ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	UNFIT FOR FAMILY LIFE: HOW REGIMES OF ACCUMULATION, SEXUALITY, AND ANTIBLACKNESS BUILT (AND REBUILT) WEST BALTIMORE
	Robert Thomas Choflet, Doctor of Philosophy, 2020
Dissertation directed by:	Mary Corbin Sies, American Studies

“'Unfit for Family Life': How Regimes of Accumulation, Sexuality, and Antiblackness Built (and Rebuilt) West Baltimore,” is an historical study of West Baltimore housing transformation in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Derived from in-depth oral histories conducted over a number of years with fifty-three Baltimore residents who have lived in (or currently live in) public housing, this project drew from resident reflections and rigorous archival work, in order to investigate the demolition campaigns that reduced Baltimore's public housing stock by almost half and the privatization campaigns that have rebuilt these once public spaces. Policy makers, housing reformers, planners, and real estate interests constructed a shared cultural politics that imagined black women as imperiled actors, public housing as destabilizing to black family life, and demolition and privatization as a necessary, even moral, intervention. This process ignored black women's organizing efforts and specific political demands, while isolating them from one

another and disrupting established political coalitions. In spite of this, oral histories reveal continued efforts by residents to organize for democratic redistribution of housing resources.

“UNFIT FOR FAMILY LIFE”: HOW REGIMES OF ACCUMULATION, SEXUALITY, AND ANTIBLACKNESS BUILT (AND REBUILT) WEST BALTIMORE

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
2020

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Acknowledgements

This project would not exist without the openness and patience of those residents of West Baltimore who shared their stories, their reflections, their insight, and their internal lives with me. In living rooms, across kitchen tables, on front stoops and porches, and in community meeting spaces, they practiced radical generosity, trust, and solidarity, that I hope I can honor here.

Whatever scholarly contributions exist within this dissertation are due in no small measure to the mentorship of Mary Corbin Sies. Mary is a rigorous reader and a sharp critic, who has a knack for holding me accountable. She knows precisely when to be patient and precisely when not to. She has read multiple versions of this project – from its earliest iterations, each half-baked premise and every over-cooked excess. She has given extensive notes on every draft and has carefully read every word and every footnote. I count it as a small miracle that she is still willing to talk to me after all of this. She is a true friend.

The rest of my committee was equally ethical and collegial. Christina Hanhardt showed me how rigorous scholarship and firm principles are complementary practices; that in a field such as ours, good scholarship begins with a clear sense of equity. David Freund helped me understand the necessity of grounding scholarship of the present within a thorough accounting of history, and the value of allowing the historical record – in all of its varied forms – room to speak, unadorned. Rosemary Ndubuizu remains one of my most valued comrades inside and outside of the academy and there isn't a word in this project that she didn't influence. She read

multiple chapter drafts, gave feedback through regular writing sessions, spent innumerable hours in conversations, and has been this project's most present and trusted interlocutor. While Dr. Nancy Mirabal may have been a late addition to the committee, she offered important insight about citational practice and firmly identifying the arguments I am contributing to, which has sharpened the final draft and will help guide this project into its future form(s). Finally, I am grateful to Patricia Hill Collins for her early generative guidance as I developed the critical race frameworks for this research.

I am grateful to the African American Studies Program at Maryland for the mentorship it has provided, and for the collegial spirit that it has offered. I am thankful for the material support that I have received from both the African American Studies and the American Studies departments. This project also benefitted from fellowship support from the Bode-Wise Fellowship, the James W. Longest Award for Social Science Research, the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center doctoral fellowship, and the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center's teaching innovation grant, which has allowed me to explore and develop these ideas within the classroom. This project also owes a debt to the numerous librarians, archivists, and academic workers who have helped me locate, access, and begin to assemble a meaningful history of Baltimore's housing policy from their rich archives. Thank you to the Langsdale Library, the McKeldin Library, the Enoch Pratt Library, the National Archives, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Library of Congress.

There is a much larger community of friends, colleagues, peers, acquaintances, and non-acquaintances-who-nevertheless-influenced-me, whose

thinking has inspired, challenged, and provoked me in innumerable ways. Communities of organic intellectuals in New York, Denver, College Park, Baltimore, and now San Diego – too many individuals to name! -- have contributed to my thinking in ways big and small that find expression here. Among the activist and community groups that I have learned from I want to thank the Breakdown Book Collective and Community Space, the Community Education Project, the many participants and organizers of the Confronting Racism conferences on Denver's Auraria Campus, the Bread & Roses Workers Cultural Center, in particular its principal, my late friend Lowell May, who shared with me conversations and his vast archive of Students for a Democratic Society and Sojourner Truth Organization literature, and in so doing forever changed how I understood race. Anna Sampaio was the first person to insist I pursue a PhD. The late Joel Olson offered an early model for me of how to do ethical and politically engaged scholarship, reminding me on more than one occasion that graduate school is not a substitute for political work. And CJ White was the first scholar to demonstrate for me in practice how clearly and effectively African American Studies could speak to the urgency of the present.

It makes sense that this project is about austerity politics. My most formative moments came as my brother Trevor and I watched our parents navigate the world austerity politics built. Seeing and experiencing their struggles, the compromises they were forced to make, the small victories they realized in the face of poverty and the sometimes crushing and life-altering defeats that same poverty dealt, were my first lessons in the materialist struggle at the center of working class life within racial capitalism. These lessons continue to shape my understanding of the world and they

shape my scholarship. My father showed me what working class ingenuity looked like – its creativity, its messiness, the possibilities it could open up and all of the various impediments that could emerge to ensnare and undo a life. His journey demonstrated for me firsthand how punitive the state could be to those caught up in Reagan's War on Drugs, and it also showed me its latent (while no doubt deeply limited) capacity to facilitate recovery and redemption. My mother struggled through college as a single parent raising two kids, demonstrating an intellectual ethic that continues to inspire. She showed me what it meant to sacrifice and what it meant to work for something beyond yourself. And while she takes immense pride in her independence, she also showed me how crucial it is in moments of struggle to have the safety of community to count on, whether that's family, friends, or its more abstracted form, a welfare state.

Practicing scholarship can be lonely and alienating. It is not an exaggeration to say that it would have been impossible for me to pursue this work without my wife, Amanda. She models for me what it means to be a self-assured, determined, and principled person in the world. The things I've learned from talking to her, from watching her, and from being near her I couldn't begin to list here. Her belief in me has furnished me with a confidence to do things that would have felt otherwise insurmountable. Oliver and Henry demonstrate curiosity, creativity, and a sense of justice in everything they do. And they happen to be two of the smartest and funniest people I have ever met. They are not just a reason to struggle for a better world but also a source of optimism that that world is in fact possible. The family we've built together remains the thing I'm most proud of.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Mary Holmes didn't actually blow up the George Murphy Homes, though, she would "have been happy to."[1] A twenty-year resident of the West Baltimore high-rise development, president of the Residents Association, she was a fierce advocate for the development's residents, and she was also a vocal advocate for the buildings' demolition. Some years into her tenure as a resident leader, she was enlisted by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) and Mayor Kurt Schmoke to participate in deliberations about her "severely distressed" building, and ultimately to preside over the ceremony that saw that building, containing her home and the homes of her neighbors, razed to the ground.[2] "The man told me, he said, 'One, two, three,' and then I pushed the button."[3] The sound of the collapsing buildings muffled the initial cheers, though they would reemerge louder, accompanied by a chorus of car alarms, triggered by the rumbling earth. As the debris issued forth from the buildings' footprint and settled into the spaces of celebration, resident smiles mixed with gasps and coughs. In that moment, the buildings would disappear from the built landscape, even as they remain a part of the consciousness of city residents and planners into the present.

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[1]Holmes, Mary. (Perkins St.) Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 5/14/11. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

[2] The federal government convened a commission in order to measure and assess how relatively "distressed" various public housing developments had become within cities like Baltimore. See, National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (U.S.), *The Final Report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing: A Report to the Congress and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.* (Washington, D.C., 1992). The commission's findings, published in fall of 1992, animated3much of the eventual push toward privatization that will be discussed at length throughout this project.

[3]Holmes interview, 5/14/11.

The plunger Ms. Holmes shoved into the casing did not trigger the explosion. Her detonator was a prop. A part of the spectacle. The twenty second demolition that erased the George Murphy Homes, activated by 375 pounds of explosives distributed throughout the collection of 14-story high-rise towers and 2-story buildings, was in fact executed by an outfit of private explosives engineers.[4] Controlled Demolition Inc. of Phoenix, Maryland was hired by the city in what would turn out to be a fairly lucrative contract that saw them apply their labor to multiple buildings between 1995 and 2001.[5] Holmes was their public avatar. The actual explosions were executed out of sight, by private hands.

This moment was the coda of a long late-morning and early-afternoon's slate of events. The *New York Times* described it as "a neighborhood demolition party."[6] And the local *Baltimore Sun* called it "the biggest fireworks display in Baltimore" that July 4th weekend.[7] Politicians spoke. Crowds gathered and people circulated. Food was grilled. Commemorative bricks from the buildings were sold. T-shirts were purchased. Prominent residents, like Holmes, were brought onto the dais among local officials and before a crowd of hundreds of residents, signaling some measure of

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[4]Sarah Pekkanen and Zerline A. Hughes, "After 36 Years, A Pile of Memories; Murphy Homes High-rises, Once Home to Hundreds Imploded in W. Baltimore," *Baltimore Sun,* (July 4, 1999); Amy Oakes and Tom Pelton, "Blast to Wipe Out Episodes in Public Housing History; Implosion on July 3 to Level Murphy Homes," *Baltimore Sun,* (June 23, 1999).

[5]For discussion of Controlled Demolition's involvement with the Murphy Homes implosion, see, Pekkanen and Hughes, "After 36 Years, A Pile of Memories;" For their role in the demolition of Lexington Terrace see, Marilyn McCraven, "Going Out with a Bang; Starting Over: The Troubled Lexington Terrace Project Falls as Part of a Plan to Improve the Lives of Public Housing Residents," *Baltimore Sun* (July 28, 1996); For their role in the demolition of Flag House Courts, see Laurice Willis, "Goodbye to a Place that Many Called Home Residents Remember Good Times and Bad in Flag House Courts," *Baltimore Sun* (February 11, 2001); By the mid-2000s Controlled demolition, Inc. was doing work on a national level. Their work in Dallas was discussed in Liz Moucka, "It's a Blast," *Texas Contractor* Vol. 154, No. 8 (April 2006); Their work in Memphis, TN, was discussed in "Making Way for the Future," *Construction News,* Vol, 73, No. 9. (May 2006).

[6]Charles Cohen, "Destroying a Housing Project, to Save It," *New York Times,* (August 15, 2019).

[7]Oakes and Pelton, "Blast to Wipe Out Episode" *Baltimore Sun*, (June 23, 1999).

community involvement in this process. Local marching bands and step groups provided pomp.

