify for FHA- or VA-approved construction loans of up to 90 percent of the build cost and the house buyers could qualify for home loans from 90 to 100 percent of the home's appraised value. Building to FHA standards required less up-front capital from the developer, and it insured the homes were financially attractive to the new homebuyer. All of these changes contributed to a significant increase in American homeownership. Between 1934 and 1972 households living in owner-occupied dwellings rose from 44 percent to 63 percent (Hays 1995, 85). Compared to other western, industrialized nations this house

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<sup>33</sup> For the exclusions and limitations of the G.I. Bill, see David H. Onkst, "First a Negro ... Incidentally a Veteran': Black World War Two Veterans and the G.I. Bill in the Deep South, 1944-1948," *Journal of Social History* 31 (Spring, 1998): pp. 517-544; for an excellent discussion of sexuality and the GI Bill, see Margot Canaday, "Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship under the 1944 G.I. Bill," *Journal of American History* 90 (December 2003): pp. 935-957; and Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

ownership rate is high; however, given the level of federal government subsidization, it is arguable whether this rate is a positive return on government investment.

Although Federal Housing Administration programs dramatically expanded house ownership opportunities, not all segments of the population benefited from the program. FHA did nothing for low-income families, single women who could not qualify for FHA loans, the non-wage earning elderly or minorities who were officially excluded from obtaining loans through FHA redlining practice (Hayden 1984, 55). Nuclear-family households in the suburbs benefited, in a one sense, from federal housing policy, but the policies also reinforced stereotypes of women's domestic roles and the dichotomy of the home and work spheres based on division of labor between men and women (Freeman 1980, 26). Suburban living also impacted white, middle class, American manhood: men had lost autonomy in corporate and industrial employment and this alienation and subordination was further embedded through the homogeneity and order of the suburbs. House ownership, consumerism, and acting as the head of the traditional, nuclear family offered males a modicum of compensation for their reduced role in the post-World War II economy. Suburban housing was based on the male-breadwinner model with "the home as retreats for male workers and as workplaces for their wives" (Hayden 1984, 7). FHA-insured mortgages favored new single-family house building over the construction of multi-family units, and in time the nuclear family residing in a single-family home would become synonymous with the American dream. Along with low-density development outside of urban areas was the need for massive federal highway projects and increased reliance on the automobile. Furthermore, the FHA legislation initially did not benefit low-income families, single women unless they were war widows, the non-wage-earning

elderly, or racial minorities who were for decades officially excluded from obtaining loans through FHA lending practices (Hayden 2002, see Table 2). The FHA fostered the vision of the self-reliant nuclear family residing in a single-family home, though in reality, the wealth accumulation in the post-World War II period in the United States that contributed to this ideal occurred through intense federal subsidization of white, suburban, nuclear families.

The Federal Housing Administration created pamphlets like the 1938 *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods* to promote single-family homes and new housing developments, and sold the idea of home ownership to the public as the American Dream (Kline 2007). The FHA's Better Housing Program used nuclear family-centered rhetoric similar to that of the Better Homes campaign in the interwar period. In a moment of waning faith in the economy and declining investments in new building, the Better Housing Program attempted to stimulate people's desire for new or modernized housing. The FHA conducted a nationwide publicity campaign, turning dealers, manufacturers, and laborers into salespeople for the campaign, and like the 1920s Better Homes in America campaign, the FHA built model homes (See Images 3 and 4). For example, the FHA sponsored "typical American family" contests at the New York World's Fair (Kline 2007, 164). Wendy Kline writes, "The suburban family celebrated at the New York World's Fair was pro-natalist in its promotion of home ownership and the child-friendly environment imagined in new suburban communities" (166). Prior to the fair, each state chose a "typical American family" to represent the state, with the winners residing for one week in a Federal Housing Administration-built house on the fairgrounds. The overall winner received a new automobile and a visit with President Roosevelt. These

demonstration houses and contests provided family-centered ideological support for the structural adjustments being made to the economy and in the social realm.

The legacy of the Federal Housing Administration has been felt in inner cities as well, as FHA regulations contributed to urban decay (Katznelson 2005; Jackson 1985). Single-family, owner occupied housing developments that were supported with FHA-backed loans tended to be located on the edge of metropolitan areas and diverted federal funding away from urban neighborhoods. This focus on new single family home building increasingly drew white, middle-class households to the new suburbs. Building code requirements that focused on lot size, separation from adjacent structures, and the width of the house, as well as numerous safety measures, meant that older homes in central cities would not qualify for FHA loan guarantees. In addition, legislation required the FHA to place greater controls on the development of rental housing and there was little commitment in the initial legislation to insure multi-family building projects. This would not change until the 1970s. Further contributing to the mass disinvestment of urban neighborhoods was the home valuation system that was adopted by the federal government under FHA, which Guy Stuart (2003, 46-68) traces in *Discriminating Risk: The U.S. Mortgage Lending Industry in the Twentieth Century*. As part of its mandate to insure house mortgages, the Federal Housing Administration was required to develop appraisal rules and risk ratings. Both guidelines were outlined in the FHA's *Underwriting Manual*, first published in 1936, and mirrored the insurance underwriting standards that were prevalent in the banking industry. In order to define the fair value of a house and its property within a certain housing market, the *Manual* set up a system of valuation based on the principle of uniformity. The *Manual* defined the best residential



areas as those in which property values are clustered within a narrow limit. Appraisers would use comparative sales data within a certain area to determine the value of the house. The stated rationale behind the theory was that residents with similar standards of living would lead to greater neighborhood stability and desirability. This methodological structure and the reliance on comparative sales data to determine the value of a house, Stuart observes, would “shape the residential settlement patterns of metropolitan areas throughout the country” (2003, 48). In a sense, like the nuclear family, the house valuation system in the United States has become naturalized as a function of market forces, when in reality it was created in the 1930s. The *Manual* also included a description of how future value should be considered as part of the valuation process. Thus, the current value of the residential property was partly contingent upon the ability of the property to produce returns for the owner. The *Manual* indicated that neighborhoods that were occupied by the same economic and racial groups would be the most stable over time and produce the highest returns. Although the appraisal rules already in some sense included a risk assessment, an additional risk rating process was established, and included consideration of the property, the location, the person borrowing, and the whole mortgage. This specific risk data was then used in the valuation of properties (51-52).

The FHA home valuation system reflected the dominant prejudices of the time and provided protection to those who feared minority movement into white neighborhoods, which was for some considered a mark of neighborhood decline. Since the method used to calculate the value of a property and its risk rating was demographic-specific, it was nearly impossible for non-white applicants to qualify for FHA-secured

loans. Properties located in non-white and integrated neighborhoods were appraised at low value and viewed as far riskier investments under this system. The neighborhood boundary drawing that reflected the racist valuation system and was central to FHA lending practices is known as redlining.<sup>34</sup> In an effort to more accurately chart the residential location of blacks and other groups considered less desirable to the stability of a neighborhood, the FHA accumulated detailed reports and now infamous maps, and relied on local appraisals to assess the characteristics of a neighborhood.<sup>35</sup> The information was then used to determine where it would insure mortgages. Using the valuation and risk rating system described above, the Federal Housing Administration could segregate its mortgage recipients by race and class, but the model would not prevent natural transitions in land use and racial and ethnic changes unrelated to federal mortgage insurance. Although the models were, in part, based on zoning-related philosophy, new zoning regulations were not considered a significant enough source of protection from outside influences (Stuart 2003, 56). As a result, the FHA also endorsed the use of restrictive covenants in its *Underwriting Manual* to supplement local zoning ordinances in the maintenance of homogenous neighborhoods. Restrictive covenants were private agreements attached to property deeds to prevent the purchase of

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<sup>34</sup> For more on appraisals and redlining, see Arnold R. Hirsch. "'Containment' on the Home Front: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War". *Journal of Urban History* 26, no.2 (January 2000): 158-189 and Kenneth T. Jackson. "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History*, 6(4): 1980, 419-452.

<sup>35</sup> The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) created residential security maps for 239 cities across the country between 1935 and 1940 as part of the City Survey Program conducted for the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB). HOLC used "map consultants"—primarily local lenders, realtors, and appraisers—to survey and assess real estate conditions. Together with HOLC staff, they completed survey sheets for each graded area on the maps in addition to detailed reports of each city. Information about how HOLC and FHLBB used this information is limited, but archival records indicate that the maps were shared with only a limited number of people outside HOLC, primarily federal agencies, including the Federal Housing Administration. For more information, including maps and survey sheets, see Amy E. Hillier. "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation". *Journal of Urban History* 29, no.4 (May 2003): 394-420.

homes by certain minority groups, which at the time included blacks, Jews, and Italians. The FHA *Manual* did not openly endorse *racial* covenants, but given its stated interest in maintaining racial segregation to produce higher property values, there is sufficient evidence that racial covenants were quietly promoted. In fact, it was not until 1950 that the FHA announced that it would not insure mortgages on properties with restrictive covenants. Paradoxically, unlike more affluent areas that mobilized to form legally enforceable restrictive covenants or were governed by FHA redlining practices, many exurban working class communities had no similar ability to restrict access to newcomers. In the early twentieth century in some metropolitan areas, similar to blacks who faced severe affordable housing shortages, Russian, Polish, and Jewish immigrant families might not be able to rent, but these European immigrants could purchase properties (Satter 2009, 17). FHA-supported redlining lasted into the mid-1960s and left minority urban neighborhoods severely overcrowded (Lamb 2005; Hays 1995). An administrative rule change from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the cabinet level department created in 1965 and under which the FHA is now administered, directed the agency to alter its lending practices to include lending in urban and minority areas. The agency dramatically shifted its lending practices, though often worked in consort with the lending industry to refuse mortgage credit to Blacks. The Housing Act of 1968 further chipped away at the racial elements of FHA lending practices by prohibiting discrimination in housing, including house financing. The 1968 Act also created the Government National Mortgage Association, also known as Ginnie Mae, to help finance the development of low-income housing projects. A series of legislation in the 1970s and 1980s required the private lending industry to report lending statistics, such

as the race and sex of applicants, and the location of approved mortgages (Vale 2005, 170-171). The FHA institutionalized a racially separate and unequal system of house financing that favored suburban building for whites while precluding insurance for houses in racially mixed and nonwhite neighborhoods in the inner city. With the Housing Act of 1934 and the creation of the Federal Housing Administration, federal housing policy became racialized and gendered. Housing policy was racialized through the FHA's racially discriminatory mortgage insurance, lending, and appraisal guidelines. Thus, the FHA subsidized the creation of segregated, white, middle-class suburbs but it also institutionalized gendered citizenship, as male breadwinner house ownership was supported through government lending and New Deal wage earner and labor policies.

#### *Soldier, Worker, or Nuclear Family*

Housing reformers from the Progressive era lined up along various divergent paths in the New Deal and post-World War II period in the United States. Lawrence Veiller, founder of the National Housing Association in 1910, was one of public housing's most vocal opponents. Veiller believed the sensitive supply and demand equilibrium of the private real estate market would be disrupted by municipal housing plans (Henderson 2000, 49). The same forces that had pushed for public housing during the Depression, labor unions, and progressive housers such as Edith Elmer Wood and Catherine Bauer, lobbied for its expansion after the war. Wood maintained the profit-driven real estate market could not meet the demand for low-income housing. She was critical of reformers who advocated for restrictive housing legislation without providing a means for the production of safe and healthy housing (Henderson 2000, 50). Mary Simkovitch, another former settlement house worker and leader of the National Public

Housing Conference (NPHC), founded in 1931, supported the creation of local public housing authorities and in 1933 the federal government the Public Works Administration (PWA) was authorized to provide grants to local housing agencies (Henderson 2000, 53). Bauer and liberal unions (through the Labor Housing Conference, founded in 1934), pushed for well designed, mixed-income, noncommercial, government-subsidized housing projects, including resident-owned cooperatives sponsored by unions, other nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. Bauer, a journalist, planner, organizer, and political strategist worked vigorously to hold together the fragile liberal-labor coalition for housing (Oberlander and Newbrun 1999; Radford 1996). According to Eugenie Ladner Birch (1985), although early housing reformers such as Jacob Riis and Wood documented the ways in which women carried the brunt of inadequate dwelling, “the women these reformers were concerned with were usually part of conventional families” (22). Birch concludes, “As their successors recorded and assessed housing quality in America, they too regarded the nuclear household—mother, father, and children—as the norm. ... [C]onsequently, their solutions were premised on the collective belief that they were treating a family housing problem” (23).

The Wagner-Steagall Act, also known as the Housing Act, passed in 1937, authorized the federal funding of housing programs for the poor (Hays 1995). Rather than creating public housing to serve the unemployed and most in need of housing, however, “housing authorities followed congressional intent [through Housing Act provisions] and filled the first projects with stable two-parent families whose limited rent-paying ability was presumed to result from a temporary delay in upward economic

mobility” caused by the Great Depression (Vale 2000, 9). In fact, in many cities, families receiving ADC (established in 1935) did not qualify for public housing (Hays 1985, 92).

The Housing Act established local housing authorities to administer its public housing program, which was intended to withstand legal challenges of the kind that arose over previous eminent domain challenges (Smizik and Stone 1988, 242). Many contend that the realty, lumber, and construction industry effectively defeated any chances for a more extensive public housing production program for low-income families. When the Housing Act was finally passed in 1937, New Deal momentum was already subsiding, and soon housing production would only benefit military industry workers and military families (Hays 1985, 89). In the showdown over the magnitude and shape of public housing, the progressive reformers were outmaneuvered by the real estate industry and racial and gendered ideologies that were wedded to single family homeownership. The 1937 act provided funds for local housing authorities to build 117,755 units of public housing in place of razed slums, thus linking slum clearance and public housing. It further required that one unit of public housing be built to replace every slum unit torn down (Davies 1966). The public housing program was put on hold during World War II, and few units were built during the immediate postwar years. Likewise, the FHA, created in 1934, insured relatively few mortgages until the war ended. There was a severe housing shortage in both rural and urban areas, as veterans returned and the baby boomers were born. The enormous pent-up demand fueled the political logic for new federal housing legislation, but earlier ideological and political efforts would prevail.

In 1941, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) released a report, A *Handbook for Urban Redevelopment for Cities in the United States*, proposing the use of

federal subsidies and granting the power of eminent domain to local agencies to acquire and clear blighted land and sell it for reuse (Rowe 1995, 177-178). By the mid-1940s, a number of cities and states had passed legislation to enable local governments to designate, acquire, and clear "slum" areas and sell the land to private developers. Yet early on there were opposing views over whether public housing legislation was supposed to be "housing" legislation or whether it was "slum clearance" legislation (Hoffman 1996, 425; Marcuse 1986; Jackson 1985). The 1949 and 1954 Housing Acts provided federal funds for local redevelopment authorities to designate "blighted" areas, acquire and clear land, and then sell the land to private developers or local housing authorities for public housing. While the stated goal of Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 was to provide a decent home and suitable environment for every *American family*, urban leaders and real estate elites treated the legislation as less as a "housing" program and more like an urban "redevelopment" program (Katz 2000). Thus, the Housing Act of 1949 did more to promote suburbanization, encourage businesses and middle-class households to abandon the cities, and exacerbate economic and racial segregation than to revitalize central cities. Fueled by the political clout of the highway and house-building lobbies, the federal government enacted policies that promoted both suburban sprawl and city distress, draining cities of much of their economic lifeblood (Katz 2000). Outside of the Federal Housing Administration-administered house ownership-centered programs, subsequent housing legislation would continue to chip away at affordable housing and multi-unit dwellings.

Although the FHA had been a highly successful program in terms of house building, it remains a part of what Gail Radford (1996) describes as two-tiered United

States housing policy in which generous federal funding through lending and tax expenditures promotes the development of single-family houses, while under-funded subsidies and deteriorating public housing development is reserved for groups that are less income stable. Although the very poor had the most serious housing needs, the real impetus for a federal housing program came from the white, middle class whose need for both decent and affordable housing increased after the Depression and then again with post-World War II housing shortages. Federal housing policy, therefore, stalled in this two-track condition. White, middle-class and working class citizens were given the “right to housing” through a combination of federal subsidies and tax breaks, while everyone else was subject to the unmanaged private rental market or public housing. This also meant an increasing hardship for female-headed households, single-parent families, and unmarried low-income individuals who needed to move to geographically isolated areas to obtain affordable housing (Hayden 1984). The hegemonic nuclear family that was inherent in the housing movements of the early decades of the twentieth century would take a more punitive turn in the latter decades as political dynamics changed and commitments to housing and other minimum economic provisions waned.



## **Chapter 4: Building HOPE VI: Neo-traditional Planning and Urban Renewal**

In 1965, the new Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was established to coordinate federal housing policies in the cities. Its enabling legislation made an additional \$3 billion available for urban renewal and public housing. The 1968 Housing Act expanded federal funding both for public housing and urban renewal, and it added two new federal housing programs, Sections 235 and 236, which provided interest rate subsidies for low-income homeownership and multi-family rental housing respectively (Hartman 1975). An annual average of 80,000 public housing units had been built between 1968 and 1971 (Bratt 1986). The Johnson Administration extended relief benefits in a series of 1965 amendments to the Social Security Act (Piven and Cloward 1977, 264-361). However, even as federal aid to urban areas increased and social provisions were extended to include more groups, urban policy programs of the 1960s were unable to address ongoing structural problems and were limited to providing incremental and temporary improvements in the conditions of economically marginalized social and racial groupings in the major cities. There was no attempt to build new institutions or sets of social relationships designed to address the structural roots of income poverty and unemployment. In this way, the Great Society remained bound by the separate social and economic citizenship established during the New Deal. The nuclear family hegemony that was institutionalized under New Deal labor and housing policy would for decades become naturalized in the American housing scheme as well in

the collective imagination of what constitutes a proper home and family. In terms of race, the business as usual of residential segregation continued.