By the time of this demolition, the Murphy Homes were four decades old and increasingly framed not as an asset or resource to poor communities in Baltimore, but as an impediment. They kept residents from integrating into normative social, cultural, and economic relations, the narrative went. “I was at a point that I was embarrassed that I lived in public housing because it was so stigmatized,” noted Linda M. Love, a resident being displaced by this process.[8] That a 20 second explosion eliminating hundreds of low income people's homes was cause for “celebration” speaks to how deeply the notion of housing-as-obstacle had pervaded the discourse of not just policy makers but of residents themselves.[9]

The politicians in attendance did their part to maintain that narrative, often contrasting these doomed spaces with more valued and desirable sites of social life, those residential spaces typically associated with the middle classes. Schmoke, for example, proclaimed, “those old buildings are coming down, and what will be coming in their place are row homes, town houses.”[10] Continuing this juxtaposition, and erasing the buildings down to their very names, Schmoke said of former Lexington Terrace Family High-rise towers that future residents can look forward to “say(ing) with pride, 'I come from Lexington Heights’” – imagining a future residential development occupying the space and embracing a naming convention (*heights*) meant to conjure middle class suburban housing in the imaginations of his

[8]Cohen, “Destroying a Housing Project” *New York Times*, (August 15, 2019).
[9]Cohen, “Destroying a Housing Project” *New York Times*, (August 15, 2019).
[10]“Baltimore to Demolish More Public Housing Units,” *Washington Post,* (September 30, 1995).

audience.[11]

Executive director of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) at the time, Daniel P. Henson, put the terms even more clearly: the family high rise towers built in the mid-century, precisely to house families whose only housing options were the substandard tenements that populated large swaths of east and west Baltimore, had become by the 1990s, "'projects' as opposed to becoming communities."[12] "There's no doubt," he went on, "when you see a row house you're looking at someone's home. When you look at family high-rise, that's 'the projects.'"[13]

This type of question-begging – projects are projects because they're projects; homes are homes because they're homes – was not limited to the political class. In fact, a crucial feature of this transformation was how effectively it enlisted some residents into this demolition effort. "All of us got together got [the buildings] down. I'm so glad" one resident notes of the Murphy Homes, before adding, "I'm going back soon as they build it back up."[14]

This demolition was one of four such spectacles that occurred between 1995 and 1999. For each, the demolitions were accompanied by city-organized galas, parades, commemorative merchandise, and nostalgic discussions of the buildings and their communities as a valued part of city and residential memory, even if they were linked to projects necessarily doomed to demolition. What was harder to know at the time was that this change of approach would not be limited to the four high-rise developments in the city. In fact, this turn-of-the-century transformation of public

[11]"Baltimore to Demolish More Public Housing Units," *Washington Post,* (September 30, 1995).
[12]Cohen, "Destroying a Housing Project, to Save it" *New York Times*, (August 15, 2019).
[13]Cohen, "Destroying a Housing Project, to Save it" *New York Times*, (August 15, 2019).
[14]"Baltimore to Demolish More Public Housing Units," *Washington Post,* (September 30, 1995).

housing properties was only the tip of the iceberg. The demolition of Murphy Homes, along with the Lexington Terrace, the Flag Houses, and Lafayette Courts would turn out to be only the first phase of what the Abell Foundation calls Baltimore's entry into the "demolition business."[15] This new business would see the elimination of thousands of housing options for low-income residents, while preserving the notion that doing so was a positive contribution to the community.

The public-private spectacle described above announced the end of decades of struggle – struggle over resources, over representation, and over meaning – and the subsumption of historical housing struggles for the poor into a new, expansive framework for addressing urban poverty. Tensions between competing approaches represented on the one hand by funding and building (semi)public resources and on the other by financing and subsidizing private interventions have in the last three decades found something of an uneasy reconciliation. The demolition of the Murphy Homes, one among hundreds of family high-rise towers that have been razed by local housing authorities around the country, and the building of Heritage Crossing through a public-private partnership, in which a small number of public housing residents live within a larger community of first-time home buyers, signals a newly crystallized approach within housing policy. Public-private partnerships have begun a process of transforming undervalued public assets into private commodities, and have justified this through a cultural politics that frames this transformation as necessary and moral. Private and state actors have worked in places like Baltimore over the past three

[15]Joan Jacobson, "The Dismantling of Baltimore's Public Housing," *The Abell Report*. Vol. 20, no. 4, (September 2007): 1.

decades to leverage the uneven valorizations of property and communities that come from decades of racial segregation in order to facilitate the re-appropriation by capital of once publicly held assets. While in its most spectacular expressions this process takes the form of the "fireworks" of a half a ton of explosives, in its more banal forms it finds expression through housing task forces, private non-profit developers, planners, well-meaning liberal fair housing advocates, and the moral posture of contemporary, post-Civil Rights, public policy.

Since the outset of these demolitions, Baltimore's public housing inventory has shrunk by over 40 percent. Where there were some 16,525 public housing units in Baltimore in 1992, there are fewer than 9,000 today. And that number continues to shrink. In its place, once publicly housed residents have been pushed into new forms of housing arrangements, defined by privatization and vouchers. Ironically, while "family" and "family stability" have emerged as discursive instruments most readily deployed by planners and policy makers when making public cases for demolition and privatization, this new situation is particularly grim for families with children, who make up Baltimore's poorest population. While the number of occupied units has decreased since the high-rise demolition overall, the decrease is even more stark for families with children (52 percent, from 13,589 to 6,496).[16]

This project looks at the archives produced by planners, policy makers, legal reformers and the larger public discourse as registered by contemporaneous media, such as newspapers, popular magazines, and journals, in order to better understand how a certain common sense was constructed around this large scale dispossession.

[16]Jacobson, "The Dismantling of Baltimore's Public Housing," 9.

How did this collection of civic actors come to define high-rises as, what Mayor Schmoke would call, "warehouses of poverty"?[17] Further, how did a sustained campaign of demolition, displacement, and privatization grow from that perception? Were these pursuits in fact in the interests of those whose relied on public housing?

Equally importantly, this project uses ethnographic methods and oral histories with those who have lived through and are living through these transformations to develop a more robust understanding of this history and the politics that produced and emerge from it. Residents counter narrate the totalizing claims captured by the planning archive. As Alessandro Portelli has noted, these counter-narrations "reveal unknown aspects of known events," casting "new light on unexplored areas of the daily life of the nonhegemonic classes."[18] Where the planning archive registers the prerogatives of power – in all of their contradictions and complexity – ask a resident about housing demolition and one is likely to get a different perspective. As will be explored below, the common interpretation, residents often argue, misrepresents demolition as an intervention staged on *behalf of* residents. The archives that resident interviews produced, however, introduce the possibility that these demolitions happened at the expense of low-income black families, and that the dominant narrative of ethical state intervention – which hinges on painting low-income black public housing residents as deviant actors, and on projecting the notion that residents endorsed this image – is the lynch pin holding this set of policies together. As powerful as the modern state is, it still seeks consent in its efforts to demolish

[17]Quoted in Robert Matthews, "Mayor's Focus is Back on Downtown: Schmoke Sees Inner Harbor as Key to Revitalization," *Baltimore Sun,* (January 23, 1998).
[18]Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 50.

thousands of poor people's homes. Likewise, as efficiently as capital is at appropriating and accumulating resources, it still relies on a cooperative state to facilitate this process and a public discourse to render its work coherent.

One key concern of this project is how, in facilitating demolition and privatization, a specific idea of "the family" has emerged – its importance to the project of national citizenship, its importance in producing normative categories, and its role in defining the bounds of both stability and alterity – to become a necessary category for this intersection of policy actors. This project gets its title "Unfit for family life" from one of those very moments, when a city task force made the case that normative family was both an essential piece of Baltimore's rehabilitation and that underdeveloped public housing stock stood in the way of normative family life.[19] Using this notion of family as leverage, demolition and privatization projects worked to re-position public high-rises within the discourse from public resource to a strain on black family life. Likewise, this notion of family positioned privatized housing schemes as the antidote to decades of underdevelopment. In so doing, ideas about the normative family freed the liberal state to demolish and privatize while maintaining a veneer of progressive intervention.

Extractive processes within contemporary liberal capitalism are often presented – and enter public consciousness – as nominally ethical practice. This is especially necessary for policy aimed at black communities within a liberal, majority

[19] Abt. Associates Inc., Gretchen Locke, Susan Popkin, and Linda Fosburg, "An Historical and Baseline Assessment of HOPE VI," (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/hopevi_vol1.pdf.

black city, in the post-Civil Rights era. How does a liberal government demolish thousands of housing units, push thousands of its most vulnerable residents from their homes, and effectively turn the massive swaths of land and potential value that land represents within capitalism over to a collection of private actors, while maintaining its liberal cachet? This study argues that constructions of "the black family" imagined, instrumentalized, and deployed within the HOPE VI planning processes, and housing policy more broadly, have functioned to justify these large-scale acts of black dispossession.

Ethnographic work with these residents helps elucidate the specific and concrete ways that the state's moral claims cohered – primarily around the racialized and sexualized notions of normative family. Further, ethnographic work gestures toward alternative readings of demolition in material terms, understanding it as a set of practices that worked within a larger context of resource distribution and redistribution that relied upon uneven assessments of value, in terms of land, housing, and life itself. That is to say, this project focuses on the cultural politics that enable a material politics to unfold. Further, ethnographic work demonstrates that black domestic arrangements and spaces remain sites from which to re-imagine, narrate, and intervene in these transformations.

In the place of the Murphy Homes, the housing authority adopted and worked to implement a new federal housing program, HOPE VI, that saw the construction of "single family" mostly privately owned homes built on this once publicly held land. This new neighborhood, Heritage Crossing, mixes some 147 private homes with 75

public housing units dispersed throughout.[20] This new residential arrangement was planned, developed, and built through a network of public institutions and private, non-profit, "community development" firms. These "public-private partnerships" link a unique approach to housing policy (and urban policy more broadly) with older, historical practices of defining and "clearing" devalued spaces to make room for new economic and social initiatives. It was welcomed into existence by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), whose legal activism cleared the way for its construction, seeing the demolition of Murphy and the allocation of federal resources into the hands of private community developers and private landlords by way of expanded voucher programs as a victory against "concentrated poverty."[21]

The figure of Mary Holmes, resident leader and community elder, symbolically initiating the demolition of her own home, while the actual material work of the demolition was facilitated by public planners, non-profit developers, and a private demolition company, perfectly captures one aspect of a larger social-cultural-economic dynamic this project is interested in. Active resident participation worked in concert with state and private forces to deliver the message that demolition was necessary and moral, while obscuring transfers of public resources into the hands of private actors.

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[20]Baltimore Department of Planning, "Master Plan for Upton Community," (September, 2005), https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/UptonFinal.PDF.

[21] This position is captured in an opinion editorial by then-president of Baltimore's city council, Shelia Dixon, "Baltimore Region Must be Partner in Public Housing," *Baltimore Sun* (October 8, 2000), 3J, where she notes that the "ACLU believed that the city used the high-rises to isolate poor, African-American families from the rest of Baltimore City," causing those living there to suffer because "government and business fail to make investments in areas of concentrated poverty."

Resident Critique:

This project works from the understanding that residential life within public housing, particularly during moments of transformation, produces reflections, critiques, and visions that can form the basis of both critical intellectual histories, as well as inform theory and praxis for those invested in studying and liberatory organizing within the contemporary city. Which is to say, this project situates residents as intellectual and political actors, rather than simply objects of sociological inquiry. The residents with whom I have spoken are situated within this project as generative intellectual, social, political actors, and the archives their reflections produce are sources for knowledge production. Building archives that register these voices assumes that late twentieth and early twenty-first century urban transformation has engendered new currents of critique, and that that critique circulates through the discussions and reflections of those living and experiencing in the most immediate terms these transformations. Sometimes these are expressed in explicit terms, other times more subtly, but in a range of ways, ethnographic methods capture these critical meditations.

This project works to be elaborated by a resident critique. This critique is captured and assembled through the ethnographic work done with research participants. I am interested in the non-positivist epistemology that residents produce through their deep deliberation and reflection on living through urban transformation. While this project attempts to avoid uncritical or fetishistic engagement with "authentic voices" living on the "front lines" of urban change, it nevertheless works

from the assumption that existing social structures, material conditions, and societal ideals shape standpoints and interlocution that can be read and assembled in ways critical and revelatory.

The archive from which this critique is fashioned consists of 53 interviews with West Baltimore residents living in and around Heritage Crossing, a neighborhood planned, developed, and built through the federal HOPE VI program. The community is home to both public housing residents as well as highly-subsidized first-time homeowners, living alongside one another within a space that once contained the Murphy Homes, Baltimore's largest and most densely populated black residential space.

The research participants within this study offer deep meditations on what it means to inhabit this space and how the turn toward market-centered, public-private partnerships makes promises of economic redress through high-rise demolition, mobility programs, and property ownership, while often accelerating the processes of urban dispossession. Further, this archive describes conditions of changing sociality, where new modes of affiliation conditioned by housing demolition, residential mobility, and new (or different) access to private property, have come to displace older social relations. The communities and residential spaces studied here are at once historically unique – shaped by a post-welfare state, market-centered and privatized urban renewal – while simultaneously linked to and bearing a longer history of black residential life in West Baltimore, as well as the concomitant history of state scrutiny that accompanies black residential space.

I engage the archive through a rigorous reading of the urban planning

documents against the critical frameworks produced through critical race theory, critical ethnic studies, and queer theory. My ethnographic method assumes that the social and intellectual labor of dispossessed communities is productive both of systemic critique of urban capitalism, and of democratic visions for moving forward. In this way, my academic praxis aims to push back against traditional approaches to urban sociology that frame black life as one undifferentiated object of perpetual study, inert and static, devoid of intellectual agency or epistemic vision.

Toward that end, it should be noted that these archives do not register a unified critique, a singular understanding of uneven power and emancipatory modes of resistance, or a consensus on how to navigate this transformation. There is a fractured-ness to any community; the impoverished and lower-income black residents of post-high-rise West Baltimore are no different. Among the things I argue in the pages to come is that there are new and antagonistic material relations that accompany residential life within HOPE VI housing schemes that further intensify and strain this already existent fractured-ness. Therefore, I do not intend to claim that by virtue of their blackness, their poverty, or their gendered and sexualized marginality that the research participants in this study hold the key to the liberated future or that these residents alone, by virtue of their standpoint, are equipped to author the postscript to racial capitalism. Rather, like any subordinated group, efforts toward disalienation take a range of sometimes contradictory forms. What I do assert, however, is that like all instances of assembled power that coalesce through institutional practice into systems of domination, the kernels of its undoing are often bound up in its expressions. Rigorous engagement with the intellectual work of those

most immediately exposed to that domination provides crucial insight.

The lived world conditions the emergence of critical tendencies. As Max Horkheimer notes, critique helps get at the emancipatory projects that people living within oppressive systems often enact or imagine. "[T]he critical acceptance of the categories which rule social life," he notes, "contains simultaneously their condemnation."[22] The processes and social movements that support and sustain capitalism function often to displace or mitigate against those process and social movements that can oppose and negate capitalism. The contradictions and irrationalities of the world constantly give rise to and simultaneously push against social change and transcendence.

People are not simply passive recipients of accepted meanings produced by political and economic elites, marketers, and the culture industry. They are actively involved in the production of meaning, some of which is novel and unforeseen by power. Oral histories with residents living through urban transformation can both provide a basis for critical analysis as well as provide insight into the various forms of collective struggles unfolding within their lived spaces – both repressive and emancipatory struggles.

Housing policy as an expression of "racial capitalism"[23]

[22]Horkheimer, Max. "Traditional and Critical Theory." in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 208.

[23]The term "racial capitalism is most associated with Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). This project works from that text, as well as key elaborations by Nikhil Pal Singh, "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation," *Social Text* 34, no. 3 (128) (September 1, 2016): 27–50; N. D. B. Connolly, "This, Our Second Nadir," *Boston Review*, February 21, 2018, http://bostonreview.net/forum/remake-world-slavery-racial-capitalism-and-justice/n-d-b-connolly-our-second-nadir; and spirited and important debate between Nancy Fraser and Michael Dawson

Sharron Albright, a resident of the West Baltimore neighborhood of Upton, who worked as a teenager in the recreation center of the Murphy Homes, remembers that as a student in Baltimore's West High School, “Murphy Homes kids had a bond.”[24] Whatever their source of mutual affinity, this housing had a very different reputation among city residents in general and even many of her high school peers. “We had a bond...but people from outside the towers had no love for those buildings...they called them (and us) every name in the book.”[25]

Albright links the denigration of the buildings and the people who lived and worked there to the larger social permission that allowed policy makers to materially neglect these spaces, even in moments when development was moving in robust ways in other quarters of the city.

> But why did those towers look like they did? There've been towers here before and there are plenty now in the harbor. When you think about it, they're the same, aren't they?...But they're not the same. That's the Baltimore they want. We were in the Baltimore they want to forget...And the thing is, those towers downtown, they're okay for families, right?...Ask me why they wouldn't go and tear down those white yuppy towers.[26]

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captured in Michael C. Dawson, “Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order,” *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 143–61;“Nancy Fraser, Behind Marx’s Hidden Abode, NLR 86, March–April 2014,” New Left Review, accessed April 19, 2020, https://newleftreview.org/issues/II86/articles/nancy-fraser-behind-marx-s-hidden-abodeNancy Fraser, “Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism,” *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (September 1, 2015): 157–89,; Nancy Fraser, “Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson,” *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 163–78. Further, this study draws immense influence and inspiration from contemporary scholarship that in practice applies a "racial capitalism" framework to the study of those institutions central to the reproduction of American life, including, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019); as well as the invaluable theoretical provocations present in Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[24] Sharron Albright, Upton resident, Interview March 21, 2010. Follow-up discussion September 15, 2010.

[25] Albright, Interview September 15, 2010.

[26] Albright, Interview September 15, 2010.

Albright's reflection gets at a central tension in urban development; the circulation of resources tends to concentrate in already over-developed spaces, while flowing away from underdeveloped space. Her assertion is that these circulations have a relationship to the larger ascriptive processes that distribute value unevenly – one neighborhood is valued and therefore enjoys significant investment, the other is not and therefore suffers materially. In this way, Albright observes the simultaneous dependent but uneven valorizations at the center of urban land use politics. And further, her reflections encourage us to note that these uneven valorizations of space are linked to uneven valorizations of those social groups who inhabit that space. In so doing, reflections like this insist that racialization is at the center of the extractive and accumulative labor that capitalism does. Racial meaning-making enables that work to happen. As she suggests, it's the answer to the question implied above, ("*why do we value certain spaces above others?*") as well as the one directly posed ("*why don't they tear down those white yuppy towers?*").

Employing "racial capitalism" as a hermeneutic for understanding housing politics opens up the possibility to think about how material and ideological processes unfold simultaneously and how those processes find concrete expression within the urban landscape and the social worlds of the city.[27] An argument for racial capitalism, then, begins with an understanding that racialization is not simply an ideological process, but rather a material one, which is to say race has utility (i.e., a "use-value")

[27] On the question of "racial capitalism" as an "activist hermeneutic," see Jodi Melamed, "Racial Capitalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 76–85.

within the processes of housing building, demolition, maintaining public resources, and privatizing space.

As Singh notes, capitalism and race both are value making processes.[28] They emerge conterminously out of that moment in western history where the capture of land and bodies was mobilized to extract value from a space external to, but quickly becoming absorbed into, western European economic – as well as social, cultural, and political – life. This accumulation process hinged on a capacity to mobilize violence in the service of dispossession (multiple, simultaneous and overlapping dispossessions) as well as a capacity to mobilize the discursive power of narration in the service of rationalizing this violence (by which I mean, folding this gratuitous and arbitrary violence in to imagined systems of meaning, rendering it rational). The latter process of constructing imagined systems of meaning linked violence (and more specifically, relative violability) to group differentiation. The former process required the latter. The violence of dispossession required a violence of differentiation. The value making of capital required the value making of race.

Put simply, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore notes in a recent interview, "racial capitalism is all capitalism."[29] "There was not one minute in the entire story of capitalism," she notes "that it was not racial."[30] That is to say, capitalism does not *augment* an historically prior and/or more fundamental capitalist process. Race is not something that can be *bracketed out* from political economy. Rather modern capitalism (that is, capitalism within modernity), comes into being coterminous with

[28] Singh, "On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation."
[29] Leopold Lambert, "Making Abolition Geography in California's Central Valley an Interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore," *The Funambulist*, (February 2019), 14.
[30] Leopold Lambert, 14.

race. It generates racial meaning, while racial meaning generates value. Racialized differentiation is essential to accumulation while – as this study thinks through – capitalist crises rely on racial difference as a means of reconciliation. Capitalism benefits from and reproduces racial differentiation. As such, capitalism is itself a racialized / racializing technology. There is no way of imagining capitalism outside of or independent of the racialization process, because there is no "outside of" the racialization process.

Hortense Spillers reminds us: "The materiality of discourse is as solid an aspect of political economy as the gross domestic product, and its far-flung subtleties and evasions, its coded displacements and well-choreographed insinuations, decidedly more pernicious as the missile that hides its hand."[31] Unevenly valorizing both things and people is an essential aspect of capitalist reproduction. We make this process legible through a vocabulary of difference – "race," "gender," "sexuality," "ability," etc. – that often obscures rather than illuminates the material bases of this difference. While racialized categories are fictive and arbitrary, they are nevertheless as real as "the missile that hides" the hand. The uneven distribution of resources that produces wealth, poverty, health, disease, emancipation, incarceration, life, are the material processes that lend meaning to identity categories. Ideology – ways of knowing the world, ways of finding and narrating an order to the world – naturalizes these connections.

To this point, in his 1923 article, "The Superior Race," W.E.B. DuBois

[31]Hortense Spillers, *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 7.

constructed an imaginary exercise in which he posed questions to himself and then answered them, elaborating on both the fiction and materiality of race.[32] Celebrating blackness in its specificity, he also cautioned against thinking about racial categories as anything but inventions. The article rejected not only the biologization of race, it rejected all idealist or essentialist conceptions of racial difference. White people "are human, even as you and I," he wrote.[33] Racialized categorization does not precede racism, he asserted, but rather racist practice produces the categories. Those who have reified racial categories imagine the world as "a great layer cake with superimposed slices of inferior and superior races, interlaid with mud."[34] But human beings are "infinite in variety."[35] What produces the categories of superior and inferior are not the categories themselves, rather, they are produced and reproduced by the active material labor of those invested in reaping the benefits of racialized stratification. Racialized social order emerges out of the capacity of the dominant group to do the violent work of asserting this order, motivated by the material benefits that this order produces. "But what is this group; and how do you differentiate it?"[36] he asks, in an effort to establish what concretely differentiates subordinated from superordinate groups within a racialized society. "I recognize it quite easily and with full legal sanction," DuBois asserts, "the black man is a person who must ride 'Jim Crow' in Georgia."[37]

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[32]W.E.B. DuBois, "The Superior Race (An Essay)," in *The Smart Set: A Magazine of Cleverness* v.70, n.4 (April, 1923), 55-60; a version of this essay is also contained in W.E.B. DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Oxford Press, 2014), 68-87.
[33] DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn*, 77.
[34] DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn*, 77.
[35] DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn*, 77.
[36]DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn*, 77.
[37]DuBois, "The White World," *Dusk of Dawn*, 77.

It is the practice – and the underlying structure it serves and labors to reproduce – that produces and defines the category. One was black because one was forced to ride 'Jim Crow.' Just as, as Eric Williams notes, one was black because one was enslaved.[38] Just as, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore notes, one was black because one was exposed to premature death.[39] Just as residents within this study note, one was black because one was forced to watch their housing degrade, their commitment to their children questioned, and their right to just housing conditions denied. That is, these categories exist to do the necessary ideological labor of making sense of exploitation and material inequity.

All of that is to say, material interventions narrate. Likewise, narration is material. This is the value of "racial capitalism" as a category. Those processes that tore down the high rises and handed once public resources to private developers cannot be understood separately from or independent of those processes that imagine "the family" and "the home" as mutually incompatible with public high-rise towers.