In Washington, D.C. the Department of Housing and Urban Development, along with other cabinet level offices were built on former slum areas. In 1950, the Chicago branch of the NAACP argued that the Chicago Housing Authority was attempting to “move the Mason-Dixon line to Howard Street” when plans for 28 high-rise apartments buildings over a span of two miles on Chicago’s south side were introduced (Hendrickson 2002), and housing authorities around the country argued in court case after court case, that the purpose of public housing was to prevent blacks from moving into white sections of cities (Schill and Wachter 1995). Slum clearance continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s and maintained racial boundaries as local housing authorities and city politicians made decisions on redevelopment. Even though slum areas were cleared, new housing production rarely followed in its place—moving poor residents, many of whom were blacks moving to the industrialized North, to even more isolated areas of urban areas and (Goetz 1993, 22). Federal housing programs were largely unchanged until the 1960s, when rent strikes, racial segregation, and deteriorating housing stock forced the government to address housing again. Housing preservation and conservation became more popular and critics of urban renewal projects such as Herbert Gans and Jane Jacobs became more prominent (Gotham 2001). In the 1960s, redlining was becoming more apparent as a major hurdle to home ownership in poor, minority neighborhoods (Hays 1995). The Housing Act of 1968 permitted federal mortgage insurance programs to extend into blighted neighborhoods and to persons with modest incomes, but just as the federal government was becoming more involved in poverty

issues and providing housing to the most economically vulnerable, public/private alliances were growing in the area of public housing and the idea of increased local control over housing was also developing (Hays 1995). Instead of attacking the real causes of postwar social division and uneven development, Great Society programs attempted to redistribute the benefits of postwar growth and south/North migration to the social and geographical spaces left behind by that growth and prop up support in traditionally Democratic strongholds.

By 1970, it became evident that the promise of urban redevelopment, often promoted by business interests in the 1950s and 1960s, was not fulfilled (Gotham 2001). Instead, urban renewal had reinforced out-migration of jobs and residents, exacerbating the problem. In the early 1970s, civil rights groups were finally seeing some positive results from litigation (Orfield 1974). The Court's decision in the well-known *Gautreaux* case in Chicago held that the Chicago Housing Authority intentionally discriminated against black public housing residents by restricting blacks from public housing developments in white neighborhoods (Hendrickson 2002). But while the Courts were turning around with respect to racial segregation in public housing, they continued to "reach inside the household and regulate its composition" through zoning (Ritzdorf 2000, 177). In the 1974 decision of *Village of Belle Terre v. Boras* (1974), the Court permitted the continued municipal use of single-family zoning, which both endorses the regulation of the family and encourages traditional family structures (Ritzdorf 2000, 177). This case has set up a jurisprudence of restrictive family definitions, as courts have continued to uphold zoning ordinances that have become increasingly narrow.

Nuclear family hegemony, which had been constructed and naturalized through structural inequality and overt discriminatory policies, was subsequently carried out through Nixon's New Federalism, Carter's monetarism, and Reagan's market-driven urban and suburban policies. Categorical funding under Great Society programs tended to benefit older cities and their Democratic constituencies. The New Federalism under Nixon sought to consolidate political support for the Republican Party by shifting federal funds to growth areas in the south and west, bypassing traditional Democratic strongholds in the older cities and regions. Under Carter, urban policy was largely aborted in favor of increased defense spending, financial deregulation, and the imposition of monetarist measures, all of which foreshadowed Reagan administration policies (Dilger 1982). Like Nixon's in the early 1970s, the Reagan fiscal program redirected federal funds to cities in the south and west. Meanwhile, austerity measures were imposed upon groups already disciplined by the program cuts of the 1970s, including cuts in income maintenance, health care spending, energy assistance, and low-income housing (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 1984). In terms of housing, near exclusive reliance was placed on the Section 8 program which provides rental supplements to renters of private housing in the form of housing vouchers. With less earning power than men and the potential for discrimination based on sex and family size while seeking rental housing, women were disproportionately impacted by this market-driven shift. During the 1980s there were severe cuts in funding for public housing, and funding for low-income housing remained low through the Bush administration. A corruption crisis at the Department of Housing and Urban Development brought more attention to homelessness but also the need for public housing reform. Unfortunately, the political

consensus between liberals and conservatives that was required to heal the wounds from the earlier scandal, along with changing attitudes aimed at addressing drugs and crime in and around public housing, resulted in the Housing Act of 1990 (Hays 1995). However, one major program that resulted from the new direction in policy--the HOPE program (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere)--was a throwback to the urban renewal projects from decades earlier.

Nuclear family hegemony took a punitive turn during the Clinton administration as Congress passed legislation seeking to curb drug crimes and implementing “welfare reform” measures. While financial and public support for public housing and affordable housing assistance programs waned, there was a dramatic change in the amount and tone of social welfare controls. The surveillance of some women was particularly punitive, as drug-dependent women were prosecuted for delivering controlled substances to fetuses in utero, female recipients of public assistance benefits were encouraged, and in some cases forced, to undergo temporary or permanent sterilization, and shifts in theories related to child welfare and adoption sought the termination of parental rights over mother-child preservation. Low-income, minority women were particularly susceptible to this assault from all sides of the policy-making spectrum. Housing legislation passed during the 1990s paralleled the shifts in cash assistance (TANF) and food security (food stamps) programs, with an emphasis on nuclear- and nuptial- family formation and self-sufficiency (for certain groups). The system of separate benefits for nuclear families and non-traditional households that was created decades earlier made public and subsidized housing ripe for attack in a growing conservative political atmosphere. The HOPE VI program and the decision in the *Department of Housing and Urban Development v.*

*Rucker* (2001) represent various ways in which the government implicated family in its attempts to regulate the homes of poor, non-traditional households that are often headed by single and elderly women.

Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development created the HOPE VI program in 1992 with grants first administered in 1993. The HOPE VI program was designed with a number of stated goals: revitalizing severely distressed public housing; increasing home ownership for low-income and moderate income families; reducing the housing authorities' maintenance costs; deconcentrating poverty by creating mixed-income and lower-density housing; and making public housing and public entitlements a step towards less reliance on government assistance (FitzPatrick 2000; Hays 1995). Revitalization of severely distressed federal public housing was based on new urbanism and related planning ideologies. However, the result was an expensive program that caused displacement of non-traditional and women-headed households while promoting two-parent, nuclear family households. Women's citizenship in relation to the right to housing has always been qualified by one's ability to perform well in the market, withstand substandard housing conditions in public and other low-income housing, or get by with little to no government assistance—though with the HOPE VI program, Congress, HUD, and local housing authorities managed to solidify nuclear family-centered ideology under the rubric of urban renewal. The gentrification that is constitutive of HOPE VI developments may also be viewed as sanctions for the breakdown of the patriarchal family unit. As singles, childless couples, and gays move into urban centers, including newly renovated mixed income housing developments using HOPE VI funding, and increase the cost of living for households in those neighborhoods,

they do not perform the traditional nuclear family, but whiteness and wealth gives them “property” in their personhood, and thus, legitimacy as consumer-citizens. This critical gender perspective raises questions about other urban theories related to regime, displacement, and urban space.

### Urban Theories

Robert Dahl’s *Who Governs* (1961) is a central text in the political science literature. Dahl explores pluralism and the evolution of the political system in New Haven, Connecticut, focusing on the rise to power from different groups over time, including those involved in urban redevelopment. Dahl concludes that decision making in the city was not restricted to a single group of elites (Hunter 1953), the dominant position at the time held by sociologists. A diffusion of political power and resources, coupled with the population’s ability to exert influence through voting, ensured that power would not remain concentrated for a long period of time without the consent of the voting population. His analysis was notable, in part, because less than ten years after publication, racial uprisings erupted across the city that Dahl described as highly stable and democratic. Among the shortcomings of Dahl’s methodology was his view of the political realm. Voting booths, party conventions, and the legislature are the locus of political activity and the dissemination of power. This narrow understanding of politics ignores the production of power and downplays the material effects of other political activity. By focusing on certain political relations, Dahl ignores how economic factors, such as investment, technology, and credit impact urban power relationships. Dahl is aware that racial politics plays an important role in one’s daily reality in urban areas; however, there is no understanding of a politics of space or the built environment as

shaping the urban regime. Gender remains completely outside of his account. Partly as a response to Dahl, in *Whose City?* (1975), sociologist Ray Pahl contends that one's life opportunity is influenced by the spatial and social allocation of housing and transportation services. Neither one's relationship to the means of production, nor to elected officials, is the main constraint towards thriving in urban areas. Every day, people's lives are determined by real estate developers, landlords, banks, mortgage lenders, non-profits, community organizers, and bureaucrats--all gatekeepers and managers who mold the use of urban space (1975, 203). However, even as he points out Dahl's shortcomings, Pahl (1975) fails to consider the full range of resource allocation in urban areas: "housing and transportation are elements in my view of the city, family allowances and pension schemes are not" (10). This view is particularly limited in light of what we now know about how gendered and racial social policies interact with the creation of the built environment.

Urban growth machine theory, developed by sociologists John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1987), places greater emphasis on the *process* of urban development. According to Logan and Molotch, the city acts as a "growth machine"--coalitions of property owners, local government, and place-bound stakeholders such as universities, retailers, and developers, promote land use development that increases the exchange value of urban real estate. The growth machine thesis emphasizes the role of individuals and interest groups, challenging structuralist accounts that appeared to reduce human agency in the process of social change. Only through exchange value on property can owners maximize the value on their holdings. In order to maximize returns, property holders persuade developers and others with the expertise and resources to attract



investment, and promote to the general public an ideology that economic growth will benefit the public good. In line with critical elite theory, Logan and Molotch (1987) argue that the privileging of exchange value over use value means that “additional growth under current arrangements is a transfer of wealth and life chances from the general public to the rentier groups and their associates” (Logan and Molotch 1987, 53). Thus, the costs of growth will fall disproportionately on low-income communities.

Urban regime theory remains central to the study of cities in the fields of urban planning, political science, and sociology, and offers a more sophisticated account of urban economic development than growth machine theories. Urban regime theory was developed in the 1980s as a response and rejection of ecological, Marxist structuralist (and hence determinist), and rationalistic economic approaches to urban studies, as well as traditional elite theory (Brenner 2009, 123). Urban regime theory focuses on governing coalitions and policy formation and is not limited to election-centered pluralism or the controlling resources of elitism. According to Elkin, “Political institutions help to form what may be called the political way of life of a people. But we as Americans do not wish for just any political way of life. We aspire to one that is worthy of us” (Elkin 1987, 110). He continues, “I will call the desired political way of life the ‘regime’. It encompasses what exists insofar as it conforms to our aspirations, and thus the term has both an empirical and normative dimension” (Elkin 1987, 110). Elkin’s philosophical notion of regime as the basic organizing principles of society, which was grounded in liberal political theory and integrated liberal assumptions regarding the separation of public and private spheres (here, state versus market) has been crystallized by many regime theorists as governance or coalition. Emphasizing the

interplay of business interests and the promotion of economic growth, as well as the changing division of labor between markets and state institutions (Elkin 1987), urban regime theory analysis contends that city governments embrace the revenue generating activities of downtown businesses, despite the conflict that arises between city officials and community groups (Stone 1989). More specifically, according to Elkin (1987),

The way in which popular control operates in contemporary cities is largely a consequence of the division of labor between state and market as that is manifest in cities. This division, which stems from the corresponding arrangement of the national political economy, means that ownership of productive assets in the city is largely placed in private hands. Public officials share responsibility for the level of citizen well-being with these private controllers, but these officials cannot command economic performance, only induce it. The concern of public officials with citizen well-being stems largely from their being subject to election or appointment by those who themselves have been elected. (18)

Regime theory maintains that diverse and extensive patterns of interdependence characterize modern urban systems. Lines of causation are not easily traced because there is often spillover from other areas of political life and unintended consequences of actions (Stone 1989, 227). In order to be effective, Stone argues (1993), “governments must ‘blend’ their capacities with those of various non-governmental actors” (6).

Regimes represent the way in which local actors mediate external pressures such as economic changes, so the focus in regime analysis is on the internal dynamics of coalition building, civic cooperation, or informal modes of coordination across institutional boundaries. Although regime theory focuses largely on elected officials and business, the role of labor unions, neighborhood groups, and other groups may be included. Stone (1993, 19-22) defines four different regime types: maintenance or

caretaker regimes, which focus on routine service delivery and low taxes; development regimes that are concerned with changing land use to promote growth; middle-class progressive regimes, which include aims such as environmental protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and linkage funds; and lower-class opportunity expansion regimes that emphasize human investment policy and widened access to employment and ownership. Furthermore, Stone (1989, 7) makes the point that not all private interests are business interests, and other nongovernmental participants are included, an example being school reform, in which case business interests may be present but are not central to an education coalition (Henig 1999).

Beauregard argues, however, that regime theory fails to account for larger structure and processes, such as social regulation (1997). Furthermore, “issues of uneven spatial development, shifting intergovernmental relations, and the local consequences of actors operating at different spatial scales are all treated in a less than satisfactory manner” (1997, 173). Beauregard concludes that regime theory focuses on “functioning rather than formation” (1997, 173). This particular criticism may, however, be an issue relevant towards specific interpretations of regime theory rather than its original understanding. Beauregard overlooks the potential for a deeper critique. While there have been attempts to integrate theories of race (Whelan, Young, and Lauria 1994; Stone 1989) and racialization (Fox 2000) of local governing coalitions into regime theory, gender, family status, and sexism is conspicuously absent. This is particularly striking given that New Deal state restructuring relied so heavily on a sex- and race-differentiated political economy.

If we move beyond the market/state and private/public dichotomy (again, in the case of regime theory, private referring to the market and business interests and public referring to the state, government, and policymakers rather than home as private or intimate versus the public) and incorporate a more complete understanding of liberalism, new dimensions of urban structuring are opened. Along a related line of criticism, Bailey (1999, 320) demonstrates the limitation of the regime framework for explaining urban political issues that are not directly economic in nature, such as the politics of identity. He argues for a conceptualization of cities as responding to a larger political environment that includes social movements focused on identity (civil rights, lesbian and gay rights) as well as reacting to economic forces. Bailey advocates supplementing urban regime theory with other perspectives, maintaining that regime theory need not be stretched to accommodate all dynamics. Indeed, recently Stone has encouraged exploring more expansive and alternative lenses to understand urban politics (Stone 2008, 300).

Similarly, Michael Brown (1999) thoughtfully explores the relationship between liberal democracy and urban regimes. He points out that the work of a number of theorists such as Mouffe (1993) highlights politics beyond markets and the state, including social movements and identity politics. Building on this point, Brown maintains that there “has been a mounting theoretical awareness that liberalism in its thought and practices is actually constitutive of multiple dimensions of public and private spheres” (1999, 47). Therefore, Brown (1999) concludes,

Recognizing the multidimensional nature of the public-private pinpoints a certain equivocation in Ekin's original formulation that needs redressing: if governance is produced at the intersection of public and private spheres in a liberal democracy -- and those spheres constitute governance multidimensionally -- then only looking at the juncture of 'state' and 'market' institutions might curtail our ability to get at the complexity of

power dynamics in an urban regime. Moreover, it does so within liberalism itself, on the grounds of theoretical inconsistency. (49)

It is important to note that “although established urban theories... provide a rich and vigorous account of restructuring effects on local politics, inattention to gender relations restricts their theoretical and empirical value” (Clarke, et al 1995, 205). Feminist theory, as well as other critiques of liberalism, may allow one to identify different forms of governance within a regime.

In an exceptional edited volume, *The City in American Political Development* (2009), Dilworth reviews the American political development literature and notes that cities are surprisingly absent. Starting with Theda Skocpol’s *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) and Stephen Skowronek’s *Building a New American State* (1985), the topic of state-building became an increasingly popular avenue through which to conceptualize political phenomenon (Dilworth 2009). This movement, “in which government was perceived as an important actor in shaping social and political outcomes, rather than being simply an arena in which interest groups and social movements battled for resources” as was the case in the urbanist literature, re-invigorated state-centered scholarship (Dilworth 2009, 2). Orren and Skowronek’s important *The Search for American Political Development* (2004) laid out the conceptual framework for this new sub-discipline, focusing on stability and change, along with various modes of contradictory political authority. Dilworth (2009) points out, cities and municipal government is not mentioned. So while cities have not been addressed in the American political development literature, gender is doubly problematic: it is absent in both regime theory and more recent state-centered urban investigations in political science.

In general, contemporary feminist urban planners have tended to treat regime theory with suspicion. Dominant themes in feminist theory take on even more significance when applied to a Fordist and post-Fordist North American metropolitan area because sex differentiated domestic roles and gendered social policy is institutionalized through the material organization of the city, land use, and in transportation planning. There is a sense that regime theories' version of liberalism's public/private divide has on one hand been constructed with only male interests in mind and on the other fails to represent women who are not white, middle-class, and heterosexual. Garber and Turner (1995) observe that "[i]n cities, where group membership is defined, the economy organized, democratic politics regulated, social interactions mediated, culture produced, and space exploited, how these take place has profoundly different meanings for men and women" (x, Introduction). The landscape of social, political, and economic forces operate within dimensions based on patriarchal values and institutions. In terms of economic development, housing, social provisions, child care policies, transportation planning, and other features of the city and built environment, "the local state induces, even though it might not force, gender compliance" (xi). Furthermore, according to Garber and Turner (1995, xii), public policies that impact the intimate sphere, such as policing private spaces and controlling household arrangements, are "inescapably gendered." Ultimately, economic restructuring and transformations in the division of labor has made the performance of gender in cities even less predictable. Women who are unwilling or unable to perform standard gendered conventions assigned to them through society are particularly susceptible to diminished standards of living. Feminist planners, therefore, ask important questions about the

interaction of politics, gender, and space. More specifically, “once ensconced in institutions, how does gender physically shape the city, define men’s privilege over women, and differentiate between women?” (1995, xvi). Home and housing policy lies at the intersection of land use, community, and domesticity, and exemplifies women’s relationship to politics and place. Failure to incorporate gender into theories of urban politics leads to a partial understanding of women and the built environment. This chapter utilizes an analysis of New Urbanism and the HOPE VI program in order to address this issue and highlight the dimensions of nuclear family hegemony in contemporary urban renewal. Using gender as an analytic tool may balance the shortcomings in regime analyses and state-centered approaches that have tended to ignore urban politics. Looking to urban theories of space can also highlight important features of urban renewal that are normally beyond the purview of political science.