Primitive Accumulation, Racial and Spatial Capital:

At the center of this intersection of extraction and meaning making is the process of "primitive accumulation." As Rosa Luxemburg has noted, "real life has never known a self-sufficient capitalist society under the exclusive domination of the capitalist mode of production."[40] Instead, the accumulation process relies on "third persons" – those situated outside of the formal capitalist process, whose presence

[38]Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 7.
[39]Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.
[40]Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2015), 328.

both shapes and distorts notions of value within the formal markets.[41] Baltimore residents' reflections on city life note the differences in perceived value between the Harbor East high-rise and the West Baltimore high-rise, or between land controlled by the housing authority and land controlled by private capital. Their observations register the kind of spatial arbitrage that is enabled by these inside/outside dynamics and clarify the ideological work that race and sexuality perform, conditioning both real and potential value of space. “Primitive accumulation” names a process by which sources outside of or devalued through cultural processes are identified and absorbed by capital. In this way, “primitive accumulation” names a form of value-making and accumulation, rather than a specific moment in history or a specific coordinate within a timeline of capitalist development. This form of accumulation is a necessary and corollary process to the wage relation and other surplus value producing processes of capitalist expansion. It follows that the historical process that produces non-capitalist spaces within the city itself is necessary and necessarily continues, finding new and

[41]Marx's early sketches of this idea are published in *The Grundrisse: Foundations of a Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Penguin, 1993). They function, in part, as a response to Smith's ideas of “original” or “preceding” accumulation, his prehistory of capitalist forms of accumulation discussed in Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* Book 2, (New York: Penguin, 1982), 355-385. Marx later synthesized these thoughts in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* Volume I, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1993), primarily in Chapter 26. Luxemburg, by way of discussing the imperialist projects of western nation states and the utility of non-capitalist economies for capitalist expansion and reproduction, updated Marx in her *Accumulation of Capital.* Harvey elaborated on Luxemburg in “Accumulation by Dispossession” in *The New Imperialism (Clarendon Lectures in Geography and Environmental Studies)*, (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 137-182. An outgrowth of this discussion that is more grounded in racialized and gendered difference and its utility in capitalist reproduction (even if it is thinking primarily in labor rather than spatialized terms) can be found in Grace Kyungwon Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); as well as Miranda Joseph's discussion of “supplementarity” in her *Against the Romance of Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Her work is in conversation with Diane Elson, “The Value Theory of Labor,” in *Value: The Representation of Labour in Capitalism*, ed. Diane Elson (New York: Verso, 2015) and Gayatri Spivak, “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value,” *Diacritics*, Vol. 15, no.4 (Winter, 1985).

unique expressions.

Primitive accumulation and the black radical tradition:

The Marxist tradition, for all of its contributions, has not thought enough about how these circuits of accumulation are complicated by racialization. Land inhabited by "othered" populations – particularly poor, non-white, and sexually non-normative populations – is typically read by capital as "non-capitalized assets," ripe for seizure, through means of violent dispossession if necessary. Anti-imperialist frameworks help identify this form of exploitation unfolding at the international level.[42] Settler colonial frameworks and the work of indigenous activists and scholars offer ways of thinking about how spaces internal to the exploitative nation can be fashioned as external to the national project and violently re-absorbed.[43] Within the context of urban space, little attention has been paid to the very long tradition of critique, issuing from black residential politics, that has focused on capital's encroachment on publicly held black residential spaces.

The housing and poverty activism of working-class black women in the late 20th century offers yet another frame for thinking about this form of dispossessive violence. Labor and anti-poverty organizers succeeded during the peak years of American capitalism – 1938-1968 – in mobilizing state power in order to redistribute some of the American largess procured through imperial projects and massive military expansion, toward projects that would blunt the sharper edges of market

[42]See discussions of Luxemburg and Harvey in footnote 36.
[43]See Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

capital as they pertained to the more vulnerable populations within the US. While entangled with commitments to structural antiblackness, and therefore unevenly distributed throughout the social body, reformers nevertheless succeeded in diverting some of the social surplus toward de-commodification projects, "commoning" some spaces within capital, a portion of that aimed at urban housing.[44]

Black struggles to gain access to these commons help to bring into focus the contours of the racialized commons; likewise, black struggles to defend these spaces against capital's encroachment help elucidate the limited extent to which these spaces were ever available to black urbanites to begin with. The primarily working class black women whose political work captured and defended these common resources from capital and the state developed an archive of critique that, among many other things, provides deep insight into how this social surplus shaped material and social lifeworlds within urban space, and how during the post 1968, post-Civil Rights years, that social surplus has become a target for the accumulation process.[45] Both conservative and liberal policy makers have focused in on welfare state institutions and spaces as yet another of these external spaces to be violently reabsorbed by capital. This project will argue that the destruction of public housing exists as one

[44]See, for example, Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggle Against Urban Inequality* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005); Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Peter Marcuse and David Madden, *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 2016); Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (New York: Beacon Press, 2006); Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage, 1978); Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[45]This political work is discussed in detail within Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing*; Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights*; Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace*; Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors*.

example of this accumulation process.

Housing functions as a project of racial capitalism in at least three key ways. First, housing has historically been and remains an essential process within urban capitalism. Privatized housing is a capitalist endeavor. And projects designed to house the population have consistently been a feature of US capitalism throughout its history and have been shaped by market prerogatives. Housing markets have served to stimulate economic growth in moments of economic crisis, and remain a site through which myriad accumulation projects unfold (markets in alienable land, real estate industry, construction, both prime and subprime private mortgage lending, public-private partnerships around development, public housing development/maintenance/demolition, etc.).[46]

Further, and a second key way in which housing functions as a project of racial capitalism, housing has functioned to partition various social groups throughout and across residential spaces.[47] Housing practice and housing policy are enabled by (and further enable) regimes of differentiation/racialization. From its inception defining who could and who could not make possessive claims on alienable land, to early twentieth century public segregation ordinances and private racial covenants, to

[46]For discussion of housing, real estate, and their relationship to economic crisis, Marxist Geography offers essential reading. See, for example, Henri Lefebvre's discussion of capital's "circuits" of accumulation in *Writings on Cities* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1960), or *Key Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2003); or see David Harvey's discussion of the "spatial fix" in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Hoboken, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).

[47]Andrea Gibbons, *City of Segregation: 100 Years of Struggle for Housing in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 2018); Carl Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Jessica Trounstine, *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Teresea P.R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in Sao Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Samuel Stein, *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State* (New York: Verso, 2019).

mid-twentieth century federal policy that would define post-war racial hierarchies in racial science terms, land use policy has always articulated with projects designed to discipline non-white social actors and provide material grounding for shifting racial definitions.

Third, housing policy plays a definitional role. A central argument in this project is that the planning process – nominally committed to a value neutral, technocratic outward appearance – in fact narrates. There are ideological arguments that run through planning documents that contribute to the racial, sexual, social differentiation that capitalism relies on. This project is interested in the way planning documents have historically (and continue to) play a role in producing the bounds of such normative categories as "stability" and "family." As such, housing policy has historically played a role in capturing how race and sexuality intersect and are generative processes within urban capitalism.

On Constructing "the Family" Within the Planning Literature

The assertion of a fairly rigid definition of "family stability" has been a central process within the history of public housing construction. As planning historian Peter Marcuse notes, where European forms of social housing often experimented with communal kitchens and other design approaches that invited alternatives to nuclear family structure, mid-century proponents of US public housing "held very conventional conceptions of family life and gender conceptions."[48] As a

[48] Peter Marcuse, "Interpreting 'Public Housing' History," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 12, no. 3 (1995): 240–58.

consequence, reinforcing the "conventional family structure" was an important pillar upon which public housers initially built their support.[49] Likewise, public housing's undoing – the public campaign against public housing communities -- often turned on notions of familial "disrepute."[50]

Ethnographic methods provide opportunities to complicate this narrative. Not only do they allow occasion to broaden definitions of family beyond socially constructed norms, based in local practice rather than universalizing ideals, ethnographic methods also produce qualitative evidence that can be mobilized in order to assess (and potentially, challenge) the normalizing claims about family that have taken hold within the discourse.

The contemporary family within capitalism should be understood as at once both a social-economic institution, as well as an ideological institution.[51] In this way, family parallels and intersects with housing, which, as Chakravartty and da Silva remind, brings together the material, the political, and the symbolic within a domestic context. In the social economic sense, the family exists to produce a range of uncompensated labor that is necessary for the reproduction of racial capital.[52] As Coontz puts it, family has come to mean that interpersonal and social space "where private and public spheres" interact. At the structural level, it functions as a way of "coordinating personal reproduction with social reproduction," a socially sanctioned

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[49] Marcuse, 246.
[50] Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 124-154.
[51] This idea is discussed in detail in Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family* (New York: Verso, 2015). See also, Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1987).
[52] Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism – an Introduction," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 64 No. 3 (September, 2012), 361-385.

place where "reproductive activities condition and are conditioned by the other activities into which human beings enter as they perpetuate a particular kind of society."[53] Housing within this dynamic functions as the privatized site that stages this uncompensated labor. It is within this private space-private family nexus that much of the labor of social reproduction necessary to racial capital is expressed and exploited. In the ideological sense, the family functions to invert the work of social relationships, by individualizing collective social obligations. Likewise, the notion of private property exists in contrast to and antagonistic to the social use of the land and other shared resources associated with housing.[54]

The private home and the normative family are keystone institutions within contemporary racial capitalist order. As such, their management and reproduction remain a principal concern, while any push to reorganize the definitions of "normative" family or to interrupt the total commodification of shelter in the form of private housing, for example, through the assertion and expansion of public forms of housing, has been met with fierce opposition. Or they have simultaneously produced some flexibility while broadening the disciplinary role and power of the state. They have also impelled compromises that allow for a seeming progressive shift that nevertheless remains guided by conservative logics that leave intact the fundamental values of racial capital – maintaining normative commitments to the private market and the private, nuclear family.

A moderately close reading of the history of housing policy in the post-World

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[53]Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900,* (New York: Verso, 1988).

[54]Barrett and McIntosh, *The Anti-social Family*; Chakravartty and da Silva, "Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt."

War II era reveals a number of ways housing policy centered (and helped define) normative notions of the private family. In this way, housing policy functioned as an adjunct within the larger state project of organizing resources and rights through the figure of the normative family. Public housing, like many New Deal policy initiatives, expanded social obligation to some low-income families among the most vulnerable to the ravages of capital, building a fixed infrastructure that could address some aspects of the economic crisis low-income people were facing (particularly as that crisis expressed itself through the inaccessibility of commodified housing). As this represented a challenge to racial capitalism's historical commitment to housing as a commodity, it was met with stark resistance by private housing interests (see some discussion of this in Chapter 2). One compensatory move housing officials made to address their interventions to this push back was to emphasize public housing's role as an ideological and disciplinary institution, particularly as it pertained to normative "family" life. Federal housing guidelines and funding stressed that public housing be for "nuclear, heterosexual families with children."[55] In this way, public housing has always played a role (though, often shifting in terms of objective) in bolstering family as an ideological category. And the state, which administers housing aid, has a history of mobilizing notions of the family in order to preserve and reproduce its power.

Within this larger genealogy, the history of housing towers, often referred to as "family high-rise" buildings, register at least two distinct moments in the state's shifting orientation toward the family. First, opening as they did in 1960, the

[55]Jon R. Norman, "Housing for Families But Not for People: Federal Policy and Normative Family Ideals in Mid-Century California," *Sociological Focus* Vol. 44. Issue 3 (November 2012), 210-230.

buildings came into being within a broader context that saw a liberalizing definition of "family." Though of course uneven and inconsistent, there was a nevertheless expanding acceptance of non-normative domestic arrangements integrating into the bourgeois ideal of family life. At the level of the housing tenant, older criteria that reflected a greater emphasis on the normative nuclear family, was displaced. In its stead, as Rhonda Williams notes, the opening of the high-rises represents a loosening of older criteria.[56]

Reflecting the contradictory and disjointed ways in which definitions of "family" were changing, and the general inaccessibility of those liberalized definitions to low-income black women who populated the family high-rises, whatever progressive gesture these buildings may have at first suggested, a corrective backlash almost immediately followed. In part, in response to deep austerity that accompanied the early 1970s, the buildings were almost immediately re-imagined in terms of their deforming effects on "family life," captured by Williams in what she called the discourse of "disrepute."[57] This became the pretext for state intervention to demolish them, discussed in Chapter 3.

But what is also clear is that the hegemonic form that "family" takes within contemporary racial capitalism is not a universal form. Nor does the "family" as a signifier need to name only one kind of relation. As Coontz notes, "family" becomes a space for reproducing social relations within a dominant order, but it can also be mobilized in an effort to "try to construct a new one."[58] It is clear in discussing the

[56]Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing.*
[57]Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing*, 185.
[58] Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (London ; New York: Verso, 1988), 14.

role of the family with public housing resident research participants that deviation from the perceived ideal is common. As will be discussed, it is in fact these perceived deviations that were mobilized by state authority as it attempted to discipline residents. This constructed deviance was read in threatening terms by a range of actors who interacted with public housing residents. The "deviant" form, as Cathy Cohen reminds us, holds significant power, as it flouts established orders and prefigures different ways of being.[59]

Chapter Outline:

Chapter one of this project constructs a history of Baltimore's racial geography. Through archival research, this chapter looks at the discourse that produced the "slum dweller" as a racially and sexually deviant figure, and "slum clearance" and the construction of racially segregated public housing as progressive interventions. Further, it looks at the practices of planners and private property interests and the mechanisms they produced in order to work collaboratively to erect racialized, sexualized, and classed partitions throughout residential space.

The case study in chapter two works from oral histories with former residents of the George Murphy Homes to develop an understanding of life within those spaces, through accounts that have not been captured in the formal archives. Further, these histories illuminate and encourage an alternative reading of the Murphy Homes' demise, one that asks us to re-think the narrative of stability and unfitness as that

[59]Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics," *Du Bois Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27-45.

relates to questions of black family life. What discourse organized the Murphy demolition? Recognizing that there was not one singular "voice" of dispossessed residents, but instead a range of competing voices, how does the narrative shift when HUD approved voices are displaced by those crowded out of earlier accounts of housing demolition? Further, what aspects of black female affective labor were embraced by housing reformers and what was ignored? What lessons can we draw from this case about both the material and cultural politics of Baltimore's housing demolition?

Chapter three looks at the HOPE VI program that has both underwritten pervasive demolition campaigns in Baltimore as well as the development of a number of new housing schemes. This chapter explores the link between the culture of poverty narratives that emerge from mid-twentieth century urban scholarship and the gradual integration of those ideas into policy prescriptions. At base, this chapter argues that the HOPE VI program and the intellectual labor that produced it should be understood within a larger genealogy that links nominally progressive policy interventions that have become popular policy approaches in the contemporary moment to a reactionary tradition that built cultural rationales based in racialized and sexualized norms in order to perpetuate and excuse underdevelopment and poverty.

Chapter four looks at the recent turn toward "mobility" as the preferred approach by policy makers to address the questions of poverty and substandard housing in places like Baltimore. In particular, this chapter looks at the reality of the voucher system and the role it has played (and is playing) in displacing building campaigns, and dispersing low-income residents. I will look at the life of one

particular Baltimore resident, and how her story is emblematic of a new approach to both managing impoverished actors and new regimes of financing that have leveraged poverty, racialized difference, and housing instability to generate new modes of accumulation and new avenues through which public resources are channelled into private hands. Further, this chapter looks at the role that liberal reform campaign efforts played in framing mobility campaigns as the ethical, "fair housing," alternative to public housing developments.

Finally, chapter five offers a case study of one specific West Baltimore HOPE VI neighborhood. The Heritage Crossing neighborhood is located on the space once inhabited by the Murphy Homes. Many dozen interviews over the course of multiple years have produced an archive from which I draw to explore the forms of sociality that emerge in this form of post-public housing living arrangement.

Chapter 2: Making the "Slum Dweller," Making the Slum

> "The norming of space is partially done in terms of the racing of space, the depiction of space as dominated by individuals (whether persons or sub persons) of a certain race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by spacing it, that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space. So this is a mutually supporting characterization that, for sub persons, becomes a circular indictment: 'You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has these properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself.'"[60]

> "Under the American idea we can't shoot or poison the slum dweller; we are being forced to either rehouse him or pay the cost of keeping him where he is."[61]

Introduction

The demolition of the George Murphy Homes produced what Mayor Kurt Schmoke called a "new front door" to West Baltimore and inaugurated the post-high-rise era in the city. This chapter explores that moment's pre-history. What forces produced this space? And what forces produced a public will that was so desirous to destroy this space that its demolition became a moment of public celebration and spectacle?

This chapter will investigate how race and the racialization process conditioned a particular set of residential arrangements that took shape in Baltimore during the early 20th century (what I refer to throughout as the city's "racial geography"). As Charles Mills notes in this chapter's epigraph, questions about what

[60] Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 42.

[61] Cleveland R. Bealmear, Chairman of HABC, January, 1944, found in "Plaintiffs' Exhibits - Exhibit 112 Cleveland R. Bealmear, Post-War Housing Program for Baltimore: General Statement (PL 44791-99), 1944-01 | UB University of Baltimore Library Archives," https://archivesspace.ubalt.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/74794.

it "means to be" white/black are always already questions about what it means to be white/black in space. Further, in concrete terms, these are questions about what it means to be white/black within specific spaces within the city.

Argument

This chapter maps two significant material processes that both shaped and defined the emergent welfare state and (as I will argue in later chapters) shaped the slow unravelling of the urban welfare state apparatus. Looking specifically at housing policy in the early 20th century, this chapter 1) maps the palliative deployments of state resources during successive moments of economic crisis, and 2) looks at how expansions of palliative modes of state practice constituted a racial/sexual formation project, elaborating spaces and resources for white domestic life through constructions of blackness – and in particular, black residential space – as a racialized and sexualized threat. This chapter unfolds chronologically, looking at how changes in the political economy and historical conditions radically shifted the realities of urban life, civic identity, and spatial meanings in the industrializing city. I will argue the following five, imbricated points: 1) There was an antiblack preoccupation at the center of early and mid-twentieth century urban housing policy; 2) Successive waves of material redevelopment of Baltimore relied on planning literature to "tell the story" of redevelopment. Here, the story being told relies on what I call below a "slum discourse" that attempted to make sense of uneven access to resources and punitive uses of the state by conflating material underdevelopment with narratives of cultural abjection; 3) The "slum" that emerges in this planning literature was deliberately constructed (sometimes at odds with historical definitions),

in racialized and sexualized terms; 4) The racialized and sexualized character of this housing policy was a reflection not simply of the federal state's commitment to white supremacy, but was the effect of sometimes intersecting sometimes competing interests of local and national actors, both public and private (to the extent that these distinctions can coherently be made) in contests over power that often leveraged racism in order to establish a material order; 5) The planning process itself, in narrating the transformation of the early 20th century city, did the ideological labor necessary in order to render coherent these discursive and material processes. Much has been made of the role federal government played in creating the conditions that made urban residential segregation possible and set into place a racial geography that continues to shape living arrangements, policy interventions, spatial valuations, and meanings into the present. What is of equal concern here is the role that local governments played in articulating with private market interests, and their collective effort to sync with, or, if necessary, push back against federal prerogatives. While these processes were always dynamic, and while specific expressions of policy may be better understood as semi-permanent crystallizations of competing agendas rather than concrete effects of a unitary agenda, balances of power between public and private interests change at different scales. And where the federal government was not immune to or necessarily at odds with the racializing projects of local developers and white property holders, local governments were often far more vulnerable to the agendas and amenable to produce policy that reflected their interests.

In unpacking the prehistory and the first fifty years of public housing policy

struggles in Baltimore this chapter seeks to do more than simply tell another story of white policy makers with proclivities toward discrimination. Further this is not a story of a city that failed to properly "integrate" its black population. Rather, Baltimore's racial geography and the material processes from which it emerged have taken their current form, "precisely because [black residents] have been 'integrated' all too well." In urban capitalism, Manning Marable notes, "the brutal exploitation of blacks" is a feature , not a bug.[62] Instead, the story that unfolds here is one of the state and capital centering blackness and mobilizing notions of racial and sexual difference in order to both produce and define a normative civic identity, at the center of which stood a normative "family" identity. By focusing on the racial and sexual dynamics of the family, on the centrality of the family to urban housing politics, and the centrality of housing politics to the material processes that circulate and distribute resources, this project seeks to foreground the myriad ways in which race and sexuality are essential, basic, operational categories within urban capitalism. It is simply impossible to read through the archives of city planning and not see the twinned narratives of capital expansion and racialized/sexualized anxiety that have accompanied urban growth and transformation. What I argue is that these are co-constituting forces. Further, I argue that by understanding race in sexualized terms, we develop a firmer understanding of the role race plays within the project of social reproduction, as well as the centrality of social reproduction to the urban capitalist project. As Chandan Reddy argues, far from simply an identitarian category, sexuality "names the normative frames that

[62]Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Boston: South End Press, 1999), 2.

organize our disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiries into our past and into our contemporary racial capitalism."[63]

The slum, like the high-rise that will be discussed in detail in later chapters, was imagined as "unfit for family life" by policy makers, planners, and property owners within the city.[64] The alterity of the raced and sexed figure of the "slum-dweller" hinged on the prevailing idea that they were incapable of enacting social reproduction in normative terms. Racialized difference and sexualized difference emerge within the planning literature imbricated. Their presence occasions and justifies a whole host of policies that ultimately circulate resources away from the poor and into the hands of the wealthy.

Denaturalizing the "Slum"

In 1860 Baltimore had the fourth largest population in the US, at 212,418 people. It also claimed the largest population of free blacks of any US city, at 27,898 people.[65] Baltimore was home to, arguably, the largest black working class of the early industrial era.[66] While never as important a trading center, nationally, as its urban rivals Philadelphia, New York, etc., the mid 19th century economy of shipbuilding and related maritime trades, blacksmithing, tailoring, shoemaking,

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[63]Chandan Reddy. *Freedom With Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[64]This notion that certain forms of housing were not fit for normative families, as imagined by those social groups shaping social life, runs through much of the dominant discourse throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century city. This exact phrasing, "unfit for family life," was employed by the Family High-Rise Modernization Task Force during their investigation of the conditions of Baltimore's high-rise developments. This task force will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

[65]United States Census Office, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior by Joseph CG Kennedy* (December 1864). https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1864/dec/1860a.html.

[66]See, for example, Andor Skotnes, *A New Deal for All?: Race and Class Struggles in Depression-Era Baltimore* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

printing, carpentry, grew to include heavy industry in the late 19th century, and with it a more diverse working class. Foundries, machine shops, railroad construction, and the manufacture of tinware, copper, and sheet ironware all employed a multi-ethnic and multi-racial group of workers. In spite of the pervasive antiblack practices that structured urban life in every US city, black Baltimoreans established black-controlled schools, were active in trade labor, and those who achieved middle class status were able to own property and purchase homes.[67] In observing residential life on Druid Hill Avenue, Booker T. Washington observed , "so far as I know, there is no city in the United States where the colored population own so many comfortable and attractive homes in proportion to the population, as in the city of Baltimore."[68] Historian Harold McDougall asserts that throughout the 1870s and 1880s, "race relations were relatively fluid," pointing to "a fair amount of intermingling between blacks and whites in public gathering places".[69] Historian Karen Olson has noted that residential segregation did not take hold in Baltimore until the turn of the century, noting that the city had no discernible "Negro quarter" until the early 1900s.[70]

In fact, the first neighborhoods to earn the "slum" designation in Baltimore were not the city's black neighborhoods. If these early "slum" spaces were racially noteworthy at all, it was because of how over-represented they were by whiteness. The 1894 Bureau of Labor's Congressional inquiry into urban housing conditions –

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[67]Harold McDougall, *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993) offers a thorough discussion of this history.

[68]Booker T. Washington in the *Afro-American*, quoted in Antero Pietilla, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010).

[69] McDougall, *Black Baltimore*, 38.

[70]Karen Olsen, "Old West Baltimore: Segregation, African-American Culture, and the Struggle for Equality" in *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History,* ed. Elizabeth Free, Linda Shopes, and Linda Zeidman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

the first federal report to employ the term "slum" when discussing urban residential space – reported that Baltimore's "slums" were not only not predominantly black, neither were they proportionally over-represented by black residents.[71] "White persons," the Bureau of Labor report noted, "represent the great mass of the persons residing in the slum districts."[72] Unlike New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, the three other cities the report had studied, where the black population was either proportionally consistent with or overrepresented in the areas designated slum, Baltimore's slums were disproportionally white.[73] At the time, 15.5% of Baltimore's roughly half million person population was designated "black, mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon," yet only roughly 4% of the slum population fit that designation.[74] Whites, who made up 85% of the city's population at the time were about 96% of the slum population. By comparison, the black population of Chicago's slums were five times greater than the general black population in the city.[75] Yet, in spite of this fact, by the early 20th century, the "slum" took on vastly different meanings.