### *The Public Spatial Turn in Urban Politics*

Different building forms produce different meanings, and there are a significant social and political norms captured in the multiple building forms and the built environment that society constructs. In the context of house building, this dynamic is even more powerful than the creation of ideology alone because building—and the area surrounding it—occupies physical *space*. In the urban planning theory literature, the issue of public space is typically understood in two different ways. The Jane Jacobs camp maintains that walkable neighborhoods develop a natural sense of trust and security. Physical isolation and single-purpose neighborhoods circumvents the ease and casual nature of urban life. In the other camp are those who view public space as a public good that promotes diversity and is constitutive of democratic institutions (Reichl 2005). The

spatial dynamics of politics gained more attention in postmodern political theory, yet many accounts focus on discursive power rather than materiality. Despite the inherently political nature of public space, the relationship between space, place, and democratic life is largely under-theorized in political theory, though the increasingly popular “spatial turn” in urban theory (Smith 1996; Zukin 1991; Harvey 1985) is beginning to attract attention in political science. Space is both “the ‘perceived space’ of material spatial practices and the ‘conceived space’ of symbolic representations and epistemologies” (Soja 1999, 74). Farrar (2008) notes that space is not only a stage for political behavior to be played out; instead, it is always an active part of the cast. The built environment establishes and maintains freedom, security, domination, and responsibility, and it is also involved in the process of subjectivity (Farrar 2008, 12). From shopping malls to parks to urban redevelopment projects, “we plan for the subjects we have; we also plan for the subjects we want” (12). From Nietzsche’s “mnemotechnics” to Foucault’s “political anatomy of detail,” the corporeal is written into memory and space, and indeed, “urban planning discourses not only create subjects but also create citizens” (2008, 13).

Historically, public space has been viewed in a variety of ways: as a guaranteed site of access to the city, the essence of pluralism and political participation, and a place to exhibit personal freedom (Amster 2008, 45). Public spaces are the arena in which public acts of the political can be demonstrated openly (Mitchell 1995). Streets, sidewalks, parks, and public transportation--common property with an egalitarian quality--are places where anyone may be (Waldron 1991). However, public space has often been a site of contestation and exclusion (Mitchell 1997). The public space that is invoked as a site for democratic openness is more often an ideal than reality. Cities now employ



various tactics to exercise control over public spaces, including surveillance cameras (Koskela 2000), municipal ordinances to regulate behavior or access and increased policing (Smith 1996). Access to public space is further eroded by privatization (Sorkin 1992). Some commentators argue that new regimes of surveillance and militarization are characteristic of a post-Keynesianism neo-liberalism (Harvey 1985). Some of these forms of neo-liberalism are exercised at the level of the city and development and “the idea that all of this is intimately tied to processes of gentrification and redevelopment is certainly not a revelation” (Lloyd and Auld 2003, 344). It is more instructive, however, to see current events as an evolution of urban dynamics, consistent with and not different than earlier periods. The specific means and ends might be different, but the overall ideologies of *gendered* power and control remain the same. This project seeks to illuminate some of these gendered ideologies to contribute to a fuller telling of the story of federal housing policy development from the interwar period to the present.

In the classic text, *Gentrification of the City* (1986), Neil Smith and Peter Williams observe that an increase in corporate and corporate-related activities in city centers leads to an increase in bourgeois entertainment facilities. The resulting displacement of the economically and socially vulnerable members of the community has been observed by many scholars (Kawash 1998; Williams 1996). More recently, cities have lured middle- and upper-income singles and couples specifically to urban centers in an attempt to increase tax revenue and spending without burdening the public entitlements and social services systems (Lees 2003). Geographers and urban theorists have observed a radically new relationship between urban planning, space, and economic regimes. As part of the post-Fordist, services-oriented economy that developed in the

late twentieth century as a replacement for large scale manufacturing production and employment, “cultural” industries have played an important role in the transformation of urban economies. Many cities have been shaped historically by trade and visitors; however, in a process described as tourism urbanization, cities are being built and developed expressly for tourists. Whether new cities, such as Las Vegas and recently developed resort areas in Mexico, or historic cities, such as Barcelona and Venice, significant energy and resources are devoted to tourist flows (Sorkin 1992). Similarly, in the influential *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (1992), Michael Sorkin argues that theme park cities, with synthetic and sanitized experiences, an obsession with security, technologically-centered overstimulation, and restricted speech have replaced the complexities of urban life. This move towards sanitized cities may represent the contemporary version of the suburb, in which land use is highly regulated and political potential is curtailed: “There are no demonstrations in Disneyland,” writes Sorkin (1992, xv). For David Harvey (2006), no amount of ‘new urbanism’ understood as urban design, can promote a greater sense of civic responsibility and participation if the intensity of private property arrangements and the organization of commodity as spectacle (of which Disneyfication is the prime example) remains untouched” (33). Judd (2003) maintains that cities dominated by tourism are characterized by standardized control of nearly every aspect of the tourist experience, as planning and administration is devoted to preserving places of cultural consumption. In addition to insulating visitors from areas outside of tourist enclaves, a la Potemkin Villages, municipalities are urged to finance new infrastructure to support these cultural economies (Fainstein 2003, 6). Rather than public investment being used for

housing and other city services, public funds are increasingly used for places of festival, such as professional sports stadiums, aquariums, historic streetscapes, or urban parks (Lees 1998; Sorkin 1992). With these new modes of financing come new institutional arrangements, such as business improvement districts and development authorities. Neighborhoods are replaced by generic urbanism that is increasingly controlled by quasi-public agencies and corporations. And in some historically black enclaves, cultural tourism centers on the communities as incubators of a safe racialized space. On the surface this celebration of historically minority-controlled space and minority-owned businesses is enticing; however, it must not be forgotten that many minority enclaves were created as a response to segregation. Though created through forms of resistance, they nevertheless represent the institutionalization of racism and segregated land use policies, mortgage lending, and municipal zoning.

Privatization of the public realm substitutes the private corporation for public institutions as the repository of trust, legitimacy, and communal identity in our society. The ideology of privatization effectively depoliticizes policy making by systematically excluding all those voices and interests who reject the sanctity of the "free-market" and the desire to maximize private profits through the use of public policy and government subsidies. The effect is to insulate the government policy making process from public influence and scrutiny, stymie groups supporting alternative strategies, and promote policies that favor private actors and corporations rather than the public good. Business improvement districts (BIDs), in particular, have generated a great deal of criticism from scholars (Kohn 2004). BIDs are viewed as embodying the power of the state with none of the responsibilities or protection of democratic government. They limit access to

space and define appropriate behavior, and may potentially circumvent constitutional provisions that require local government to respect civil liberties. These new public, urban spaces are akin to the suburban mall—they are *pseudo-public* space because they are no longer open to all (Crilley 1993). This new form of property is neither wholly public nor private. These forms of space and property allow uneven levels of participation for different groups. For example, some spaces which may be hostile to ethnic minorities and low-income groups, others might open up spaces of visibility and freedom from public assault for gays and lesbians (Pain 2000; Goss 1996). Against Crilley's *pseudo-private* space, Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) propose *pseudo-private* spaces, those that “are formally owned by the state, the public, but that are subject to control and regulation by private interests” (153). These include public sidewalks that are patrolled by business improvement district security guards and parks governed by conservatories. In these *pseudo-private* spaces, public interaction is merely a means towards capitalist accumulation (153). Public space, therefore, is seen “as the marker of urbanity” (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006, 152). Places for gathering become viewed as what makes a city a city, and making those spaces safe is of utmost importance. Redevelopment often makes certain groups, such as the chronically homeless, become more prominent in public space (Schraeger 1994), and in many cases business support for social services providers increases in attempts to make the homeless invisible (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006, 158). Many debates over urban redevelopment rely on a narrative of promoting health, safety, and the release of social tension in order to legitimize displacement and the use of public funds for private development (Farrar 2008, 19). More sobering still, some scholars observe that contemporary urban centers reflect

emerging dystopian dreams/nightmares (Wright 1997). Sanitized communities, free of trash and marginalized populations, and awash in consumerism, remove all memory of the past. Spaces that were once prized for their openness and diversity are eradicated to impose homogeneity and predictability. Attempts to design more manageable public urban space, including Paris' Haussmannization in the 1850s, Olmstead's plan for New York City's Central Park, and the federal government's public housing redevelopment in the 1990s, rely on these longings for more perfect spaces (Farrar 2008, 19). These cultural theoretical ruminations of urban life are perhaps more provocative than incisive. They tend to reduce urban theory to economic or technological determinism, which devalues human agency and political choice, and yet, they are telling of new modes of control that are utilized in urban areas. Histories of white flight, inner-city disinvestment, and suburbanization during the post-war period are utilized and re-appropriated by real estate developers, real estate agents, city planners, and businesses in order to support redevelopment. Reconfiguring public space, and along with it narratives of reclaiming it, is commonly used by parties involved in development (Magnet 2000). However, recent urban renewal is adjusting the contours of public and private space. Rather than opening up neighborhoods and public space, both urban and suburban, to new forms of democratic expression, urban renewal is making communities less accessible to many groups and individuals. In addition, the resulting displacement revolves around the idea of normal families and recreates the idea that some are deserving and proper representatives of good communities.

### Urban Renewal and Practices of Displacement

In *The Language of Cities* (1971), Charles Abrams describes the negative effects of urban renewal and displacement on low-income households. Condemnation, eminent domain, and eviction are cited as examples that devastate low-income communities, a sort-of secondary victimization. Even as we witness the intentional destruction of homeplaces in developing countries and criticize the practices of foreign governments, Americans tend to accept similar practices in the United States. Geographers J. Douglas Porteous and Sandra E. Smith (2001) suggest a new term to describe the deliberate destruction of home that is against the will of the residents and which results in negative consequences for inhabitants: domicide (ix). Albeit somewhat sensationalistic, domicide captures an array of institutional practices which cause displacement. The destruction of home occurs at the local and global level and is frequently caused by political, bureaucratic, and corporate projects, including economic development and urban renewal. “The elimination of home and homeland is justified as being in the public interest,” as those displaced are considered “victims of the common good” (2001, ix). Victims/survivors of domicide are not usually viewed as refugees or in exile. They are not crossing borders nor receive protection from international NGOs, and thus, remain invisible. Unplanned disasters, whether from nuclear power plants meltdowns, extreme weather, or chemical spills, are not viewed as domicide since these phenomenon are not deliberate. Although the psychological effects of domicide and unplanned disasters may be similar, and government or corporations may be complicit in failing to protect the population or establishing appropriate procedures to ensure safety, such unplanned disasters are not engineered (2001, 19). One larger than life example of domicide is

Robert Moses' transportation planning in New York City (2001, 185). His modernization projects involved building highways, tunnels, dams, bridges and other large-scale public works which cut through stable mixed-race neighborhoods. When natural disasters cause devastations to dwelling places there is significant attention and outcry, but when home places are removed as a part of urban renewal projects--in the name of the public interest—there is little protest from the broader community. Instead, “experts”—remnants of Progressive-era managerial science--are frequently invoked to buttress support for redevelopment projects. Planners are brought in to recreate theories of community development on the landscape and to develop so-called participatory procedures to satisfy community members, neighbors, and activists.

Some are critical that planners are merely “evangelistic bureaucrats” who believe they are capable of defining the public interest for others (Davies 1972, 110). The planner as evangelistic bureaucrat “legitimizes his schemes not by reference to the actual consumer, but either in terms of his [sic] own self-induced charisma or by reference to a range of putative consumers whose wishes and wants he himself can, in impunity, define” (Davies 1972, 3). Policy analysts develop reports that point out potential positive outcomes of development: improved test scores for school children, reduced geographic isolation from the broader community, improved safety, and racial/ethnic integration. Real estate agents laud increased housing value. Business leaders and city bureaucrats emphasize increased tax revenue and opportunities for small business development. All of these experts support a wave of near mythical improvements that will purportedly flow from sites of urban renewal and development. Once started, the momentum is difficult to contain and nearly impossible to oppose, particularly after the *Kelo v. City of New*

*London* (2005) decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that local governments could justify takings on eminent domain grounds and support community redevelopment.

Community meetings are carried out to explain proposed changes and gain community input in the planning process. Some planning scholars, however, describe how participatory planning practices merely act as a veil for the practices of planner and developers (Kaza 2006). In reality, the decision to redevelop a place is frequently made in board rooms and government offices; not all strategies and plans are made public.

Community assessment is a more recent manifestation of managerial social science in the field of planning and economic development. Impact assessments are carried out to evaluate the level of change that might occur within a particular community from the development process (Hindemarsch 1988). The assessment process may explore quantifiable indicators such as population density, income, and transportation use, as well as indicators that are far more difficult to quantify, such as community cohesion, neighborhood satisfaction, civic identity, and social service needs (Bowles 1981; Soderstrom 1981). However, despite the dearth of community and social impact assessments by real estate developers, municipal economic development professionals, and community planners, there is growing criticism that public participation is limited, social indicators of positive change are usually set by those managing development (and not the community), and more critically, that the process is used for public relations purposes rather than to assist in asset-based community development participatory action research (Lang and Armour 1981). This bureaucratization and specialization of planning functions rationalizes the result and overlooks the practices being carried out in the name of the common good, increase tax receipts, economic development, or safety.



Within all of these procedures, there are few parties that legitimately represent the interests of community members and residents. Indeed, there is little understanding that “what is uprooted may be the very meaning of people’s lives” (Porteous and Smith 2001, 11). These Faustian bargains on which municipalities increasingly rely for development have the power to further embed sex difference and racialization into public and private space. For the purposes of this project, the concern is that the state and federal government and the courts--those promoting and defining urban economic growth--are promoting a physical reconstruction and redefinition of space, one in which women with limited financial means are likely to feel the negative impact rather than benefit. Women are less likely to have the political power to guide development and financing schemes or access to the decision making process. This also means that residents commonly viewed as embodying unappealing aspects of urban life are increasingly restricted from participation in urban public space. There is a sense that by policing, purifying, and controlling space, redevelopment can shape appropriate lifestyles and families. The point here is not to mourn the loss of public space. Nostalgia for an idealized version of public space in which a democratic citizenry can interact, communicate, and deliberate, is at the very heart of many urban renewal visions that contribute to displacement, including neo-traditional planning. Furthermore, the goal of urban renewal projects is normally for the benefit of citizen/worker/consumers or those most able to consume and contribute to increased tax revenue.

### *New Urbanism and the Nuclear Family*

Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic of the *New York Times*, described new urbanism as “the most important phenomenon to emerge in American architecture in the

post-Cold War era”.<sup>36</sup> New urbanism is an architectural design movement that began in the late 1980s and became more mainstream in the 1990s. An early response to so-called "cookie cutter suburbs" and "unhealthy sprawl" of conventional suburbia was "neotraditionalism," a form of architecture that evolved from the urban historic preservation movement of the 1970s (Ellin 1996). Neotraditionalism as a design approach was popularized with the traditional neighborhood designs of self-styled "town planners" known as DPZ—Duany and Plater-Zabek (Katz 1994; Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1991). New urbanism developed as a specific type of neo-traditional architecture and evolved into a full-scale planning movement. New urbanism’s initial aim, advocates claim, was to reform all aspects of real estate development, including addressing suburban sprawl, environmental deterioration, and race and income segregation (Katz 1994). In its charter, The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), which was founded in 1993 by a group of architects in the San Francisco area to promote new urbanism’s goals, cites these planning issues not as problems but as interrelated community-building challenges. The charter maintains that the CNU is a coalition of community activists, government officials, and public and private sector professionals representing a diverse group of citizens and “committed to reestablishing the relationship between the art of building and the making of community, through citizen-based participatory planning and design” (CNU 2001, 1). The CNU plays a large role in the marketing of new urbanist design and planning philosophy through producing reports on issues such as trends in the housing market, suburban sprawl, and the connection between new urbanism and charter schools. The CNU asserts that housing consumers want to live in communities where

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<sup>36</sup> Herbert Muschamp, “Can New Urbanism Find Room for the Old?” *The New York Times*. June 2, 1996. p. 27.

land is used efficiently and there is reduced traffic, all contributing to a better way of life. New urbanism is “dedicated to *reclaiming* [emphasis added] our homes, blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, districts, towns, cities, regions, and environment” (2).

As farmland was increasingly sold to private developers, urban centers were becoming more deteriorated or segregated, and there were few places where families could afford to live that did not involve long commutes to jobs in the city, new urbanists sought to restore towns into communities with neighborhoods and distinct districts. This could be achieved by working against suburban sprawl and infilling older, obsolete suburban and urban areas with new, planned, mixed-use neighborhoods. One of the founding principles of new urbanism focuses on building walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods where houses are situated within walking distance of stores, restaurants, and parks (Langdon 1994). High-density housing with a mix of apartments, condos, and single-detached houses are supposed to encourage social diversity, provide more public spaces, and promote a sense of community. The new urbanists’ ideal is the pre-World War II American city: a place with a "traditional" main street and city center. Although precious neighborhoods with white picket fences are the stereotypical image of the neo-traditional planned community, advocates of new urbanism maintain that local architecture styles are observed in design (Langdon 1994).