The "slum" entered the US congressional record amidst a growing moral panic in the late 19th century. The work of Jacob Riis and others captured in detail – in both photographic and text form – images of a quotidian violence that industrial capitalism had wrought on the lived conditions of urban workers (mostly white, according to Riis's representation).[76] These cultural meditations pushed concerns

[71]Carroll D. Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia: Seventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor* (1894; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1970).
[72]Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.*
[73]Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.*
[74]Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.*
[75] Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.*
[76]Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Garrett Press, 1970).

about the negative consequences of underdeveloped urban space into the public sphere.

Two years after the publication of Riis's expose, the US Congress directed the Commissioner of Labor to investigate "what is known as the slums of the city." As Garrett Power notes, the term "slum" had been "used on the back streets of Dickensian London" as a slang reference to the squalid sleeping quarters of the urban poor, but Congress's directive represents the first known official occasion in which the residential space of a US city was so referred.[77]

The embrace of the term "slum" by policy makers and the construction of a kind of "slum" discourse in planning and policy circles enabled federal and local actors to advocate for and shape interventions that would address some of the more excessive expressions of poverty and exploitation without having to do the challenging structural work of addressing its underlying causes. While the "slum" discourse spatialized the crises of capitalism, it also suggested that its uneven development could be adequately addressed simply through greater access to capitalism's assets, such as "better housing" and homeownership. This prefigured many contemporary approaches that would come to define urban governance in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.[78]

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[77] Garrett Power, "Deconstructing the Slums of Baltimore," in *From Mobtown to Charm City: New Perspectives on Baltimore's Past*, ed. Jessica I. Elfenbein, John R. Breihan, and Thomas L. Hollowak (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002), 48.

[78] Scholars who advocate greater access to ownership as the solution to "closing the wealth gap" typify this approach. A recent iteration of this school of thought can be found in the "asset-based approach to poverty alleviation" discussed in such work as Thomas Shapiro and Edward Wolff (eds.), *Assets for the Poor: The Benefits of Spreading Asset Ownership* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005); Michael Sherraden, *Assets and the Poor: A New American Welfare Policy* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Caroline Moser, *Asset-based Approaches to Poverty Reduction in a Globalized Context* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2007).

Further, the "slum" as imagined through this discourse did important ideological work for early 20th century urbanization. The "slum" was constructed as antonymous to the "home." While the "family," the "resident" or even the "tenant" could reside in the "home," the slum had only the "slum dweller." Further still, discourse surrounding the "slum dweller" was often differently inflected, depending upon the racialization process. For some, slum dwelling was a contingent and liminal practice, where its residents were imagined as separable from their conditions, differentiated from the perverted and perverting effects of the slum, while for others slum dwelling was represented as an essence, imagining them as hopelessly bound up in and inseparable from the slum. The primarily European immigrant women textile workers who populated the "slums" of Baltimore's Fells Point, for example, in their "struggling for a livelihood" found themselves "living in such places out of necessity."[79] In contrast, black residential life, discussed below in more detail, was regularly collapsed into and conflated with the conditions of the slum itself. These differing representations of the "slum dweller" in popular media became more pronounced, registering a shift in thinking. As the slum became more firmly associated with black residents, it took on new meanings, shifting in the public discussion from something that was an effect of destabilizing poverty to something that was generative of instability. And as it did, it shifted within popular discourse as an indictment of urban industrial capitalism to an indictment of a perceived internal dysfunction of residents.

[79]"Our Working Women: Their Condition in Cities – Seventeen Thousand Interviewed," *The Sun* (February 1, 1889).

It followed that while policy interventions were initially mobilized to assist the "slum dweller," racialized and sexualized moral panic ensured that policy approaches soon shifted toward punitive state practices, and a catalogue of interventions dedicated to containment, circumscription, and policing.[80] The "slum" designation came to condition new spatial consumption patterns, in ways that would build material resources for whites, while pushing blacks into increasingly more concentrated, resource-poor, spaces.[81]

The Sexual Politics That Made the 'Negro Quarter'

This moralist approach to the slum developed alongside what Cedric Robinson calls a commitment to "racial regime" maintenance that had overtaken the white residents and planners of cities like Baltimore by the early 20th century[82]. Industrialization induced radical demographic shifts and by 1900 Baltimore's population had grown to 500,000 people (effectively doubling since 1870).[83] Large numbers of rural southern blacks arrived, pulled by the promise of jobs, and pushed by worsening economic factors, including the decline of the cotton crop, as well as the regime of white terrorism colloquially referred to as Jim Crow. Between 1880-

[80]See, for example, Samuel Roberts' discussion of the "slum-dweller" as pathogen in *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[81]A stipulation here: This is meant as structural critique, not assessment of black capacities to inhabit, stage resistance from, and or, revivify what Achille Mbembe called the "death worlds" of urban dispossession.

[82]Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory & Meaning: Blacks & Regimes of Race in American Theater & Film Before World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[83] United States Census Bureau, *Census Report on the Population of the Twelfth Census, 1900* (December, 1901) https://www.cencus.gov/library/publications/1901/dec/vol-01-population; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *The Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Volume I Population* (1913) https://www.census.gov/publications/1913/dec/vol-1-population.htm.

1900, Baltimore's Black population increased by over 50% (from 54,000 people to 79,000 people). By 1910, of the 558,485 residents of Baltimore, 88,065 were Black.

While urbanization drew an expanding and diverse group of residents closer together, it also precipitated a racialized and sexualized political response on the part of those invested in the established white civic order. Political assertions that "this is a white man's city" – a Democrat slogan during the 1899 mayoral election of Thomas G. Hayes, an "unreconstructed Confederate" – were accompanied by rigid enforcement of anti-miscegenation laws.[84] Robert W. Burnside, a black resident of Baltimore, was arrested in 1900 and ultimately sentenced to 18 months in Maryland State Prison for marrying his partner, Lena Holtgreve, "an attractive white woman."[85] The media referenced his "almost hypnotic influence" over her as a potential metaphysical source of their relationship, rather than the more likely scenario that their living and working in close proximity to one another – Burnside worked as a merchant in the employ of Holtgreve's father – precipitated romantic involvement.[86] Similar stories ascribing magical powers to black men pervaded local news media around this time.[87] When Burnside and Holtgreve decided to marry, they sought refuge in the black church neighboring the Holtgreve's home, before running off to Washington DC where Burnside would eventually be apprehended.[88] Burnside and Holtgreve's romantic relationship hints at the disruptive power of demographic shifts

[84]Bettye C. Thomas, "Public Education and Black Protest in Baltimore: 1865-1900," *Maryland Historical Magazine* Vol. 71, No. 3 (Fall, 1976); quote describing Hayes is from HL Mencken's 1941 memoir, *Newspaper Days 1899-1906* (New York: Knopf, 2013), 41.
[85]"Sentenced for Miscegenation." *Boston Globe* (November 14, 1900), Wed, Main Edition, 11.
[86]"Sentenced for Miscegenation," 11.
[87]"Under the Negro's Spell, She Says," *The Sun* (February 5, 1910).
[88]"Under the Negro's Spell, She Says."

and re-organized residential spaces, while the state's response demonstrates its capacity to use punitive policy to secure social commitments to racialized and sexualized norms.[89]

Between 1899 and 1911, the city council made three attempts to revoke black voting rights. In 1910 the white upper middle class neighborhood of Roland Park required all home owners to sign home owner covenants forbidding occupancy by Blacks.[90] Forrest Hill, Bolton Hill, and other similarly situated white residential spaces followed suit.[91] The most far reaching attempt to re-articulate the white spatial imaginary in the face of growing diversity was the proposed West Ordinance, an historic attempt not just at racialized segregation, but an effort to inscribe a formal racial designation onto every residential block in the city.[92]

Authored by Milton Dashiell, a white attorney residing in Baltimore, the ordinance was the product of grassroots, progressive neighborhood activism. It was

[89]"Under the Negro's Spell, She Says."

[90]C. Fraser Smith, *Here Lies Jim Crow: Civil Rights in Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

[91]Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood.*

[92]Baltimore City Archives, Ordinance 692, *Published Volumes of Ordinances and Resolutions 1910-1917* (RG 16, S.17). As Boger notes, "the ordinance" was in fact three different, successive, attempts to institute city-wide segregation policy, passed by segregation proponents between 1910–1913. "Only one ordinance was in effect at any one time, and they all were part of the same campaign and had the same purpose." See Gretchen Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City: Baltimore's Residential Segregation Ordinances, 1910-1913" *Journal of Urban History* vol. 35 no. 2, (January, 2009). A contemporaneous account of the campaign to institute residential segregation from the perspective of Ashbe Hawkins, a black, Yale-educated property owner, whose attempt to purchase property in an all-white neighborhood precipitated the earliest residential segregation campaigns in the city, can be found in Ashbe Hawkins, "A Year of Segregation in Baltimore," *Crisis Magazine* (November, 1911). Other contemporaneous media discussions of the West Ordinance include, "First Blow Against the West Ordinance," *Afro-American Ledger* (December 31, 1910); "West Segregation Law Still Causing Trouble Among Baltimore's Solons," *Afro-American Ledger* (January 14, 1911); "The New West Ordinance," *Sun* (March 15, 191), 1. Secondary discussions of the West Ordinance include Carl Nightingale, "The Transnational Contexts of Early Twentieth Century American Urban Segregation," *Journal of Social History* (Spring, 2006); Garrett Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style: The Residential Segregation Ordinances of 1910-1913," *Maryland Law Review* Vol. 42, (1983).

working and middle class whites – those who populated the Madison–McCulloh–Eutaw neighborhood groups – who first put the political pressure on the city council and the Mayor to enact this segregation.[93] Neighborhood groups "averse to the Negro invasion" pointed explicitly to a perceived threat of miscegenation as the catalyzing force behind their neighborhood activism.[94] In fact, as Nightingale notes, the argument that residential segregation would "bring peace" to a transforming city, was often supported by the argument that it would bolster anti-miscegenation laws.[95] The *Baltimore Sun* said as much in a series of editorials that built support for the segregation ordinance by drawing on already existing support for racialized sexual politics.[96] When City Solicitor Edgar Allen Poe (grandson of Baltimore's most famous literary figure) made his case for segregation law, he, too, did so on the grounds that it would extend a "continuity" from already entrenched views against inter-racial romantic relationships into the realm of residential policy.[97] In other words, the political commitment to residential segregation was prefigured by an already existing political commitment to sexual segregation.

The West Ordinance, named for Councilman Samuel L. West, was introduced by him in 1910. The City Council passed the ordinance, and it was signed into law by progressive Baltimore Mayor Barry Mahool, December 20, 1910. Mahool was considered an "earnest advocate of good government, women's suffrage, and social

[93]Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City."
[94]Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City."
[95]Carl Nightingale, "The Transnational Contexts of Early Twentieth-Century American Urban Segregation," *Journal of Social History* Vol 39, No 3 (Spring, 2006), 675.
[96]"Segregation Ordinance Should Bring Peace," *Baltimore Sun* (September 27, 1913); "The West Ordinance," *Baltimore Sun* (October 10, 1910); "Strong for West Plan," *Baltimore Sun* (October 11, 1910); "The West Ordinance is Constitutional," *Baltimore Sun* (December 20, 1910).
[97]Baltimore City Archives, Mahool Files, 451.

justice," though none of those progressive attributes conflicted with his segregationist approach to residential policy.[98] In putting forth his rationale for supporting the ordinance, Mahool asserted that racial apartheid was necessary "for preserving the peace, preventing conflict and ill feeling between the white and colored races in Baltimore city."[99]

The West Ordinance was one of the first and possibly the most extensive residential segregation law in the US. Its intention was to assign every residential block in the city a racial designation. "No negro can move into a block in which more than half of the residents are whites," with violators punishable by fine or imprisonment.[100] This ordinance, the *Sun* notes, "applies to every house."[101]

While a devastating effort, this approach to urban apartheid was politically untenable. The West Ordinance had inspired similar initiatives in metropolitan areas throughout the US. Resistance to the Louisville, KY segregation ordinance, which placed similar racialized limitations on the sale of property, brought a fight against the ordinance to the Supreme Court. The court ruled that prohibiting the sale of real property to Black Americans violated the 14th Amendment of the constitution. Ironically (tragically?), the court ruled it violated the rights of the *seller*, because such limitations violated the sellers' freedom of contract. In the 1917 case *Buchanan v. Warley* the court stated,

> A city ordinance which forbids colored persons to occupy houses in blocks where the greater number of houses are occupied by white persons in practical effect prevents the sale of lots in such blocks to colored persons, and is unconstitutional. A white owner who has made an otherwise valid and

[98]Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style," 289.
[99]Quoted in Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style," 289.
[100]Quoted in Power, 299.
[101] *Ibid.*

> enforceable contract to convey such a lot to a colored person for the erection of a house upon it for occupancy by the vendee is deprived, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, of an essential element of his property -- the right to dispose of it to a constitutionally qualified purchaser -- and may attack the prohibition under the Fourteenth Amendment in a suit for specific performance of the contract against the vendee.[102]

The decision effectively ruled that the particular form of residential segregation being practiced in Louisville (a practice modeled on Baltimore's ordinance) was unconstitutional. Following suit, the Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that the West Ordinance was unconstitutional.

However short lived they were, formal segregation efforts did establish a model and did set in motion particular processes for remaking the city's racial geography. Under the West Ordinance, Black residents were forced out of more economically desirable residential spaces and forced into increasingly smaller swaths of underdeveloped residential space. Once these distinctly "Negro Quarters" began to emerge as an effect of this policy, it followed that ideas about what constituted a "slum" as well as the characteristics of who populated them also began to shift. Public discourse did the work of fashioning new and specific meanings to associate with "slum" spaces.

A growing tuberculosis epidemic, for example, took on racialized, sexualized, and moral dimensions alongside this emerging commitment to residential segregation. While tuberculosis outbreaks tended to correlate with relative access to resources, concentrating in spaces populated by the impoverished, the "lung block" became as

[102] *Buchanan V. Warley* [245 U.S. 60 (1917)] Library of Congress. (cdn.loc.gov/service/ll/usrep/usrep245/usrep245060/usrep245060.pdf).

much a construct of the white spatial imaginary as it was a material fact.[103] In fact, the designation quickly came to stand in for all residential space inhabited by the residents who were poor and black. [104] Further, the spaces themselves, by virtue of the fact that they housed black residents, were increasingly framed as generative of disease and instability. "Infected house theory," held that tuberculosis passed from residents to housing and that housing was then a danger to pass the disease on to future residents.[105] The notion of low-income housing as pathogen animated early 20th century demolition campaigns. In conflating the infected house, the "lung block," and the "slum," with the low-income black resident, the city was able to re-code a social problem as a parochial one, limited to the concerns of black residents.

In fact, the biologization of race by way of tuberculosis panic opened up an opportunity for Baltimore to re-establish segregation ordinances. Mayor James H. Preston pointed to the "unhealthy state of the negro race" as a crisis that only newly devised segregation schemes could address.[106] In so doing, he proposed a new residential racial segregation ordinance that centered "public health" concerns. Likewise, he advocated for and actively promoted racial covenants among white home owners, on similar grounds, parlaying fear of the disease toward a greater segregative purpose.[107] With few residential options many black Baltimoreans – even

[103]See, for example, Samuel Roberts, *Infectious Fear* (2009). Also see, Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics of Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[104]Roberts, *Infectious Fear.*
[105]Roberts, *Infectious Fear*, 90-104.
[106]Quoted in Arnold Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore, 1900-1968," (May 3, 2003), 14, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 3: Expert Report of Arnold Hirsch, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[107] "New Segregation Plan," *Baltimore Sun* (July 2, 1918).

some with means – were forced to rent "shanties," to "double up," forced to live in substandard housing, even if they could afford better options.

Whatever the Congressional definition may have been in the 1894 Bureau of Labor report, the first "slums" to merit public comment in Baltimore and, therefore, policy interventions, were spaces of black intimate life. And just as the progressive city successfully segregated residential space, it just as thoroughly projected onto those newly established black geographies specific meanings that linked black poverty to domestic deviance contrasted with a normative whiteness. A 1907 treatise on black residential space by a white researcher argued that "low standards and absence of ideals" were to blame for black underdevelopment.[108] Low income black residents were "shiftless and irresponsible" and were "in some degree accountable for the squalor and wretchedness" of their residential spaces.[109] Janet Kemp's *Housing Conditions In Baltimore* (1907) recommended that the worst housing should be condemned and destroyed, with "no concern as to where the dispossessed would relocate."[110]

Racializing/Sexualizing the Slum: The Slum as Moral Failing

Janet Kemp's 1907 study, *Housing Conditions in Baltimore* attributed the "low standards and the absence of ideals " of the residents of one of Baltimore's most notorious underdeveloped spaces, Biddle Alley, to the "shiftless and irresponsible,"

[108]Janet Kemp, *Housing Conditions in Baltimore: A Report of a Special Committee of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor and the Charity Organization Society, Submitting the Results of an Investigation Made by Janet Kemp* (Baltimore: Federated Charities, 1907).
[109]Kemp, *Housing Conditions in Baltimore.*
[110]See also, Power, "Deconstructing the Slums of Baltimore," 58 and Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style," 297.

nature of the population. They were “in some degree accountable for the squalor and wretchedness” of the residential space, and she recommended that the worst of the housing there be condemned and destroyed, with, “no concern as to where the dispossessed would relocate.”[111] In a similar report produced in 1908 by James Waring, focusing specifically on Biddle Alley, such practices as "gambling” and “the cocaine habit” were said to “hasten the decay” of the residential space as well as “many of the degenerates" who inhabited it.[112]

In 1918, Baltimore's Alliance of Charitable and Social Agencies completed what was perceived at the time to be a comprehensive study of “slum life,” focusing on the “moral character” of roughly 9,000 city households, located mostly in Baltimore's more underdeveloped black residential spaces. The study, like much of the era's social science, sought to make sense of the material underdevelopment that defined these neighborhoods by assessing the moral character of those who inhabited this space. The study focused on the relative “stability” of the “families” at the center of these households, and noted that in “1201 cases,” at least one head of the household had engaged in “desertion, or non-support” or “marital infidelity.” Further,

> incompatibility, neglected, immoral or incorrigible children, failure of children to support parents or parents to support children, or neglect of a father of an illegitimate child to support it. Under the classification of abnormal or criminal practices, including drunkenness or heavy drinking, drug using, shiftlessness, mendicancy, immorality, thievery, manslaughter and assault, there are 694 cases. Under that of the withdrawal of an essential member of the family group, there are 280 cases of imprisonment. Under the miscellaneous cases there are instance of 61 women with illegitimate children. *There is here a total of 2,236 cases...in which the trouble is said to have had its origin in something out of the way in somebody's mental or moral make-*

[111]Kemp quoted in, “Deconstructing the Slums of Baltimore,” 58.
[112]James Waring, “Work of the Colored Law and Order League of Baltimore Maryland, Committee of Twelve, for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race” (Cheney, PA: Committee of Twelve for the Advancement of the Interests of the Negro Race, 1908).

up, [original emphasis].[113]

Biddle Alley became one of the city's first all-black residential spaces as a consequence of choices by local real estate interests, reformers, and policy makers. These segregationist policies were designed to push black residential life into increasingly smaller swaths of land, while annexing increasingly greater shares of urban property for white capital. All of this, at a time when the shifting racial demographics threatened to unsettle white control over the political and symbolic economies of the growing city. In becoming an all-black residential space, Biddle Alley also immediately became one of the city's most visible repositories of fear and anxiety over black residential life. The above selection of reports suggests a preoccupation with this space, and in particular, the ways in which its inhabitants produced and reproduced (or, more to the point, didn't produce/reproduce) the behaviors and norms that early 20th century civil society valued most.

The moral practice of Biddle Alley residents became an object of profound interest and scrutiny for the public, policy makers, and urban sociologists in Baltimore. But while similar spaces of white poverty emerged alongside the construction of Biddle Alley, the perceived moral failings of the residents of Biddle Alley – and similarly underdeveloped black residential spaces in the city – conditioned two simultaneous projects, both essential to producing what would become the contemporary city: First, the perceived moral failings of black urban residents was mobilized in order to rationalize the racialized poverty they were made

[113]Alliance of Charitable and Social Agencies, *Poverty in Baltimore and Its Causes: A Study of Social Statistics in the City of Baltimore for the Years 1916-1917* (Baltimore: Alliance of Charitable and Social Agencies, 1918), found in the University of Maryland's Hornbake Library Maryland Room.

to endure. The material suffering happening in Biddle Alley, policy makers would argue, was caused by the incapacity of black residents to accept and perform social norms. This was a residential community hobbled by its "degenerate" addictions, its own vices, its moral failings, rather than the structural functions of urban capitalism or white supremacy. Second, these spaces, populated by deviant actors, were presented as a kind of existential threat to the populations and spaces they lived alongside. That is, the intense scrutiny of these spaces produced and defined them within the public discourse as a threat to the civic reproduction process itself. This not only isolated black residential spaces from the larger public life, but in fact, situated these spaces as antagonistic to public life itself. As the state grew increasingly amenable to the idea of intervention on behalf of a struggling citizenry, particularly in response to the failures of capitalism precipitated by the 1929 stock market crash and subsequent economic depression, a focus remained on these twinned projects. Housing policy would remain attentive to what policy makers perceived to be the moral dimensions of poverty and housing policy would be mobilized to contain the moral threat that the slum and slum dweller represented to the larger public and the project of normative social reproduction.

Salvaging Capital, Expanding the Commons

At the national level, the failures of capitalism during the late 1920s and 1930s devastated the industrial working class. In the interwar period, Gross National Product fell by 25%, while manufacturing production fell by 40%.[114] Millions of

[114]Barry Eichengreen and Tim Hatton, "Interwar Unemployment in International Perspective," Institute

workers lost their jobs, with an unemployment rate that reached 25% by 1933.[115] The construction industry was devastated, and millions of workers who populated it lost their jobs as the Depression significantly slowed the pace of housing construction.[116]

The array of federal interventions that followed balanced the need to maintain and expand capitalist market principles with a continued commitment to preserving civic order which, as discussed above, was already underway in places like Baltimore and other cities transformed by black migration. Housing policy became an expression of this approach. Sometimes this policy was too tilted toward market priorities to truly establish a thoroughgoing or lasting ideological statement. For example, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), introduced in 1933, held firm to the state's market commitments, eschewing direct aid to individuals and instead channeled resources by way of low interest loans to local groups who would then use those funds to construct affordable housing.[117] As Heathcott notes, housing reformers lobbied to establish this kind of an approach because they imagined it would secure resources for a "submerged middle class."[118] Yet, this would prove to be largely unsuccessful, as it depended on the willingness of a class of private (yet, ostensibly altruistic) investors and potential landlords to take on the risk of building within an uncertain housing market. This group, in the main, did not materialize, as most

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for Research on Labor and Environment. IRLE Working Paper #12-88 (April, 1988).

[115] Eichengreen and Hatton, "Interwar Unemployment in International Perspective."

[116] AJ Badger, *The New Deal: Depression Years, 1933-40* (New York: Palgrave, 1987).

[117] Joseph Heathcott, "The Strange Career of Public Housing: Policy, Planning, and the American Metropolis in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 78, No. 4 (Autumn, 2012).

[118] From the work of Edith Wood, who saw the middle class as occupying an especially precarious class position during the depression, having access to some resources and the capacity to afford to pay higher rent but could not find housing, and/or those who were slipping economically out of this position and needed a leg up to maintain their middle class status.

private actors were simply unmotivated to build low-cost housing, as the rents necessary to produce a return on their investment exceeded what would have been affordable for most low-income households. [119]

Failing to entice private actors to develop affordable housing at a scale near sufficient to address the growing housing needs of Depression-era US cities, by 1934 the Public Works Administration's (PWA) Housing Division shifted to direct development.[120] Baltimore's Perkins Homes, a 652 unit low-rise public housing development, would become one of 52 such developments throughout the US funded by direct PWA resources. Yet, in spite of its success in providing a publicly funded and publicly controlled alternative to commodified housing, political pressure rendered the PWA program "economically inefficient." Too few units were built, and what was built proved to be too expensive to offset costs. By the time the final project was completed, the program had only created 29,000 units.