Ellin (1996) argues that neo-traditional towns became successful on the marketplace in the 1980s and 1990s due to their romantic character and by appealing to nostalgic notions of 1920s era American life. By the mid- to late-1990s, new urbanists had begun to develop a wider range of projects, including within inner city neighborhoods and in developing countries (Dunlop 1997). Advocates of new urbanism,

maintain that the design and planning movement go beyond nostalgia and address land use problems, automobile-driven lack of mobility, and alternative zoning ordinances which emphasize multiuse and higher density developments (Talen 2000). Other critics of new urbanism argue that the success of new urbanist projects should be evaluated by their results, not simply their lofty aims (Krieger 1998). Talen (2000) was more positive in her evaluation of new urbanism, even though she recognized problems with implementation. In general, she argues that the underlying framework is sound and reflects a long-standing and history-based reformist perspective on urban problems and their solutions. New urbanists claim to have promoted governance structures for their developments that differ from those typical of planned urban developments or post-war master planned communities. Furthermore, they advocate for participatory community planning. By the end of the 1990s, new urbanist influence had extended to the ways private-public partnerships were institutionally and legally structured in federal urban development and renewal projects. New urbanist principles were utilized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's affordable housing developments, including the HOPE VI public housing redevelopment scheme (Dunlop 1997).

More recently, social scientists have begun to investigate the relationships between design, the built environment, human behavior, and sense of place in new urbanism developments, with mixed results (Ford 1999). Geographers who focus on equitable social-spatial relations have been particularly critical of new urbanist philosophy (Till 1993). Dowling (1998) argues that neo-traditionalism—a set of conservative reactions to current economic and social changes that upholds ideas of the past solutions to problems of the present—is changing American urban and suburban

areas. The extent to which social and economic segregation has been successfully addressed through new urbanist planning remains questionable. Urban professionals, Young (1990) argues, in their efforts to make that world a better place to live, must remain open to the differences, creative impulses, and alternative understandings of "the real world" that are associated with its messiness and unpredictability. To some critics, new urbanism wants to create spaces that are not only free from social woes such as crime and poverty, but from the very essence of city life. Both cities and suburbs appear anarchic to new urbanists; it is that sense of chaos, in part, that new urbanism attempts to address. Although cities and suburbs are chaotic in very different ways, new urbanism approaches both similarly. Benjamin Barber (2001) argues that "the new urbanism has addressed the loss of vitality in the suburbs in a primarily cosmetic way, opting for the appearance of cities but avoiding those essential urban traits such as class and race mixing, the delight real urban dwellers take in the unfamiliar, tolerance and even affinity for disorder, and the ubiquity of risk" (210). New urbanist developments, whether as urban infill and redevelopment projects or suburban developments, look like retreats from urban city life. They have none of the elements that make cities lively and interesting places in which to interact with other people. In fact, although new urbanism theoretically places a high premium on civic interaction and participation, there is little room for that in reality. Richard Sennett (1999) concurs with Barber and observes, "the pristine, white-gleaming small towns produced by the movement called the new urbanism are a world apart from the everyday disorders of life; the kitsch, the pseudo-small towns now being built as an antidote to suburban sprawl provided no home for differences-- differences of the sort that lead to conflicts of ethnicity, race, class, and/or sexual

preference” (278). Even as new urbanism rejects the chaos of the city, it has the appearance of supporting democratic ideals and multiculturalism. In reality, it fails to make any substantive connection between democracy and the built environment and ignores the ways in which sex and racial difference is played out through urban design and the built environment.

Neil Smith (1995) argues that the 1990s marked a shift in urbanism from the Keynesian and New Deal economics towards a revanchist urban regime. Smith adopts the 1890s French concept of *revanche*, loosely translated as revenge, to express the current backlash that is occurring in the United States against liberal urban policy (1995, 185). Smith says “as critics around the world understand, the decline and fall of Keynesian interventionism--from the welfare state and urban policy to state centered models of international development--marks a structured political adjustment toward what is widely understood as neo-liberalism” (1995, 197). Smith points out that with the growing illegitimacy of the state, “the market and intense policing operate simultaneously and most intensely” (199). Market forces, along with the drive for order and control, are becoming even more powerful. Although Smith is specifically looking at New York City, he asserts that the new urban revanchist trend is not isolated to New York City or even within urban centers (186). He argues that the middle-class, politicians, and property developers are attempting to assert control over cities as a response to social ills that have characterized the last few decades in American cities, such as homelessness, crime, and noise (12). He adds, these “deep-seated fears and insecurities are enlisted to fuse and conflate physical and psychic safety” so that “the symptoms are the cause” (188). In essence, crime, violence, poverty, and homelessness are blamed for the

dysfunction in cities, rather than viewing those characteristics as an outgrowth of problems already existing within the city and society in general. Whereas racism and oppression were once seen as the root cause of many social problems, a century later, racism, sexism, and poverty are being removed from the table as points of discussion in social policy debates. As a result of the social problems that remain, in order to instill order and assert control, some feel that “sanitizing the landscape will reverse the city’s decline, opening up the possibility of a glorious new urban destiny” (1995, 188). Aside from the impact on social policy, sanitization of the cities comes in the form of local quality of living legislation, such as banning panhandling or preventing homeless from sleeping in certain public spaces. Smith’s characterizations of new urban revanchism do not directly parallel his critique of architectural new urbanism, but he asserts that “the impulse that gave rise to the nostalgic traditionalism of so-called new urban architecture, every bit a struggle to reclaim a lost bourgeois order, is shared with the new urban revanchism” (186). The revenge of new urbanism is not manifest in the same way as new urban revanchism. Whereas New York City had the Giuliani administration and the attack on the homeless, prostitutes, graffiti artists, and unruly youths, architectural new urbanism represents escapism in the form of cookie cutter traditional-styled homes, excessive codes and regulations, and an image that is more exclusionary than welcoming (194).

While Smith’s observations are important and insightful, and urban scholars certainly have reason to worry, historically, revanchist ideology has been present for women and minorities attempting to obtain affordable housing absent of government policing. The severe societal costs of welfare state dismantling and the privatization of

housing policy about which Smith warns should not be underestimated; however, focusing on recent neo-liberal reforms and redevelopment governance practices as the object of criticism obscures nuclear-family hegemony. These critiques divert attention away from understanding the multiple ways in which United States' housing policy has reproduced class, race, and gender bias since the federal government was involved in housing. The privatization and corporatism to which scholars of neo-liberalism tend to refer has always been a part of federal housing policy.

New urbanism also maintains that it is sensitive to local culture and vernacular architecture. It has adopted the language of critical urban planning, with its focus on creating dynamic public spaces and human scale architecture. In fact, in its attempts to appeal to local history and culture, new urbanism's literature is highly racialized. For example, in "Principles for Inner City Neighborhood Design: Creating Communities of Opportunity"--a joint venture of The Congress for the New Urbanism and the Department of Housing and Urban Development--the porch as a housing design element is conceptualized as analogous to jazz:

If we investigated the origins of Jazz, we would understand the origins of the Porch. The porch represents the fusion of European and African architectural expression. The porch serves a dual purpose: the vestibule to the occupant's private residence, and the occupant's vestibule to the street. Perhaps Architects, Designers, Planners and Owners should use the science of Ethnomusicology for inspiration when revitalizing inner city communities. (27)<sup>37</sup>

These planners and architects who claim the porch as a mixture of European and African architectural expression are articulating a curious revisionist history of the American

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<sup>37</sup> "Principles for Inner City Neighborhood Design: Creating Communities of Opportunity," Department of Housing and Urban Development, <http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/principles.pdf> (Accessed February 2, 2003).



single family house. Combining the idea of the porch with Afro-Caribbean heritage on the one hand, feeds into the stereotype that only minorities utilize affordable housing, and on the other, attempts to re-appropriate symbols of Afro-Caribbean culture for civic and consumer consumption. New urbanist advocates may be aware that “urban renewal” has become understood as the synonym for “black removal” in some urban communities. Nuclear family hegemony is expressed through the single family house, and in this case, the front porch takes on new meaning. Sennett concludes (1999), this type of “identity talk... leads to isolation rather than interaction” (278). In general, the imagery of new urbanism’s neo-traditional architecture harkens back to a time when sex differentiated roles and racial segregation was well defined. That new urbanism gained such widespread popularity and the federal government would redirect significant financing to programs based on neo-traditional design, speaks to the extent to which gendered and racial elements still exist in American culture and policy prescriptions viewed as neutral and legitimate.

### *HOPE VI as Gendered Urban Renewal*

As federal funding cuts led municipalities to rely more on property tax revenues, cities have become more dependent on and subsidizers of the real estate market through public giveaways of land, zoning policies, city planning commissions, and subsidies that funnel tax dollars to developers. The state facilitates this process by clearing the land, improving streets and utility hook-ups, and providing parks, libraries, new police stations, and schools. HOPE VI, one feature of this trend, shifted public housing to the market through privatization of management, vouchers in the housing market, and mixed income developments financed by public private partnerships that use tax dollars to subsidize

private developers. A key 1995 revision eliminated one-to-one replacement, so residents could be displaced without guarantee of return to new or rehabbed units. Public housing was one of the few remaining policy obstacles to gentrification, and this revision eliminated a significant barrier, opening up public housing sites to large scale private market-rate development (Hackworth 2007). The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 further institutionalized the rollback of federal support for public housing by requiring reconstructed sites to have a mix of incomes with no more than 40 percent of residents considered “poor,” strict work requirements, expanded reasons to terminate leases, and limited relocation rights (Ranny and Wright 2004, 15). The major housing-related elements of the 1998 legislation included increased use of vouchers and Section 8 certificates, increased local and private control over housing, encouraged more house ownership, and theoretically integrated social services into low-income housing planning. While the additional social services and service coordination funding was welcomed by many low-income communities, many of the other provisions in the legislation had a disproportionate negative impact on women, particularly those affected by urban renewal programs that involved displacement. Households impacted by public housing demolition and relocation might be eligible for housing vouchers; however, since *source of income* is not a federally protected fair housing class, there is no guarantee that residents being displaced could obtain market rental housing with the vouchers. Even without displacement, the increased use of housing vouchers as a replacement for affordable housing production meant that more households were forced to seek housing on the open rental market. Far more difficult is the loss of kinship networks that non-traditional households rely on in low- and moderate-income

neighborhoods and in affordable housing communities for child care, emergency cash assistance, and other basic needs. These household forms and networks of care—whether extended family, “other-mothers,” neighbors, community based organizations, or church members—exist alongside traditional families; they provide social cohesion and constitute important, intentional support networks. Housing policy that leads to widespread neighborhood transitions and displacement undermines these networks of support that are crucial resistance-building and survival techniques for many non-nuclear family households.

Research has shown that family-centered political rhetoric escalated between 1984 and 2000 (Elder and Green 2006). While both parties invoked the family as part of their ideological agenda, it was to buttress different policy endeavors (2006). Suzanne Mettler points out that through the 1998 welfare reform, both Congress and the President acted to further firm up divided gendered citizenship (1998, 226). She argues that the move away from the neutral, federal entitlement of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) to state controlled TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) signaled a new type of intergovernmental relationships, one in which the gendered nature of the New Deal administrative state further embodied sex differentiated citizenship (227). It is important to note that AFDC, however, also had state-determined elements. R. Claire Snyder (2003) points out that the family-centered theories of Galston, President Clinton’s deputy assistant for domestic policy, were startlingly close to that of members of the Christian Right, including James Dobson and David Blankenhorn (157). It was within the Democratic administration that women’s gendered citizenship took a punitive turn in the realm of affordable housing.

Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development created the HOPE VI program in 1992 with grants first administered in 1993 to provide a flexible source of support for investments in public housing developments and their residents. The HOPE VI program was conceived after a three-year U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) study was commissioned by Congress to focus on the problems of severely distressed public housing (FitzPatrick 2000, 435).<sup>38</sup> The commission found that traditional, large-scale public housing projects failed to provide adequate housing and were very expensive to maintain (2000, 435). The HOPE VI program was designed with a number of stated goals: revitalizing severely distressed public housing; increasing home ownership for low-income and moderate-income *families*; reducing the housing authorities' maintenance costs; deconcentrating poverty by creating mixed income and lower density housing; and making public housing and public entitlements a step towards less reliance on government assistance (HUD 1999). In order to implement this new program, one that would replace severely distressed public housing and replace it with mixed income, mixed use properties, HUD collaborated with the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), to develop their "Principles for the Inner City Neighborhood Design."<sup>39</sup> To obtain funding, local municipal housing authorities would submit a proposal to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a HOPE VI grant which HUD evaluated based on the following elements: "level of obsolescence of the current project, consultation and cooperation with residents, density and income mix

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<sup>38</sup> See also, The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "An Historical Baseline Assessment of HOPE VI," <http://www.huduser.org/publications/pubasst/hopevi.html> (Accessed August 2, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> "Creating Communities of Opportunity: HOPE VI and the New Urbanism," A Collaboration of the Congress of the New Urbanism and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, <http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/principles.pdf> (Accessed May 14, 2005).

of the proposed project, leveraging of outside resources, family self-sufficiency plans for residents, size of new development, and the need for funding” (HUD 2001). Other conditions that were considered included potential for success and proof that the housing authority sent out notices to tenants and held at least one meeting about possible changes. From 1993 to 2000, the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded nearly \$4 billion to local housing authorities to fund demolition, planning, and revitalization through HOPE VI (HUD 2001). However, the result was an expensive program that displaced large numbers of low-income households in order to make room for income-stable families. With the HOPE VI program, Congress, HUD, and local housing authorities promoted nuclear family-centered ideology under the rubric of new urbanism and urban renewal.

The rehabilitation of severely distressed housing projects requires relocation for households living in properties slated for demolition. Since 1996, although the local housing authorities were required to increase funding through private investment, this necessitates setting aside a large portion of the new or renovated housing for middle-income families, leaving many low-income families, and especially single women, locked out of the new program. These attempts to integrate market rate housing with public housing limits the amount of available space for low-income households and the emphasis on homeownership means that fewer women will be able to access the new properties (NLIHC 2000). Advocates of the HOPE VI program assert that mixed income housing will deconcentrate poverty in the poorest neighborhoods of inner cities and bring in residents with higher incomes, leading to healthier and more stable communities (FitzPatrick 2000). However, just as many other HUD programs historically have

developed differently in relation to housing blacks, other minority racial groups, whites, and lower versus middle-income families, so too does HOPE VI. Since the Department of Housing and Urban Development is committed to deconcentrating poverty, many of the poorest families must relocate to new neighborhoods. Generally what happens when a housing project receives a HOPE VI grant from HUD is that only 30 percent of the original residents are permitted to return after renovation, as a large portion is set aside as market-rate housing. Since 1996, although the local housing authorities were required to increase funding through private investment, which necessitates setting aside a large portion of the new or renovated housing for middle-income families, many low-income families, and especially single women, are locked out of the new program (FitzPatrick 2000). These attempts to integrate market rate housing with public housing limits the number of available space for low-income households and the emphasis on home-ownership means that fewer women will be able to access the new properties. In addition, when HOPE VI was first funded, 20 percent of the total budget was reserved for resident relocation and on-site services for residents able to return. The community services available included job and vocational training, drug treatment, and remedial education. The theory behind the community services funding is to increase the likelihood that households will be able to move towards self-sufficiency (FitzPatrick 2000). To make matters even worse for lowest-income families, starting in 1999, in an effort to mix incomes in public housing projects, public housing authorities were no longer required to accept only the poorest tenants. Nationally, the average wait for public housing is eleven months, but the largest cities have waits as long as five to eight years (NLIHC 2001). It is within this depressing housing situation that the Department of

Housing and Urban Development has relied on revitalization through income mixing with its HOPE VI program. However, only the most income stable public housing residents are viewed as deserving enough to qualify for a space in the new developments.

Although the goals of HOPE VI are ambitious, the program does not address the more systemic problem of poverty. The HOPE VI program may ultimately create an even larger housing crisis because as more low-income housing projects have been demolished low-income households are left with fewer affordable housing options. The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard reported in 2001 that severe housing problems remain “in part because of the dwindling supply of unsubsidized units affordable to very low-income households” (25).<sup>40</sup> The Joint Center reports that the loss of even more units because of rent increases or demolition has intensified the problem. The forecast is bleaker in the subsidized housing market. Landlords with properties in desirable areas have been taking advantage of opting out federal programs for market rentals. Properties with long term agreements with HUD began expiring in the 1980s when appropriations was low, and now nearly 10-15 percent of existing long term contracts are set to expire in three years (26). For low-income tenants with housing vouchers, the situation is not much better. In 1994, over one in eight households with vouchers had to return them partly because they could not find landlords to accept the vouchers (26). Finally, the Joint Center reports that even though there is the demand for more housing, there are more properties slated for demolition. The number of units that are supposed to be rebuilt or rehabbed cannot meet the housing demand (26). Although working poor homeowners and renters are struggling, they have less of a burden to

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<sup>40</sup> Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, “State of the Nation’s Housing: 2001,” <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu> (Accessed December 1, 2007).

shoulder than the lowest income group. Nationally, the average wait for public housing is eleven months, but the largest cities have waits as long as five to eight years (NLIHC 2001, 1).

Advocates of the HOPE VI program claim that mixed income housing units will deconcentrate poverty in the poorest neighborhoods of inner cities, but relocating residents has a number of negative side effects. Recent studies demonstrate that relocating the poorest residents of a city is not deconcentrating poverty. The Urban Institute conducted a study of families relocating through the HOPE VI program and prepared the report “HOPE VI and Section 8: Spatial Patters in Relocation” for HUD. The study showed that “in some places not much deconcentration is taking place--that too many of the relocatees wind up in other seriously distressed high-poverty neighborhoods not far from the original site” (1). Other former residents are moving to other very poor neighborhoods and may actually destabilize those neighborhoods (1). In the District of Columbia, the HOPE VI program has been criticized by housing advocates and Maryland State politicians for moving poor, African American families across the District line into Prince Georges County, Maryland, where changing demographics are already taxing state resources creating fragile communities. Therefore, income-mixing and deconcentration of poverty--one of the primary goals of the HOPE VI project--seems to lead, not to revitalization, but to higher concentrations of poverty in other areas.

In Chicago, from 1995 to 2002, nearly 50 percent of families forced to relocate with housing vouchers moved to “high-poverty” neighborhoods (Wilén 2008). Researchers predict 12–20 percent of former CHA high-rise residents will be able to relocate to new mixed-income developments (Wilén and Nayak 2006). Projected



replacement units do not equal those demolished. Mixed-income developments are designed to be one-third “affordable” (household income of 80–120 percent of metropolitan area median income of \$75,000 a year), one-third market rate, and one-third public housing units. Also, the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Reform Act codifies exclusion and policing of low-income tenants in HOPE VI mixed-income developments, demarcating the “deserving” from “undeserving poor” by excluding those with recent felony records, CHA lease noncompliance, failure to work or be in a qualified education or training program or verified job search (Wilén and Nayak 2006). Under the One Strike rule, tenants can be evicted if a family member commits a criminal offense on or off public housing property or violates special behavior rules. As HOPE VI reached the end of its first decade, critics argued that the policy had made things worse for many public housing residents. Far fewer units had been built than were lost under the policy, and few residents had returned to their communities refashioned as mixed income. Residents suffered the trauma of dislocation, some numerous times (Smith 2006).

The flip-side of moving residents out of the community is that new residents are being lured in by the affordable house purchase. Middle-class neighbors are expected to act as role models, and provide the social capital and political clout low-income people in need (Popkin et al. 2004; Brophy and Smith 1997) while work requirements provide the discipline. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “The intentional mixing of incomes and working status of residents” will “promote the economic and social interaction of low-income families within the broader community, thereby providing greater opportunity for the upward mobility of such families” (quoted in Smith 2006, 20). Although contested, these claims are deeply embedded in ideologies

of poverty and race. They resonate with ingrained cultural explanations for poverty and recycle culture of poverty theories with a new set of racialized and gendered claims on the city (Brophy and Smith 1997). Michael Katz (1989) outlines a long history of moralizing poverty in which notions of the ‘undeserving poor’ “represent the enduring attempt to classify poor people by merit” rooted in morality, culture, and individual motivation (9). The deconcentration thesis recalls this tradition in its most racialized form, echoing Oscar Lewis’s (1966) influential thesis on the intergenerational transmission of a “culture of poverty” among Puerto Ricans, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s (1965) claim that the “dysfunctional” Black family was at the root of a “tangle of pathologies” that locked African Americans into poverty (Katz 1989). Although temporarily discredited in public policy discourse in the 1970s, sociologist William Julius Wilson’s (1987) influential underclass theory provided new fuel. Bruce Katz, of the Brookings Institute, and others (Massey and Denton 1993) picked up Wilson’s thesis to support deconcentration of public housing, while neglecting Wilson’s argument for economic redistribution. The civilizing–moral regeneration narrative is pervasive in HOPE VI. Bruce Katz cites public housing as “the most egregious example of how spatial concentration of poverty leads to welfare dependency, sexual promiscuity, and crime” (Bennett, Hudspeth, and Wright 2006, 194). Depicted as “marginal citizens,” public housing residents are subject to the “guidance,” “placement assistance,” and behavior rules and training by what Polsky calls “the therapeutic state” (Imbroscio 2008, 120). The deconcentration thesis is joined to the architectural determinism of new urbanists who contend that the architecture of public housing shapes the destiny of poor people. These accounts leave out the history of racism and deindustrialization, the

impoverishment of residents, and disinvestment in the buildings that produced the deplorable conditions of public housing. As urban sociologist Janet Abu-Lughod (2005) sums it up, “The awful conditions in the projects were redefined as a ‘new pathology’ caused by the high-rise architecture itself” (299). Conflation of race, poverty, and social pathology is prevalent in media accounts of the benefits of gentrification for minority neighborhoods. The civilizing narrative that underpins HOPE VI urban renewal recalls early twentieth-century race literature that tied whiteness, the nuclear family, and homeownership to normalcy.

Public housing location and architecture is frequently marked by advocates of the deconcentration thesis as separate, institutional, and deviant. In the discourse of urban renewal and HOPE VI, conventional high rise public housing buildings took on a new character as jungles and chaotic. Indeed, the built environment in many high rise public housing communities was worrisome. Many buildings were structurally unsound, lacked necessary basic repairs, and contained residents who were involved in illegal activity. However, the physical structures of high rise buildings do not in themselves create deviance. It is the economic circumstances of residents and the systematic failure to fund basic repairs and capital improvements that were the source of public housing problems. Indeed, high-rise buildings in other parts of cities house middle-class and affluent residents.

Welfare and housing assistance programs are administered through separate federal offices, but the recipients of the funds often overlap. Many of the same families affected by the 1998 welfare reform have also been affected by the housing policy changes that result from HOPE VI. In the worst-case scenario, families may be left

without adequate housing and financial support. In some cases, when local housing authorities apply for HOPE VI grants, they have to demonstrate that some of the existing residents and almost all returning residents are moving towards self-sufficiency. The housing authorities assume (and include in their calculation) that because of the time limits imposed by welfare reform, many of their residents will be self-sufficient, whether there is any real evidence to support that or not. The disciplinary power of local housing authorities was buttressed by HOPE VI welfare “reform” measures. Mindy Fullilove (2005) discusses the loss of community and the psychic pain of displacement experienced by people uprooted by urban renewal from 1949 to 1973. It is disturbing that the lessons from this period are not recalled in the current round of urban displacement. Fullilove describes the experience of displacement as “root shock”—“the traumatic stress of the loss of [one’s] lifeworld” (2005, 20). The meanings of community and traumatic experiences of displacement are not to be found in planners’ seemingly benevolent designs to eliminate low-income communities of color and their schools to pave the way for mixed-income development. The racially coded discourse of cultural and moral deficiency underlying this social engineering obscures the reality of displacement and disregards the value of existing social and cultural connections in communities experiencing race and class oppression. As critics of the deconcentration thesis argue, “choice” should also mean enhancing “the right to stay put” (Imbroscio 2008, 120). HOPE VI represents one way in which housing policy turned punitive under the Clinton administration. Welfare reform was coupled with urban renewal redevelopment to displace low-income households, many of which are headed by single and elderly women. Indeed, nuclear family hegemony turned punitive under the Clinton

administration as low-income, public housing residents were displaced from their  
homeplaces under the guise of development for the public good.

## Chapter 5: *HUD v. Rucker*: Constructing the Racialized Family in Federal Public Housing

In the 2002 Supreme Court case the *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker* the Court ruled that public housing authorities are permitted to evict tenants when they, their household members, or their guests are involved in illegal drug activity; the Court agreed that such evictions are permissible even if the tenant has no knowledge of, or control over, the criminal activity, and even if the activity takes place away from the housing unit. With this decision, the Court affirmed the racial and gendered nature of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) housing policy, whereby extended family is linked to the housing unit and property interests, transforming the familial relationship, in a sense, into what political scientist Patricia Strach calls a "shadow bureaucracy" (2004).<sup>41</sup> I use this term to describe a dynamic similar to Strach's conception. In numerous policy areas the state uses the family as a conduit through which rights and responsibilities flow. I add to this understanding that the family is utilized to carry out policy and argue that the familial relationship is both constructed and destroyed by racial and gendered ideology, as well as by legislative and judicial practices. In the case of *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker* (2002), the Court upheld punitive measures that serve to discipline non-traditional households and minority families residing in federal public housing. This decidedly

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<sup>41</sup> Political scientist Patricia Strach uses the term shadow bureaucracy to describe how policymakers use family to accomplish their goals. As part of her PhD thesis titled "All in the Family: Policy Process, Structure Change" (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2004). This should not be confused with the idea of shadow governments used by planning scholar Gerald Frug and architect Andres Duany to explain quasi-public entities that govern citizens, such as homeowner associations or TICs (a co-op board is one example of a tenancy in common organization).

undemocratic decision resembles traditional clan retribution, in which families and associates bear the responsibility for the transgressions of another.

Critics of the Court's decision argue that the law is draconian and the legal decision transfers criminal responsibility from the people participating in criminal activity to their family members living in public housing—yet another example of the government reaching inside the home to define legitimate family, which is shifting and contingent across the spectrum of rights, groups affected, and policy. While numerous housing and community activists quickly criticized the decision and the ruling has had profound implications in terms of the criminalization of poverty and the heightened surveillance poor and often minority women undergo, the case has received little scholarly attention beyond the narrow confines of law review articles that focus on doctrinal questions of due process, property rights, and statutory interpretation. Those observations are important, yet remain limited because they tell us little about the ways in which race and gender are implicated in lawmaking and jurisprudence. Furthermore, the politics of public housing and the related representation and treatment of poverty issues has received far less attention by feminist scholars than policy issues such as reproductive rights, women's labor, drug policy, and public entitlements. Examining the links between nuclear family-centered and government regulation of the family unit, through cases like *Rucker*, will provide new insights into the logic of government control and regulation in the shape of social welfare policy, and illuminate practices that are often overlooked in understanding the construction of the law and social and political practices. My goal, therefore, is not to add to the doctrinal story of the slow train of privacy progress from *Loving* through *Lawrence*. In fact, there have been significant positive

developments for women with respect to custody, child support, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and reproductive rights. Rather, this chapter is an attempt to illuminate elements of the family that have not always been apparent and which remain invisible unless we look beyond the confines of traditional legal doctrine. I examine the *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker* to illustrate the ways in which the family unit has been both constructed and distorted for the purposes of legitimizing racial and gendered social policy aimed at advancing particular conceptions of the family and household composition. Indeed, the war on drugs and urban renewal team up to further restrict the rights of the poor who, either by choice or circumstance, might maintain non-traditional households.

#### *The War on Drugs Meets Urban Renewal*

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s drug related violent crime drew the attention of the media, the American public, and lawmakers. The United States spent an estimated \$4.7 billion a year on the war on drugs and by 2002 that amount had risen to \$26 billion (Stinson 2004, 442). Although numerous studies illustrate that the rates of illegal drug use are spread evenly across all racial groups, African-Americans and Latinos are far more likely than other groups to undergo police surveillance and to be arrested and convicted (Zatz and Krecker 2003). This “harsh system of arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment” is understood by criminologists as “punitive prohibition” (Provine 2007). According to Loic Wacquant (2009), modifications to social policy are linked with penal policies and act as a “double regulation” (xviii) of the poor. Economic deregulation and retrenchment are felt not only in levels of cash assistance (and other direct services to the poor and the transformation of wage labor), the police, the courts,



and other judicial bodies constitute an ever growing penal welfare state. Rather than merely enforcing the law and dealing with criminality, the contemporary American penal system has been converted into a political institution which renders social problems invisible (2009, xxii).

Convictions related to the illegal narcotics market and violent interpersonal crimes have radically changed the demographics of poor, urban neighborhoods. Despite increased spending for the war on drugs, during the Reagan administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget was cut from \$26 billion to under \$8 billion (Stinson 2004, 442). While financial and public support for public housing and affordable housing assistance programs waned, there was also a dramatic change in the amount and tone of social welfare controls. Minority males have not been the only group to suffer intense government intervention. Low-income, minority women were particularly susceptible to this assault from all sides of the policy-making spectrum. The surveillance of some women was particularly punitive, as drug-dependent women were prosecuted for delivering controlled substances to fetuses in utero, female recipients of public welfare benefits were encouraged, and in some cases forced, to undergo temporary or permanent sterilization, and shifts in theories related to child welfare and adoption sought the termination of parental rights over mother-child preservation. Social controls extended into the housing realm as well. First seen as a way station to market rate housing for different ethnic groups, the projects became associated with "predominantly poor, single-parent households, most headed by females and with boarders, hidden spouses, and relatives living off the books" (Venkatesh 2000, 65). Increasingly, large public housing projects were viewed as the seedbeds of drug dealing

and drug abuse, with deteriorating infrastructure, out of control children, lazy residents, and overall dangerous and chaotic living conditions.

Congress capitalized on the anti-drug sentiments and hostility directed towards recipients of cash assistance and public housing residents to enlist support for the passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act (ADAA) in 1988. The ADAA amended the United States Housing Act of 1937 that established local housing authorities. The ADAA provides:

Any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other tenants or any drug-related criminal activity on or off such premises, engaged in by a public housing tenant, any member of the tenant's household, or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, shall be cause for termination of the tenancy.  
(quoted in Johnson 2000, 64)

Thus, a tenant could be evicted and stripped of one's public housing without having committed a crime. The ADAA was subsequently amended in 1990 by the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act, making criminal activity grounds for eviction if the tenant's behavior "adversely affects the health, safety, and quiet enjoyment of the premises" (quoted in Johnson 2000, 64). The law asserts that "eviction would not be the appropriate course if the tenant had no knowledge of the criminal activities of his or her guests or had taken reasonable steps under the circumstances to prevent the activity" and further advised that "each case will be judged in its individual merits and will require the exercise of humane judgment by the [HA] and the eviction court" (quoted in Castle 2003, 1449). The authorizing statute was never amended to reflect these alterations; however, the Department of Housing and Urban Development permitted housing authorities to "consider all of the circumstances of the case, including the seriousness of the offense, the extent of participation...and the effects that the eviction would have on family members not involved in the proscribed activity" (in Castle 2003,

1449). The Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996 extended the scope of drug-related evictions under the ADA and Cranston-Gonzalez. Under the Housing Extension Act, reference to drug-related criminal activity was changed to “on or near such premises” from “on or off such premises” (Housing Opportunity Extension Act of 1996).

In addition to his 1994 State of the Union address remarks calling for a “one strike and you are out” policy, President Clinton followed the signing of the Housing Opportunity Extension Act by ordering the Department of Housing and Urban Development to issue standard guidelines for all public housing authorities in the adoption of the “One Strike” policies. As a result, HUD issued a notice to public housing authorities in April 1996 that called for “decisive action must be taken to provide for the safety and well-being of families who live in public housing” (quoted in Castle 2003, 1451). The notice also asserted that HUD would provide incentives for implementation of the One Strike policies through an evaluation system. The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) measured the quality of local public housing authorities by considering the following: condition of the properties, financial well being of the public housing authority, quality of management, resident evaluations, and security measures (Castle 2003, 1453). In addition to these primary indicators, as part of the security measures, HUD would grade public housing authorities on lease and eviction proceedings. The assessment system provides:

PHAs that have adopted policies, implemented procedures and can document that they appropriately evict any public housing residents who engage in certain activity detrimental to the public housing community receive points ... This policy takes into account the importance of eviction of such residents to public housing communities and program integrity,

and the demand for assisted housing by families who will adhere to the lease responsibilities. (quoted in Stinson 2004, 452)

Public housing authorities were advised to consider the following, as a part of their security assessment: applicant screening, tracking and reporting crime, lease enforcement, and grant program goals. Public housing authorities that used aggressive resident eviction policies would receive a higher score (Castle 2003, 1453). Ultimately, PHAs would be classified as high, standard, or low performers. Those PHAs that were scored to be high performers would require little additional oversight, while those considered low performers would receive further monitoring. Therefore, public housing authorities are under a great deal of pressure not only to maintain physical infrastructure and financial solvency, but to closely monitor tenant activity and weed out those considered undesirable.

Despite the fact that public housing authorities may take the tenants' circumstances into account in determining whether to terminate the lease, it is not required to do so. The assessment system provides little room to consider individual circumstances when third-party evictions will enable the PHA to boost its security grade. Public housing authorities can take steps to mitigate eviction. They "may allow a tenant to remain on the condition that she exclude the 'culpable household member' whose actions warrant a lease termination" and "may also consider whether a household member who has engaged in illegal drug use or alcohol abuse has successfully completed a rehabilitation program and is no longer engaging in such behavior" (Stinson 2004, 452). Therefore, even under the most lenient course of action from the PHAs, household units may be broken apart in order to protect the leaseholder from eviction. Breaking up household units that might already be strained in its attempts to provide childcare and

financial security can be devastating. The Public Housing Assessment System leaves little actual discretion for the public housing authorities and fails to consider the fragile composition of the households affected. In fact, the public housing authorities' discretion to press for eviction is held, by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and supporters of the One Strike provisions, as the counterbalance to the legislation and regulations—when in reality fairness is hardly possible under such a framework.

All levels of public housing administrators were required to pursue One Strike evictions. In fact, in 1999, the Code of Federal Regulations was changed and provides:

In determining whether to deny admission or terminate assistance because of an action or failure to act by members of the family, the PHA has discretion to consider all of the circumstances in each case, including the seriousness of the case, the extent of participation or culpability of individual family members, mitigating circumstances related to the disability, and the affects of denial or termination of assistance on other family members who were not in the action or failure.  
(quoted in Johnson 2000, 69)

Despite confusion over the interpretation of the new housing and drug crime laws, housing authorities became increasingly focused on using third party drug arrests to evict tenants. Low-income housing advocates suggest that the upsurge in drug-related convictions coincided, not only with attitudes towards drugs and crime in and around public housing, but with new federal housing programs that were originally intended to renovate and rehabilitate severely distressed public housing. Before existing properties could be demolished, tenants needed to be relocated or evicted. Low-income housing advocates argue that housing authorities were relying on drug arrests to decrease the number of tenants who would be eligible for relocation by the public housing authority, as those evicted for drug-related offenses were effectively barred from public housing in the future.

*Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker*

The *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker* was the culmination of litigation occurring across the country to clarify the terms of 42 U.S.C. 1437d (l)(6), a clause that permitted local housing authorities to evict tenants for the criminal acts of a third person. In this particular case, Pearlie Rucker, 63, Willie Lee, 71, Barbara Lee, 63, and Herman Walker, 75, were residents of housing units operated by the Oakland Housing Authority. Each received eviction notices for violation of their leases, specifically, the provision that “any member of the household, or another person under the tenant’s control, shall not engage in ... any drug-related criminal activity on or near the premises” (quoted in Hannaford 2003, 143). The tenants claimed that they were unaware of the lease violation. Rucker’s mentally impaired daughter was arrested for possessing cocaine a few blocks from Rucker’s apartment, Walker’s home health aide kept cocaine in his apartment, and Lee’s and Hill’s grandsons were arrested for smoking marijuana in a parking lot near the apartment complex (Hannaford 2003, 143). Upon receipt of the notices of lease termination, the residents brought an action against the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Oakland Housing Authority, and its director in United States District Court seeking injunctive relief against the action (*Rucker v. Davis* 1998). The tenants alleged that the lease provision violated Congressional intent, the Administrative Procedures Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, state contract law, the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments.

All four residents claimed that they acted within the provisions of the lease. Rucker indicated that she regularly searched her daughter’s bedroom for drugs. Lee and

Hill informed their guests of the housing authorities' drug policy and were not aware of their grandsons' drug use. Walker informed his guests of the housing authorities' drug policies and was also physically unable to prevent his caretaker from possessing drugs in his apartment. The plaintiffs claimed that the primary problem was the language of the lease provision and the Act on which it was based because "it imposed a standard of strict liability on tenants without leaving them any defenses" (Hannaford 2003, 144). As such, plaintiffs without knowledge of illegal drug activity had no possible defenses, as there was no innocent tenant defense. The plaintiffs argued that the lease provision violated due process by evicting the tenants even though they had no knowledge of the illegal conduct by family members. The plaintiffs also claimed that the state's interference with the tenant's right to association violated the First Amendment. Finally, Fourth and Fifth Amendment violation claims were based on search and reporting requirements. Most significantly, the plaintiff's relied on *Tyson v. New York City Housing Authority* to buttress the due process and First Amendment claims (Hannaford 2003, 144).

Throughout the 1990s, state courts attempted to resolve the issue that was ultimately brought to the Supreme Court. Courts were split over how to interpret the obtuse language of the "One Strike" provisions, and very few extended their decisions to account for the problematic dynamics captured in the provisions. For instance, in *Memphis Housing Authority v. Thompson*, the court prohibited the eviction of innocent public housing tenants for the illegal activity of relatives, holding that the court cannot rely on equitable principles to determine whether or not a tenant breached a lease agreement, whereas in *Minneapolis Public Housing v. Lohr*, the court allowed landlords to evict tenants who claimed they were unaware of criminal activity on the premises. In

*Tyson v. New York City Housing Authority*, an earlier case in which an entire family was threatened with eviction due to the illegal activities of a son residing off the premises, the court determined that the parent-child relationship should not be grounds for an eviction. However, *Tyson* was decided before the Anti-Drug Abuse Act was passed, which theoretically modified the lease for all public housing residents, contractually obligating all public housing residents to prevent any third party illegal activity on the premises (Johnson 2000, 68).

The Department of Housing and Urban Development views the lease provision as a step towards the public housing goal of offering “decent, safe, and sanitary housing” and claims the general well-being of the entire public housing community will be promoted through termination of tenancy related to third party illegal activity (Johnson 2000, 69). In its “Public Housing and Grievance Procedures” regulations from 1991, HUD provides four reasons for its eviction policies. First, it argues that contractually obligating all residents is typical in landlord-tenant law and facilitates better management. Residents should not have the ability to opt out of the contract once a lease violation occurs. Second, the possibility that tenancy will be terminated is likely to motivate the household into preventing illegal activity. Third, if evictions were fault-based, HUD argues, the local public housing authorities would have a very difficult time establishing that tenants knew or could have prevented the illegal activity. Family members who do not cooperate with the contractual obligations could be removed from the lease and barred from the residence. Finally, HUD justifies its policies by noting that families that do not try to prevent illegal activity are threats to other housing residents (Johnson 2000, 68, 69). Although the authorizing statute and the regulations are silent on



the issue of on the standard of liability, HUD concluded that Congress intended to hold tenants to a standard of strict liability for the illegal activity of guests and family members. Though while HUD may be promoting the strict liability standard, it had previously indicated in its regulations that local housing authorities should use their own discretion and expected that “each case will be judged on its individual merits and will require the wise exercise of humane judgment by the PHA” (Hornstein 1996, 263).

In *Rucker v. Davis*, the Ninth Circuit held that HUD’s interpretation permitting eviction of innocent tenants was inconsistent with congressional intent and should be rejected under *Chevron U.S.A. v. Natural Resources Defense Council*. The Chevron test “requires a reviewing court to first determine whether or not Congress has spoken directly to the matter in question.” That does not, however, make it clear whether ‘congressional intent’ is read to include a textual review of statutory language or the legislative history (Piety 2002, 392). Therefore, citing the Supreme Court’s decision in *Food and Drug Administration v. Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation*, the Ninth Circuit held that it was necessary to review the legislative history to interpret congressional intent. The Court contended that because of the ambiguity of the One Strike provision, the statutory scheme should be considered within the context of previous legislation. The Court also considered a civil forfeiture provision that appeared in the subtitle of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The Controlled Substance Act “provided for an innocent owner defense and recognized an innocent owner as one who either did not know of the conduct giving rise to the forfeiture, or did all that could reasonably be expected under the circumstances to terminate such criminal conduct” (Saghir 2003, 379). The Department of Housing and Urban Development argued that the

statute was only applicable in civil forfeiture cases—not lease eviction hearings—and that the ADAA and the Controlled Substance Act were two different statutes. The court, however, determined that while the statutes were different, they covered the same subjects and were passed at the same time, thus, it was reasonable to assume that Congress intended them to be interpreted together (Saghir 2003, 397).

The Supreme Court granted certiorari and, in an 8 to 0 decision, reversed the Ninth Circuit's decision. Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote the decision for the Court. While the Ninth Circuit relied primarily on Congressional intent, the Supreme Court looked at the language of the One Strike provisions, as well as Congressional intent. The Court determined that Congress did intend to hold public housing residents to a standard of strict liability in crime-related eviction cases. The One Strike provisions that were captured in residents' leases were clearly written and allowed PHAs to evict for drug-related offenses regardless of whether the tenants had prior knowledge that the illegal activity was occurring (Schuller 2004, 1190). The Court noted that Congress' intention to deter drug-related crime was evident in the plain meaning of the legislation. The Court pointed out that Congress knew how to create an innocent tenant defense because it had done so in previous legislation. According to the Court, had Congress been interested in establishing such a defense for the public housing residents, it would have done so, as it had in civil forfeiture cases (Schueller 2004, 1191). Furthermore, the Court dismissed the due process claims, contending that the government was acting in its role as landlord, not sovereign, and the state court eviction procedure was enough to satisfy procedural due process.

Citing *Lyng v. International Union* (1988), the Court also dismissed the First and Eighth Amendment claims. In *Lyng*, a section of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 was challenged by striking workers, claiming it had violated their right to freedom of association and freedom of expression by prohibiting striking workers from qualifying for food stamps. The Supreme Court, however, held that the statute was constitutional, and since the statute did not violate any fundamental rights, strict scrutiny was not necessary. Furthermore, since the state has the power to establish or eliminate a benefit, it may also impose conditions for receipt of the benefit, the Court argued (Hannaford 2003, 147). The Court also concluded that looking to the legislative history was unnecessary where the “plain language” was “unambiguous” and it conducted a somewhat bizarre textual analysis of the One Strike provision, focusing on rules of grammar rather than legal analysis (Piety 2002, 393).

In response to the Ninth Circuit’s argument that allowing the eviction of innocent tenants would have absurd results, the Court held that:

The statute does not require the eviction of any tenant who violated the lease provision. Instead, it entrusts that decision to the local public housing authorities, who are in the best position to take account of, among other things, the degree to which the housing project suffers from “rampant drug-related or violent crime,” the seriousness of the offending action, “and the extent to which the leaseholder has ... taken all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the offending action.” It is not absurd that a local housing authority may sometimes evict a tenant who had no knowledge of the drug-related activity ... Strict liability maximizes deterrence and eases enforcement difficulties.<sup>42</sup>

The Court was seemingly convinced by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other supporters of One Strike laws that the statute was the best way to insure the safety of all public housing residents. Since PHAs, theoretically, could still

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<sup>42</sup> *HUD v. Rucker* 535 U.S. 125 (2002) 237 F.3d 1113, at 8

take individual behavior into account when considering eviction, local housing authorities and not the courts were in the best position to consider all of the elements of a household situation in determining whether to evict or not. In various amicus briefs in support of HUD, local housing authorities emphasized that PHA discretion would provide enough fairness to balance concerns with respect to overzealous evictions (Hannaford 2004, 455). However, although the Court emphasized the “potential for discretion,” the Court failed to discuss whether the Oakland Housing Authority did, in fact, take individual circumstances into account (Hannaford 2004, 455).

While some commentators agree that the language of the statute suggests that Congress did intend to establish strict liability, there should still be “outer limits” to the reach of the statutory and regulatory coverage (Castle 2003, 1457). *Rucker* has certainly made it easier for local housing authorities to enforce the lease provision; however, it may do little to ensure the safety and well being of public housing residents. Since many third-party evictions involve criminal activity *near* public housing, and not *inside* public housing units, the aggressive eviction procedures serve only to displace more residents, while maintaining the same physical and potentially harmful criminal environment. Although the lease provision indicates that the tenant becomes liable for all persons recorded on the lease, guests, and anyone else under their control, the Court did not question how these terms should be defined, nor did it scrutinize the way in which household associations are connected to liability.

The Court’s decision also renders potential action that is contrary to the alleged intentions of the One Strike provisions. The statute does not maintain that is not appropriate to evict when actions have been taken by the tenant to keep the offending

party away from the unit and the facility. All four respondents in *Rucker* claimed that they made attempts to mitigate the illegal behavior—purportedly the desired effect the One Strike provisions should have—yet it was not enough to prevent eviction proceedings or to stop the illegal activity. The goal of the One Strike provision was to keep public housing facilities free from illegal drug and gang activity; however, tenants who report such offenses and make attempts to stop it receive no statutory protection. The public housing authorities may still move to evict the tenants, and based on the assessment system and the need to reduce those eligible for new housing, they have every incentive to carry out the evictions aggressively. Furthermore, households are not the only units covered by the One Strike provisions. Since the statute indicates that eviction is permissible when illegal activity occurs “on or off” the premises, theoretically, there is no limit to the range of coverage. Such evictions would indeed render absurd results, though it remains a logical next step given the Court’s decision. Another thoughtful commentator argued that Supreme Court overlooked the doctrine of unconstitutional conditions that was apparent in the plaintiff’s due process claims (Hanneford 2004, 148). But in an era of eroding rights of the poor, it is no surprise that the Court failed to consider the importance of placing a check on government regulation.

#### *Nuclear Family Hegemony and Rucker*

In the opening pages *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1* (1978), Michel Foucault discusses the ways in which the Victorian sexual regime influenced contemporary, western sexual practices and norms. Foucault says,

Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The

legitimate and procreative couple laid down the law. The couple imposed itself as a model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy. A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parent' bedroom. The rest had only to remain vague; proper demeanor avoided contact with other bodies, and verbal decency sanitized one's speech. And sterile behavior carried the taint of abnormality; if it insisted on making itself too visible it would be designated accordingly and would have to pay the penalty. (3-4)

Of course, Foucault was much more interested in exploring not why there is sexual repression, but the forces by which repression had been created and recreated discursively. A pure Foucauldian analysis of *Rucker* might explore the rationalization and systematization of sexuality, family, and crime through legislation, the courts' interpretations, police reports, prisons, and housing authority ordinances. Such a perspective is beyond the purview of this project. Foucault's insights on the dynamics of family and sex, and more specifically the modes of surveillance of sexuality, are helpful towards understanding how privacy is shaped differently in various contexts. The white, two-parent, heterosexual nuclear family continues to garner the most cultural respect in the American context.

Since the dwelling place is the primary location for the performance of family, the single family house, condominium, rural farmhouse, apartment, and other dwelling types become the place where familial ideology is carried out. As Patricia Hill Collins (2005) observes with regard to black men and responsibility, "possessing property and the power that it commands operates as yet another benchmark of hegemonic masculinity" (192). Real men are not dependent and they take care of their families' financial responsibilities. The unemployed and underemployed fail to live up to these norms of responsibility. The inability to provide for children means that these men are seen as sexually immoral

(2005, 192). In addition, blackness itself forms an exclusionary factor in hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, Hill Collins claims, “the best that Black men can do is to achieve an ‘honorary’ membership within hegemonic masculinity by achieving great wealth, marrying the most desirable woman (White), expressing aggression in socially sanctioned arenas (primarily as athletes, through the military, or law enforcement), and avoiding suggestions of homosexual bonding” (193). Black women are further subsumed in this hierarchy of acceptable identity norms. Hill Collins states that the main benchmark of hegemonic femininity is to not be like men. Other criteria for hegemonic femininity include aquiline physical features and light skin color, submissiveness, and appropriate heterosexuality—pleasing a male sex partner, but within in the context of marriage (195-197). Sex workers, lesbians, and other women who engage in various sexualities and those who do not easily fit into the western sexual order are viewed as being less feminine, and also less of a person. Black women are susceptible to this same judgment. Viewed as both sexually deviant and unwilling (or unable) to align their lives to the terms of ordered citizenship, black women have been stigmatized (198). In terms of political economy, black women also do not fit into mainstream norms. Historically, black women have labored. The nuclear family norm and male wage-earner model proscribes women as a group to a place of domestic labor within the home. All women who are wage laborers outside of the house and are financially independent become suspect; black women who work outside of the house are seen as usurping male authority (199). Black women’s mothering is also a mark of suspicion: those who are not partnered in a legally sanctioned marriage are therefore not appropriately submissive to male authority and nuclear family norms.

All of these factors comprise an ideology that diverts attention from the structural causes of black social problems and contributes to a broader cultural rhetoric that continues to construct women's unequal citizenship. Therefore, *fixing* (or controlling) urban communities becomes more about prescribing nuclear family hegemonic norms for low-income households. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan published his 1965 report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, more commonly known as the "Moynihan Report," the racial and gendered messages were overt: black redemption would come when they adopted white family patterns. According to Moynihan, one of the causes of black family breakdown was the matriarchal family structure:

At the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of the Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family. It is the fundamental cause of the weakness of the Negro community.... In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure, which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole. (1965)

Moynihan's "tangle of pathology" thesis related to black matriarchy, as well as comments on black women's alleged hyperfertility and promiscuity, would take on different forms in the following decades as the concept of "welfare queen" crept into common American usage and justified ideologically specific forms of public policy. In contemporary debates over housing policy, the references to family are coded and symbolic racism replaced overt racism. The result, however, is the same: the white, heterosexual, nuclear family and its norms are elevated, while other family forms are criticized. Surveillance, displacement, and ongoing labels of pathology are assigned to those households unable or unwilling to adopt mainstream cultural norms of productivity, femininity, masculinity, and nuclear family. Single mothers who work are viewed as amoral because they violate patriarchal norms which maintain that women should be



caring for children at home. But single mothers who receive cash assistance and other forms of public entitlements are considered irresponsible for “living off” of the state and not raising their children to be citizen-workers.

With housing in particular, the interplay of race, gender, and sexuality alongside places viewed as public or private, decent or indecent, deserving or undeserving, yields different protection from the government. Domesticity and nuclear family norms are at their most unstable in public housing communities. The *Rucker* decision symbolizes the confluence of structural racism and poverty with American norms of productivity, privacy, and family. The privacy of the home and family is a mainstay of American political ideology and yet households and dwelling forms that fall outside of the single family house norm are vilified. These homes—public housing buildings and individual units—are constantly on display, not dissimilar to the living practices of settlement house residents during the Progressive era. Daily life is interrupted by social workers, building maintenance workers, law enforcement, and property managers such that publicity and privacy is not stable. In order to reconstitute the boundaries of privacy, public housing residents are continually forced to adapt. Under these difficult circumstances, space appropriation--the ability to create and maintain homeplaces, which involves emotional and psychological health and the creation of meaning in our spatial environment--is challenging. Household members residing in units but not formally on the lease are forced to live secret lives. In some instances modes of political resistance and advocacy may arise from resident adaptation; however, even those important movements are not enough to counteract policy-drive displacement and humiliation. According to architectural historian and sociologist Daphne Spain (1995), both public housing and the

beguinage are urban gendered spaces that hold “surplus” women in abeyance until socially sanctioned roles are created for them. Creating spaces predominantly for women was not the original intent of public housing, as it was for the beguinage. Yet both have warehoused women who live outside the married-couple ideal (and, in the case of public housing, increasingly outside a changing labor market). By housing unmarried poor women in such places, society contains spatially the problems associated with the growth of female householders: poverty, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and a general threat to the patriarchal social order (256-257).

Public housing residents are not afforded the same level of privacy as other adults. In “Redefining Families: Who’s In and Who’s Out” (1991), legal scholar Martha Minow describes the tension between the functional family and official, legal forms of marriage and family composition. While recognizing the problem of making law reflect what everyone wants it to be, she argues that “unless we start to make family law connect with how people really live, the law is largely irrelevant or merely ideology: merely statements of the kinds of human arrangements the lawmakers do and do not endorse” (8). The gap between law and practice is evident as science and technology has extended family formation beyond the biological family. Minow points out a number of problems with the functional approach to family. Commenting on the HUD regulations that allow evictions of family members and other engaged in criminal activity, Minow notes how “family” is treated expansively by the government. In the case of standard zoning regulations it is appropriate to include grandparents and other closely related household members as “family”; however, the HUD regulations seem to accept these persons as “family” but only as punitive measures which impact innocent or helpless household

members. Minow observes that these regulations recall “man-in-the-house” stipulations. In those cases<sup>43</sup>, the Supreme Court’s narrow, formal definition of family allowed recipients of cash assistance to maintain their benefits (13). However, according to Minow, the government “continue[s] to try to assert family or familylike relationships in order to avoid or reduce public responsibility for a family’s economic dependency” (1991, 13). Minow’s intuition about family and the government’s punitive measures against intentional families is similar to those expressed in this dissertation, but it does not capture the wide range of racial and familial ideology that is involved in social policy.

Nuclear family hegemony took a punitive turn during the Clinton administration as Congress passed legislation seeking to curb drug crimes and implementing welfare reform. Urban renewal programs including HOPE VI resulted in displacement for many low-income households. The trend in punitive, family-centered regulations culminated in the *Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Rucker*. These actions represent various ways in which the government implicated family in its attempts to regulate the homes of low-income, non-traditional families that are often headed by single and elderly women. Although a number of legal regimes outside of the United States punish family members for the crimes of relatives—either through fines, shaming, or corporeal punishment--it is chilling that this form of collective sanction is acceptable in a democratic state. These extreme punitive measures are racial and gendered by design and in their enforcement. This collective sanction scheme illustrates the lack of privacy enjoyed by public housing residents, the conscription of households to law enforcement, and the ways in which urban renewal is used as foil to cleanse neighborhoods of those considered undeserving, undesirable, or failing at self-sufficiency—all of which rest on

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<sup>43</sup> King v. Smith, 392 U.S. 309 (1968)

norms of the proper family being one which resides in single family, owner, occupied housing.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

In 2008, the *New York Times* ran a story titled “Ownership Society: White House Philosophy Stoked Mortgage Bonfire.”<sup>44</sup> The article examined how President George W. Bush entered office seeking to spread the dream of homeownership. What followed during the Bush administration, the article states, were lax lending standards, inflated house prices, a wave of mortgage defaults, and a global credit meltdown. The article was remarkably absent of historical analysis of homeownership in the United States. Indeed, the Bush administration had no almost urban policy to speak of, other than some modest attempts at extending house purchase to minorities and middle-income families. Nevertheless, the American obsession with single family house ownership extends as far back as the interwar period when Herbert Hoover became the Secretary of Commerce in 1921. Since then the single-family house and the homeownership ideal have become sacrosanct in the eyes of the public, business, and policymakers, and have garnered near universal approval. A string of administrations supported policies which directly subsidized and promoted single family house ownership, incorporating more benefits over the years and buttressing the vision of the American dream. The single-family-house-centered rhetoric of the early decades of the twentieth century still resonates today. As commitments to other social programs changed, such as cash assistance and affordable housing, single-family house ownership--centered on the hegemonic nuclear family--stood at the center of policymaking. Family is connected to home in our social and political imagination and exposes an interesting dilemma in America’s ideology: the

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<sup>44</sup> Jo Becker, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, and Stephen Labaton, “Ownership Society: White House Philosophy Stoked Mortgage Bonfire,” *The New York Times*. December 21, 2008.

home remains a site of dependence and mutual support, and yet ownership of a house reflects a prevailing individualist ethos in the United States.

Contemporary federal low-income housing programs continue to bear the mark of early housing programs, characterized by male-headed nuclear family and single-family home rhetoric organized around a male breadwinner model, and thus they reinforce the nuclear family ideal. Although federal housing policies have been shaped by numerous competing interests, the nuclear family has acted as the legitimate norm around which policy has been organized. Both the federal government and the courts have contributed to this gendered structure of housing policy; the federal government, through the creation of public policies and the support of private business interests and the courts through the adjudication of housing-related issues, both of which nurture, tolerate, and endorse gender-stratified policies. The HOPE VI program and the decision in *HUD v. Rucker* represent various ways in which the government implicated family in its attempts to regulate the homes of low-income, non-traditional households that are often headed by single and elderly women. Obtaining and maintaining housing in the United States relies on the performance of gender, and more specifically, on the formation of nuclear or quasi-nuclear families.

Women's citizenship in relation to the right to housing has always been qualified by one's ability to perform well in the market, partner with a breadwinner, withstand substandard housing conditions in public housing, or get by with little to no government assistance. Although the recent housing lending and foreclosure crisis has raised an interest in housing policy, most observations are grounded in the same gendered and racial institutional assumptions that were pervasive prior to the crisis. There have been

few challenges, in both political science and the policymaking arena, to the widespread ideological issues embedded in federal housing policy. Without seriously exploring nuclear-family hegemony as it relates to housing planning and practices, the United States will continue to build upon troubling undemocratic, gendered and heteronormative practices and ideologies. The federal government continues to emphasize goals largely unrelated to the primary needs low-income households and women, focusing instead on the industry, investment, and community development facets of housing. Furthermore, although many American households no longer fall into the model of the male breadwinner, housing policy and much regional planning, including transportation, schools, and child care, rests on these assumptions.

This dissertation has introduced the concept of nuclear family hegemony as a guiding ideology that has impacted both the creation of federal housing policy and its present shape in the United States. The aim of the project is modest: tracing the dynamics of nuclear family hegemony from its rise during the interwar period through contemporary manifestations adds an additional lens through which to understand federal housing policy development. Mainstream literature in political science looks to business interests, political parties, urban regimes, and race to explain housing policy history. The approach I use in this dissertation acknowledges those influences and seeks to help create a fuller understanding of housing policy. Gender and family has largely been ignored in the political science and urban politics literature related to housing policy, in general, and low-income and affordable housing, specifically. The research I present here advances the literature in feminist theory, urban planning, and United States social policy development.

In addition to contributing to the scholarly literature in these areas, this ideological tracing highlights potential negative implications for the functioning of representative democracy. If we take race, gender, and sexual equality seriously in this democratic regime, how might policy makers, urban planners, and political scientists develop models that respond to criticisms and adjust policies to integrate various family formations and household arrangements? Women's increased involvement in paid work may have weakened the United States' economic and social commitment to the male breadwinner model; however, this shift has not translated into structural adjustments in federal housing policy. Moreover, as Ange-Marie Hancock (2004) observes, social identity, such as race, gender, and sexuality, becomes manifest as civic identity in the public realm. These elements of our personhood become public identities. This public identity then interacts with and influences public deliberation. The results raise concerns about democratic regimes' ability to ensure equal participation due to moral judgments, negative stereotypes, and frames based on ascribed characteristics, including family status.

Devolution and the move towards increased public/private partnerships has had significant impact on social policy making and since these trends disproportionately affect women and children, it raises concerns for women's equal citizenship and access to government services increasingly dominated by the market. Moreover, while this dissertation does not address the extent to which policymakers directly impacted the formulation of federal housing policy, it does offer evidence that nuclear family hegemony has so thoroughly saturated our perspectives on family and housing that it has garnered bi-partisan support. An investigation of how United States political actors have



relied historically on shifting images of the family may help us understand other contemporary movements towards family-centered policy. Examining perceptions of the family in the home may also move us closer to understanding under what types of ideological conditions states model housing policy, and contribute to the dialogue related to whether welfare states formulate social policy based on institutional designs, economic forces, or cultural values.

Although both western and non-western countries continue to wrestle with matters of ethnic, social, and political identity in this modern world, in the global north, political theorists are increasingly re-centering their thought on the anxiety that continues to grow from capitalism and controlling economic structures. We see many political theorists turning attention away from identity and towards how communities, governments, and the self are confronting changing economic structures and the new faces of capitalism. There are numerous likely factors driving this trend: globalization, profound social and familial changes in non-western countries, declining prosperity spurring concerns in global north/developed countries, population centers shifting from rural to urban areas, rights increasingly centered on individuals, and changing technologies. However, many explorations continue to fail to take the family and familial ideology into consideration. This is particularly surprising since global urbanization is the source of significant family upheaval and is creating new modes of social and civic understanding.

### *House of Cards*

In an example of past being prologue, in *The Future of Housing* (1946), Charles Abrams worried that federal housing policy “seems now to be directed not toward

keeping private and public efforts separate, but toward subsidizing private effort, socializing its losses, and removing the elements of stake and risk which always lay at the root of free enterprise” (quoted in Henderson 100). The financial crisis that followed the bursting of the housing bubble should force us to step back and re-examine our policies and attitudes toward house ownership. However, it seems that there has been no serious re-thinking of federal housing policy and housing markets. In fact, the recent \$8,000 tax credit for first-time home buyers is a return to earlier efforts to try to re-inflate the housing market by (artificially) stimulating demand. On a related issue, the Mortgage Interest Tax Deduction--another example of how nuclear family hegemony has led to a reification of the owner-occupied, single family house—which is processed through the tax code, has taken on a mythology of being a natural property right. Any discussion of revoking or scaling back the deduction on mortgage interest is tantamount to treason. Even while the federal government faces a record deficit, the loss of tax revenue from this housing-related tax deduction is overlooked.

In a recent article in *The Guardian*, economist Joseph Stiglitz argues that the continued propping up of the United States housing market is dangerous and confusing. Distorted interest rates, mortgage guarantees, and tax subsidies encourage continued investment in real estate, when the economy needs investment in technology and clean energy. He continues,

It is perplexing because in conventional analyses of which activities should be in the public domain, running the national mortgage market is never mentioned. Mastering the specific information related to assessing creditworthiness and monitoring the performance of loans is precisely the kind of thing at which the private sector is supposed to excel.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, “A better way to fix the US housing crisis: Government policies to prop up the housing market not only have failed to fix the problem, they are prolonging the agony,” *The Guardian*, September

Continued support of the housing market, Stiglitz argues, will make the private, business sector more reliant on the federal government and future policymakers will face increased pressure from the real estate and house building lobbies, making it even more difficult for the country to wean itself from its real estate addiction. Powerful political interest groups on both sides of the aisle are also pushing for the blinders to be put back on. The National Association of Realtors, the Mortgage Bankers Association, and the National Association of Home Builders--all of which tend to support Republicans--serve as powerful cheerleaders for inflating the housing market. And community-action groups, the Congressional Black Caucus and civil-rights organizations--mostly on the left--have also firmly opposed efforts to tighten lending policies. They see a loosening of credit as a way to redress the decades of discriminatory patterns in lending that led to disinvestment in inner-city, minority communities.

Scholar/activist Peter Dreier observes that there is a lack of ideological debate over housing in contemporary discussions of housing policy, especially in the area of affordable housing (2002). While housing may be discussed as a social and economic issue, it is not politicized. Dreier continues, “the catalytic role of organized labor and radical housing reformers during the Depression and postwar periods and their virtual absence within the current housing coalition—along with their bold ideas that expanded the public debate about government’s responsibility—account for much of the difference between then and now” (Dreier 2000, 330). There is neither a general agreement that housing is a serious problem nor a wide spectrum of views about what role the federal

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9, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/09/us-housing-crisis-policies> (Accessed September 27, 2010).

government should play in addressing it. Although he points to an absence of radical housing reformers and labor leaders in the current housing debate, he overlooks other potential ideological factors. The nuclear family has so thoroughly saturated our social imagination that any political positions outside of that dominant frame are viewed as highly oppositional, or worse, irrelevant.

### Areas of Future Research

Political context, a key product of political culture, is commonly considered a primary influence on policy decisions. Although I do not employ a language of political culture or political context in this dissertation, the concept is instructive towards understanding family-centered policy making and nuclear family hegemony. Political culture includes more than shared beliefs, values, and norms. It also encompasses identity, such as race, sexuality, and gender. While there may be genuine debate in a democratic state regarding the contours of political culture and the salience of some issues over others, there are some features of political culture that are difficult to operationalize because there are underlying assumptions that shape deliberation, history, and experience. Ideology related to the nuclear family and family status is one of these assumptions. Existing government policy impacts our perception, interpretation, and manipulation of meaning accorded to the nuclear family, and in turn, these characterizations are reinforced in politics and the broader culture. Thus, conducting research related to nuclear family hegemony using traditional quantitative tools in which familial concepts are operationalized may not be instructive. Utilizing political psychology in the examination of social identity may be one fruitful avenue towards understanding familialism or family status as an underlying feature of political culture

and identity. Another is exploring framing and cognitive-discursive approaches which explore the multiplicity of meanings embedded in public discourse. How groups frame their demands and the discourses they use is as important a factor in whether they get heard as is whether they have political voice and visibility. But this is also part of a dynamic, because how these claims are then reinterpreted by state institutions and the frames they use will shape their implementation--or not--and their outcomes. Finally, detailed content analysis of political texts in which gender and family norms are incorporated can highlight the familial features of policymaking. All of these approaches can also link political theory to empirical political science.

### Women and Housing Tenure

In the 1970s the Department of Housing and Urban Development created a “Women and Mortgage Credit” program under the slogan “If a women’s place is in the home, it might as well be her own” (Keller 1981, 39-46). The short-term results of this program showed some success; however, more in depth research by architects and urban planners revealed more structural problems in the nature of housing design and homeownership promotion that negatively impacted women. It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that house *purchase* became possible for women in the United States. Homeownership was typically related to marriage. Emily Card (1980) notes that historically there were three socially acceptable models of homeownership for women: separated and divorced women might retain the primary residence, widows might inherit the family property, and single women might inherit a house from parents or other relatives (216). In 1968 the Fair Housing Act prohibited discrimination in the housing arena based on race, religion, and national origin, but did not prohibit discrimination

based on sex. It was not until 1973 with the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) that marital status and sex became covered in terms of mortgage credit and in 1974 Title VIII amended the 1968 Housing Act to include sex discrimination as a protected class (Card 1980, 218).

Although house owners have garnered most of the attention in the media during this downturn in the American economy, renters are also struggling. Unemployment, changes in cash assistance benefits, and reductions in state and federal funding for affordable housing means households which rent are placed in even more precarious positions. In February 2010, the *New York Times* published an article related to the pervasive images of Eagle moving trucks in many low-income communities in Milwaukee.<sup>46</sup> Eagle Movers is contracted by the city to accompany the sheriff's office staff during legal evictions. The movers will either place apartment contents on the street or move them into storage. The article also noted how common eviction remains for low-income women, especially black, single mothers. Sociologist Matthew Desmond (2010) notes in the article that just as incarceration has become typical in the lives of poor black men, eviction has become typical in the lives of poor black women. In his 2002 study of rental and eviction patterns in Milwaukee, Desmond found that while women constitute 13 percent of renters in the city, they make-up 40 percent of evicted tenants. These figures represent legal, court-ordered evictions; the actual number of displaced residents through informal eviction procedures is likely significantly higher. And yet, while entire fields of study have sprouted up around the issue of race and male incarceration, minority women and rental housing—an area salient to *women's* lives--is generally beyond the

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<sup>46</sup> Erik Eckholm, "A Sight All Too Familiar in Poor Neighborhoods," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2010.

pervue of academic analysis. Narrow, liberal democratic rights-based approach fails to address the entire social, political, and legal structure in which women find themselves situated. When political theory does make room for feminist texts it tends to ghettoize them rather than incorporate feminist theory and related critiques into the mainstream literature.

### *Housing as a Human Right?*

In last decade, a number of scholars have developed the idea of shelter as a basic human right (Michael E. Stone 2006). Part of the support for this notion comes from international human rights activists seeking to secure housing rights. Industrial development has lead to a significant rise in urbanization, one which has never before been seen. As nations cope with large scale social challenges that parallel these widespread economic changes, many housing activists seek to secure housing tenure, especially for those considered the most vulnerable—the elderly, women, and households with children. Some feminist scholars, however, argue that access to decent housing would require more than a legal status right (Saegert and Clark 2006). The combination of “domestic centrality” and “economic marginality” frequently makes women dependent on men (2006, 296). In theory, a right to housing would provide women and marginal groups with safety, stability, a space to enhance one’s personal development. Nevertheless, “To the extent that a Right to Housing fails to challenge and change the racialized and gendered order of education, employment, wealth accumulation, and access to services, its contribution to the improvement of women’s lives would be limited” (2006, 298). A right to housing would also need to address dominant patterns of development, zoning, transportation, and alternative housing forms in order to be aligned

to the needs of women. Ultimately, advocates for a right to housing are overlooking the broader challenges that women face in obtaining safe and affordable housing. It is also instructive to remind oneself of Carole Pateman's suggestion that in the story of modern political theory, the dynamics of sexual contract mean that women are unable to contract as equals; thus, any contract based on rights is an empty one for women.

Other recent litigation may prove more promising in securing housing tenure for women, including low- and middle-income women. In response to proposed austerity measures in Great Britain, a women's rights organization filed a complaint with the high court asserting that the budget did not consider the effect the measures would place on women. The Fawcett Society maintains that "the government violated a four-year-old amendment to Britain's 1975 Sex Discrimination Act mandating that officials give 'due regard' to gender inequality when drafting plans."<sup>47</sup> Since women would be disproportionately impacted by the cuts, the lawsuit claims, the measures needed to be removed from the budget. This type of creative legal advocacy has the potential to keep women from bearing the brunt of market-driven changes and budgetary austerity measures.

### *Theorizing Housing Policy*

There are political and social theorists who have theorized dwelling, home, and homeplaces. Yet none of these explorations articulate the ways in which home is presented in popular literature, the media, or through housing-related business and professional associations, all of which has endorsed a gender-stratified housing policy.

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<sup>47</sup> Anthony Faiola, "Women Set to Bear 72% of British Austerity Cuts," *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2010. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article /2010/08/30/AR2010083003436\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article /2010/08/30/AR2010083003436_pf.html) (Accessed, August 30, 2010).



The political and ideological are at the very heart of housing discourse, and still, social scientists and political theorists have largely overlooked these connections. Perhaps there is a fear of turning the descriptive into the normative and appearing non-scientific or neutral. But by ignoring the political dimensions of housing, as well as discussions of ideology, specifically gender ideology, scholars are avoiding what is at the crux of contemporary social and public policy: the changing relationship between the state and individuals.

Features of both liberalism and classical republicanism are evident in ideology surrounding home and family. The single-family house represents elements of liberalism: norms of privacy, self-sufficiency, the lack of intrusion of the state into the intimate realm, and a place in which parents raise consumer citizens. The house also captures features of classical republicanism: norms of designing one's private life based on the common good, virtuous women mothering to raise citizen soldiers, sexual self-discipline, paternal authority, and a close relationship between the polis and household. While in practice all of these values are myths to some degree or another, they contribute to a powerful story about the American home and proper family life. Both theoretical orientations in their contemporary form promise a commitment to democratic pluralism, but both reinforce conceptions of home and family that can be construed as undemocratic in practice. Moreover, the discourse of public and private, of the household and its relationship to citizens, has remained but it has been transformed by modern bureaucratic governance and the state's investment in the meaning of family and home. The idea that the household is the necessary foundation for citizenship--whether explicit or implied in liberalism and classical republicanism--is significant in the grounding of United States

housing policy. The ambivalence that these conflicting values present are played out at the level of social policy and is further manifest through the interaction with race and class; however, much of this contestation remains invisible to the public and scholars in political science and urban politics.

Although current housing policies reflect changed policy commitments from multiple administrations, present access to housing remains family-composition specific, which means gender and sexuality—alongside the more commonly recognized factors of race and class—is an integral part of the complex policy-making matrix. More specifically, nuclear family hegemony serves to reify distinctions based on sex; it incorporated women’s economic dependence as an essential component of housing finance and endorsed a single standard for what a good family looks like. This nuclear-family hegemony crystallized in the 1920s under the Hoover administration, escalated through suburbanization, urban disinvestment, and market reforms from 1950s to 1970s, and in the 1990s developed into policymaking that was increasingly punitive for those outside the nuclear- and nuptial-family norm. Many feminist scholars have pointed to the Reagan administration and the subsequent conservative revolution as constitutive of contemporary pro-traditional family centered policymaking. However, this dissertation illustrates that with regard to housing policy, the seeds of family-centered thought were planted decades earlier. Shifting commitments to means-tested cash assistance programs, changing views on crime and punishment, and reluctance towards addressing the causes of poverty rather than its effects created an opportunity for policymaking to become punitive, but the ideology is one that has existed in American culture since the early years of the twentieth century. Criminology, child welfare, and safety are relevant public policy

issues, but they should not be dealt with *through* disciplinary housing policies that disproportionately impact certain households over others.

In United States housing policy, a cycle of bad policy had been established and re-formulated for nearly a century. Without acknowledging the complexity of dwelling, lawmakers unwisely assume that the single family house is the solution to all shelter-related problems. American home ownership has a mythical quality that makes otherwise rational persons overlook obvious obstacles and historic lessons. Coupled with images of the traditional, nuclear family, house ownership has been consistently invoked as the solution to poverty, changes in gender roles, economic downturns, racial strife, threats of communism and anti-Americanism, immigrant assimilation, and veteran returning from service. The overwhelming central tendency in United States housing policy towards single family house ownership undoubtedly reflects certain characteristics of many families. Because of the type of housing it encourages and the judgments about what counts as normal, it makes it harder to maintain household styles beyond the nuclear family. The hegemonic nuclear family does much more than to exclude certain groups from receiving the same goods and social recognition. It creates and perpetuates a culture in which a wide range alternative ways of life and expressions of desire are unthinkable. Moreover, the social and cultural norms of the nuclear family permeate our legal and legislative schemes which have placed specific groups under assault for failing to observe those norms. Contemporary household repression is not a sudden response in an era of devolution and neo-liberalism nor an anomaly in the history of women and housing tenure. Rather, it is the culmination of a much longer and slower process of state-building during which the state came to define and regulate the nuclear,

heterosexual family across many decades. In drawing boundaries around citizenship through federal housing policy, the state has helped to define the very meaning of family in America.

## Appendix



**Image 1**

*Fitter Family Medal awarded by the American Eugenics Society. Source: American Eugenics Society Collection, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA.*

Chicago

Publication No. 9—October, 1925

*Better Homes in America*  
*Herbert Hoover, President*

# SCHOOL COTTAGES

For Training in

## HOME-MAKING



Five-room Home Economics Cottage built for \$4,812 at Port Huron, Michigan, in the 1925 Better Homes in America Campaign. Students of the Washington Junior High School cooperated in the planning and erection of the house—students in Home Economics and Art had charge of furnishing and interior decoration.

### A Study of School Practice Houses and Home Economics Cottages

By  
JAMES FORD  
and  
BLANCHE HALBERT

BETTER HOMES IN AMERICA  
1653 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D. C.  
Price Ten Cents

**Image 2**

*Manual cover, School Cottages for Training in Home-Making, Better Homes in America. Source: Cornell University, Division of Rare & Manuscript Collections, Ithaca, NY.*



**Image 3**

*Pamphlet, House #15, Community Interests Zone, "The Town of Tomorrow," 1939 New York World's Fair. Source: New York Public Library, New York, NY.*



**Image 4**

*Photograph, Demonstration house set in a "neighborhood" with other demonstration houses, 1939 New York World's Fair. Source: New York Public Library, New York, NY.*

# Own Your Home!

The most commanding appeal of the age is home ownership.

It kindles a new interest in life.

It plants the bed-rock of useful citizenship.

It encourages thrift.

It quickens independence.

It provides comfort and contentment.

It stimulates ambition.

It fosters love.

The most useless thing in life is the rent receipt.

It represents no resource.

It impels no incentive.

It anchors no asset.

It inspires no good impulse.

The duty of every man is to own his home; to plant the flag of personal liberty upon a piece of land of his own, over which he is monarch, and to which is riveted the ideals of correct living and personal usefulness.

The inevitable—the overnight—increase in population in city and state and nation forshadows the hour when a careful consideration must be given to its distribution.

The permanence of our institutions cannot be safeguarded if we disregard our obvious duty to render possible the acquirement of homes for our citizens—

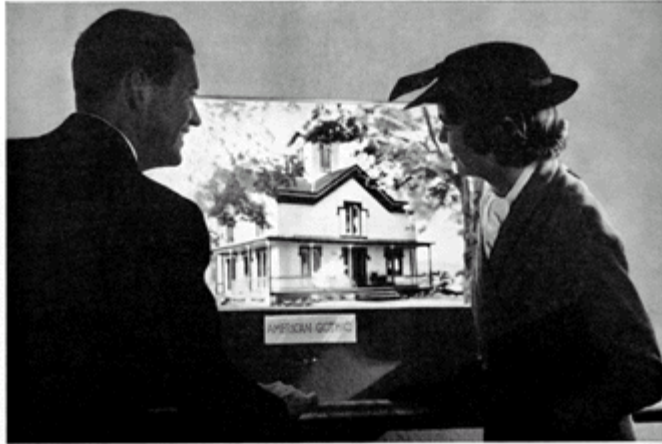
And our service as individuals—service to ourselves and our dependents; to our state and our nation; to our God—cannot measure up to that standard of constructive citizenship that impels us to greater achievement, and to nobler purposes—

Unless we feel the impulse to own our own home, to be our own landlords; the masters of our own castles of love and opportunity, amid the environment of an inspiring pride.

Image 5

Advertisement promoting home ownership. Source: Pittsburgh Courier, April 28, 1923.





## Is YOUR HOUSE Also a Museum Specimen?

**N**OT from the outside, perhaps—but what of the inside? You would not drive a 1920 automobile; it would be obsolete and inadequate for modern service. Houses become obsolete, too. Your house, if it is more than 15 years old, is probably almost as inconvenient inside, compared with "New American" standards, as this outmoded museum specimen.

Now, in 1936, your family should be living in a truly modern, a "New American," home. Scientific planning of rooms saves steps and lightens housework. Electric servants work for better health and greater comfort for the

whole family. "New American" living costs are even lower than in your present home. This is not a dream house, but a home you can own—one to be proud of. General Electric, by fostering "New American" demonstration homes, opens the door to new living comforts for you.

"New American" is not an architectural style—it is a new conception of living. For information on how to obtain "New American" comfort, convenience, and economy—in your present home or in a new house—write to the General Electric Home Bureau, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

*Labor-saving appliances, developed by General Electric research and engineering, are brightening the home life of America*

**GENERAL  ELECTRIC**

Image 6

Advertisement, "Is YOUR HOUSE Also a Museum Specimen?" Source: Survey Graphic, October 1936. <http://newdeal.feri.org/texts/309.htm>

A

### A Neighboring House

National surveys indicate that the vast majority of Americans are comfortable with affordable housing if it "fits in" the neighborhood. If efficient floor plans and basic materials are utilized (in keeping with the guidelines for cost-effective housing), it is possible within a very limited budget to create the detail and character needed for a house to be viewed as a "neighboring house" rather than just an "affordable house." The house illustrated below accomplishes this, utilizing the recommendations detailed in this Pattern Book.

**The Neighboring House**  
The result is a Neighboring House that is in harmony with its neighborhood and an asset for the community.



**Placement on Site**  
The front facade is set back from the street the same distance as the majority of houses in the neighborhood. It joins the facade of adjacent houses in defining the public space of the street. The front door of the house is on the facade facing the street.



**Front Door and Porch**  
In those communities with porches, the house includes a front porch with the same depth and dimensions of existing houses. If there is no porch, the front door is established.



**Front yard**  
The front yard is the most public part of the property and the majority of landscaping and establishment is provided there as a contribution to the street.



**Parking Placement**  
The placement of parking is well behind the front facade of the house, preferably served by an alley and providing an accessible route to the house.



**Architectural Character**  
The front facade, including the porch, is the most ornamented and finished part of a Neighboring House. The facade contributes most significantly to the public space: the sidewalk and street.  
The house has a recognizable architectural style that is found elsewhere in the community and is recognized as an expression of local tradition.  
The most basic house can be modified with minimum effort. Using correct proportions and standard elements, such as columns, that are correctly sized can make the difference between a house that fits and one that does not.

**Accessibility**  
A house's accessibility should be considered at the beginning of the design process. Ramps and accessible walks are an integral part of the design of the house, as opposed to add-ons. Due to careful design, the siting of the house illustrated provides a no-step entry approach from its parking area.



**Green Design**  
Green design techniques help to achieve an affordable house. In taking advantage of a house's site and green building techniques, Neighboring Houses promote energy efficiency and conservation in a way that helps to assure long-term affordability.



Image 7

*Design Model, A Pattern Book for Neighboring Houses, Congress for New Urbanism. Source: The Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), [http://www.cnu.org/sites/www.cnu.org/files/Neighborhoods\\_US\\_3.jpg](http://www.cnu.org/sites/www.cnu.org/files/Neighborhoods_US_3.jpg)*

## Table 2

### U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) - Definitions and Explanations (Abbreviated listing)

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, Fertility & Family Statistics Branch*

#### **Family.**

A family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. Beginning with the 1980 Current Population Survey, unrelated subfamilies (referred to in the past as secondary families) are no longer included in the count of families, nor are the members of unrelated subfamilies included in the count of family members. The number of families is equal to the number of family households, however, the count of family members differs from the count of family household members because family household members include any non-relatives living in the household.

#### **Family group.**

A family group is any two or more people (not necessarily including a householder) residing together, and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A household may be composed of one such group, more than one, or none at all. The count of family groups includes family households, related subfamilies, and unrelated subfamilies.

#### **Family household.**

A family household is a household maintained by a householder who is in a family (as defined above), and includes any unrelated people (unrelated subfamily members and/or secondary individuals) who may be residing there. The number of family households is equal to the number of families. The count of family household members differs from the count of family members, however, in that the family household members include all people living in the household, whereas family members include only the householder and his/her relatives. See the definition of family.

#### **Household.**

A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. A house, an apartment or other group of rooms, or a single room, is regarded as a housing unit when it is occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters; that is, when the occupants do not live and eat with any other persons in the structure and there is direct access from the outside or through a common hall.

A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households

excludes group quarters. There are two major categories of households, "family" and "nonfamily". (See **definitions of Family household and Nonfamily household**).

**Household, family, or subfamily, Size of.**

The term "size of household" includes all the people occupying a housing unit. "Size of family" includes the family householder and all other people in the living quarters who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. "Size of related subfamily" includes the husband and wife or the lone parent and their never-married sons and daughters under 18 years of age. "Size of unrelated subfamily" includes the reference person and all other members related to the reference person. If a family has a related subfamily among its members, the size of the family includes the members of the related subfamily.

**Household, nonfamily.**

A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

**Householder.**

The householder refers to the person (or one of the people) in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented (maintained) or, if there is no such person, any adult member, excluding roomers, boarders, or paid employees. If the house is owned or rented jointly by a married couple, the householder may be either the husband or the wife. The person designated as the householder is the "reference person" to whom the relationship of all other household members, if any, is recorded.

The number of householders is equal to the number of households. Also, the number of family householders is equal to the number of families.

***Head versus householder.*** Beginning with the 1980 CPS, the Bureau of the Census discontinued the use of the terms "head of household" and "head of family." Instead, the terms "householder" and "family householder" are used. Recent social changes have resulted in greater sharing of household responsibilities among the adult members and, therefore, have made the term "head" increasingly inappropriate in the analysis of household and family data. Specifically, beginning in 1980, the Census Bureau discontinued its longtime practice of always classifying the husband as the reference person (head) when he and his wife are living together.

**Step family.**

A Step family is a married-couple family household with at least one child under age 18 who is a stepchild (i.e., a son or daughter through marriage, but not by birth) of the householder. This definition undercounts the true number of step families in instances where the parent of the natural born or biological child is the householder and that parent's spouse is not the child's parent, as biological or step-parentage is not ascertained in the CPS for both parents.

**Subfamily.**

A subfamily is a married couple with or without children, or a single parent with one or more own never-married children under 18 years old. A subfamily does not maintain their own household, but lives in the home of someone else.

***Related subfamily.*** A related subfamily is a married couple with or without children, or one parent with one or more own never married children under 18 years old, living in a household and related to, but not including, the person or couple who maintains the household. One example of a related subfamily is a young married couple sharing the home of the husband's or wife's parents. The number of related subfamilies is not included in the count of families.

***Unrelated subfamily.*** An unrelated subfamily (formerly called a secondary family) is a married couple with or without children, or a single parent with one or more own never-married children under 18 years old living in a household. Unrelated subfamily members are not related to the householder. An unrelated subfamily may include people such as guests, partners, roommates, or resident employees and their spouses and/or children. The number of unrelated subfamily members is included in the total number of household members, but is not included in the count of family members.

Beginning in 1989, any person(s) who is not related to the householder and who is not the husband, wife, parent, or child in an unrelated subfamily is counted as an unrelated individual.

## Table 2

### Questions on FHA credit report, 1935

Source: *Federal Housing Administration, 1934-1940.*

#### *Identity*

- A. Is this person's name correct as given above? (If not, give correct name.)
- B. About what is his age? What is his racial descent (Answer whether Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Negro, etc.)?
- C. Is he married? (How many dependent on him?)

#### *Character*

Is he regarded as steady and dependable?

Is his general reputation as to character, habits, and morals good? (If not, state nature of unfavorable reports.)

Did you learn of any domestic difficulties?

Is his personal reputation as to honesty good?

#### *Attitude Towards Obligations*

What is his general attitude towards contractual obligations?

Does his wife lend encouragement to him?

Does he have the reputation of living within his income?

Does his family have the reputation of living extravagantly?

Has he the reputation of willingness to pay, if able?

#### *Ability to Pay*

What is his annual income earned from his employment of business?

About what income, if any, has he from other sources? (From investments, rentals, or contributions of other members of family or household expenses.)

What would you estimate his net worth?

If married, does his wife follow a gainful occupation?

What is his wife's independent annual income, if any? Independent net worth?

If above person does not live in property, give its monthly rental.

#### *Business History*

What is the nature of his business, and what position does he hold?

About how long has he been in present connection?

Does he work full time steadily? (If not, how many days per week does he work?)

What is his reputation for real estate transactions?

Is or was he a "legitimate" speculator or promoter type of borrower?

Is he considered a chronic litigant?

Has he ever been insolvent? When? (Explain in remarks and give circumstances.)

Does the cause now exist? (Explain under remarks.)

#### *Prospects for Future*

What are his prospects for future?

Is he making efforts to improve himself in his work?

Is he self-satisfied or ambitious?

#### *Associates*

What is class of his business associates?

What is reputation of social associates?

*Remarks*

1. Amplify his business history.
2. Amplify fully unusual and unfavorable information.
3. If a woman, cover husband's or father's reputation, business history, worth and income.

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