The Wagner-Steagall Act

Housing reformers, however, continued to push lawmakers to adopt a more thorough federal housing policy. Initiated by women reformers like Edith Elmer Wood and Catherine Bauer, and animated by the urgency of the Great Depression, by 1936, a new climate was emerging to pressure the federal government to construct a permanent public housing program.[121] This effort worked from the understanding that

[119]Lawrence Meir Friedman, *Government and Slum Housing: A Century of Frustration* (Chicago: Rand Mcnally,1968); Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[120]Heathcott, "The Strange Career of Public Housing."
[121]Eugenie Ladner Birch, "Women-Made America: The Case of Early Public Housing Policy," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* Vol. 44, No. 2 (1978), 130-144.

government needed to be at the center of construction of dwellings when the private sector was unwilling to build and made the "demand that publicly constructed homes positively support family life."[122] By 1937 Congress had introduced two housing bills, one provided by Senator Robert Wagner (with considerable contributions from housing reformers, including settlement house activist Mary Simkovich), and the other put forward by Rep. Henry Ellenbogen (with input from Bauer, in her capacity as Labor Housing Conference director).[123] The Wagner and Bauer coauthored compromise bill acknowledged the large role that demolition would play in housing reform and included a proposal for one-for-one replacement housing. Rent ceilings in the bill asserted that rent could not go beyond 20% of household income (would eventually become 25% and then 30%). And it directed the Secretary of the Interior to create the U.S. Housing Authority (USHA).[124]

This legislation was a compromised version of what grassroots housing reformers were fighting for, but nevertheless represented the first established federal effort to promote large scale public housing construction.[125] Of course, it should be noted that the federal government sought social authority to act, in part, by emphasizing the ways in which the policy would address the "slums." The act promised to

> provide financial assistance to the states and political subdivisions thereof for the elimination of unsafe and insanitary housing conditions, for the eradication

[122]Birch, "Women-Made America," 130.

[123]As Joseph Heathcott notes, in fact numerous housing reformers were active in the construction of this legislation. Journalists Jacob Riis and Theodore Dreiser, planning advocates Clarence Stein and Lewis Mumford, and housing experts Lawrence Veiller, Edith Elmer Wood, and Catherine Bauer consulted with progressive Senator Wagner to write the legislation, to champion the bill in Congress, and to see its passage through the complex politics of the New Deal. For more on this, see Heathcott, "The Strange Career of Public Housing."

[124]Heathcott, "The Strange Career of Public Housing"

[125]Birch, "Women-made America," 148.

> of slums, for the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income, and for the reduction of unemployment and the stimulation of business activity, to create a United States Housing Authority, and for other purposes.[126]

Preoccupation with the "slum" and the perception that public housing's role would be to "replace" slums within the contested urban landscape shaped the legislation in specific ways, which would ultimately increase the political power of local authorities.[127] Because public housing was imagined as a tool to rid cities of "slum" sites, it needed to be enacted simultaneously with an increase of the power of eminent domain. This linked housing, planning, siting, and building with demolition. Further, the political and legal realities – including, most importantly, judicial precedent that had limited the powers of the federal government to condemn local, privately owned property – required that the Wagner-Stegall Act place authority in the hands of local governments.[128] In turn, then, the Wagner-Stegall Act should be understood less as legislation that "created" federal public housing, and more as that legislation that created the US Housing Authority and conditioned the creation of local housing authorities. While we often think of New Deal policy as radically expanding the role of the federal government, Wagner-Steagall suggests something more complicated. In this instance, New Deal policy conditioned a new set of relationships that brought federal, state, and local government into new planning and policy alignments. Within this framework, Wagner-Steagall coordinated subdivisions of each government level to fund, plan, and execute public housing in cities across

[126]United States, "Housing Act of 1937," (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1938).
[127]Catherine Bauer, "Now, At Last, Housing," *New Republic* (September 8, 1937), 119-121.
[128] D. Bradford Hunt, "Was the 1937 United States Housing Act a Pyrrhic Victory?" *Journal of Planning History*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (2005), 195–221.

America.

By the end of 1937, Maryland had passed legislation enabling cities in the state to create housing authorities. Baltimore's city council passed a public housing ordinance on December 13th, 1937, establishing the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC).[129] These authorities were exempt from taxation, and endowed with powers of eminent domain.[130]

Constructing new federally supported housing developments involved compensating "slum" property owners, covering the costs of selecting and clearing potential housing sites, securing and maintaining necessary infrastructure for construction, along with covering the costs of constructing the buildings themselves. Further, the prior, attendant demolition campaigns associated with building housing also required significant public investment. All of this would come from congressional appropriations to the USHA, and in Baltimore, channeled through the HABC. The operational and maintenance costs once the projects were up and running, were (and continue to be) funded through tenant rents. HABC was chartered by the state and operates as a municipal corporation. As such, funding issued from the USHA came in the form of credit/debt, rather than direct grants. Construction of Baltimore's public housing stock, then, was enabled by the issuing of long-term (60-year), interest-free, mortgage loans with that debt retired through the issuing of municipal bonds.[131]

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[129]Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "History of HABC." https://www.habc.org/habc-information/about-us/history-of-habc/

[130]Joan Jacobson, "Dismantling of Baltimore's Public Housing," *The Abell Report*, Vol. 20, no. 4 (September 2007), 3.

[131]Alex Schwartz, *Housing Policy in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Neighborhood Composition and the Federal Continuation of Segregation

Demolition campaigns intensified in Baltimore during the first years of Wagner-Steagall. To undertake public housing development, the city passed ordinances declaring areas blighted as a way of triggering land purchases, housing clearance, and new construction. This pre-World War II approach to public housing planning was also overtly segregationist. A federal government not yet invested in questions of "race-neutrality," not yet fully considerate of the optics of its own "racial science" in a world increasingly being defined by Nazism and Fascism, remained openly in support of "separate but equal" policy.

In the Federal Works Agency's (FWA) "Site Selection Bulletin" in 1939, HUD's predecessor directed local governments and newly established housing authorities to abide by what has come to be known as the "neighborhood composition rule."[132] In their written policy, FWA manuals asserted that not only should housing projects be racially homogenous, but that each housing site should preserve the already existing racialized character of the area it would be built in.[133] This meant that among the first eight federally financed public housing projects in Baltimore, those that were planned in black residential spaces would be designated "Negro housing" (Poe Homes, McCulloh Homes, Douglass Homes, Gilmore Homes, and Somerset Homes) and those planned in white residential spaces were designated white (Latrobe

[132]Federal Works Agency, United States Housing Authority, Site Selection Bulletin at 7-8 (Feb. 13, 1939); for "neighborhood composition rule, see, Williams, *Politics of Public Housing*, 35; also see *Thompson V. HUD* Memorandum of Decision, 168-170.

[133] National Housing Agency, Federal Public Housing Authority, "Low Rent Housing Bulletin" 18 (Dec. 1, 1945); *Walker v. United States Department of Housing & Urban Development* (October 9, 2003) https://www.clearinghouse.net/chDocs/public/PH-TX-0001-0023.pdf.

Homes, Perkins Homes, and Armistead Gardens). As such, public housing planning and siting (and its attendant land transfers and demolition campaigns) further inscribed a racial and sexual order into the residential landscape. Further, beyond the initial establishment of segregationist housing, the housing authority closely monitored the racial demographics of each project, and instituted rules requiring approval for "change[s] in predominant racial occupancy."[134] The housing authority was expected to "[r]ecord race or nationality depending upon whether or not a special racial or nationality group is to be rehoused in a given project."[135]

These interventions were in many ways a continuation of and expansion of practices first set out in the West Ordinance. They intensified segregation and systematically reduced black access to residential space, pushing them into increasingly more densely populated swaths of land. Further, the "neighborhood composition rule" encouraged strategic use among segregationists of housing siting practices. White housing siting was often targeted in or on the border of racially contested (i.e., "mixed") areas. This worked to "reclaim" residential areas for white occupancy and to spatially impede black mobility.[136] The construction of McCulloh Homes public housing development, wrote Homer Phillips, "would offer a splendid

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[134] Federal Works Agency and United States Housing Authority, "Procedure for Securing Approval from the Washington Office of a Major Change in a Project," (December 20, 1939), http://archives.ubalt.edu/aclu/pdfs/R0002_ACLU_S03A_B03_F014.pdf?.

[135] Federal Works Agency and United States Housing Authority, "Suggested Procedures for Initial Tenant Selection and Renting," Bulletin No. 31 (December 17, 1939), 24-25. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Initial-Tenant-Selection-and-Renting.pdf.

[136] Arnold Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore, 1900-1968," (May 3, 2003), 16-25, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 3: Expert Report of Arnold Hirsch, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; Karl Taeuber, "Public Housing and Racial Segregation in Baltimore," (April 29, 2003) 17-32, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs' Exhibit: Exhibit 2, Expert Report of Karl Taeuber, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

barrier against the encroachment of colored."[137]

Baltimore's Latrobe Homes, for example, was one of three public housing projects to be built between 1933 and 1935, on slum clearance sites chosen by the city (in concert with a state agency, the Maryland Emergency Park and Housing Commission).[138] As a planned "white" housing project, it was understood from its inception that it would serve to block the movement of the black residents of East Baltimore, in order to protect property values of those in white residential areas. "Some Negro leaders voice a suspicion that the [Latrobe] site was selected deliberately to halt the northward expansion of the East Baltimore Negro district," wrote the *Baltimore Sun.*[139] A few months later, the *Sun* confirmed that limiting black mobility was in fact a motivating force in the siting approach the city took: "In explaining why the authority decided to develop the area populated mostly by Negroes," the *Baltimore Sun* reported, "the housing official said the body was actuated by the idea of enhancing the value of the white residential neighborhood north of Eager street, one of the boundaries of the tract."[140] The site was

> occupied by colored people living in extremely bad buildings…Health conditions are bad as indicated by the tuberculosis rate, which is the highest in the city per assessed area…The tract should be reused for a white low rental group of clerical and technical

[137] Memorandum from Homer Phillips to H. Tudor Morsell, "Inspection and Study of Project #2700--Baltimore, Md," Public Housing Administration, Project Files, Record Group 196, Box 206, National Archives, College Park, MD (July 30, 1934).
[138] Hirsch, 16-25; Maryland Emergency Housing and Park Commission, "Report of the Joint Committee on Housing in Baltimore," Public Housing Administration, Project Files, Record Group 196, Box 206, National Archives, College Park, MD (Mar. 19, 1934); "Report of the Associated Architects of Baltimore to the Maryland Emergency Housing and Park Commission," Public Housing Administration, Project Files, Record Group 196, Box 206, National Archives, College Park, MD (Mar. 19, 1934) (undated).
[139] "Plan Up Today in Removal of Negro School," *Baltimore Sun* (August 1, 1939).
[140] "City Negroes Crowded Into Small Living Areas," *Baltimore Sun* (February 12, 1940).

employees, as is peculiarly susceptible to replanning of streets and alleys.[141] This, of course, had the effect of shrinking black residential space.

The Perkins Homes offers another clear example of eminent domain laws being mobilized by the city and the federal government in order to push black residents, via "slum clearance," out of space desired by white capital. Opened in 1940, the collection of two-story, garden-style apartments built in parallel formations bordering central courtyards across eight square blocks, borders the historically white (quasi) working class Fells Point and Little Italy neighborhoods. The slum clearance that predicated its construction was intended from the start to remove black residents in order to create housing for "foreign born whites." An evaluation of the site undertaken by public officials in 1934 stated, "[t]his area by its location should house lower income industrial employees, and from a point of view of city wide balance of racial areas should be occupied by white families probably largely foreign born." The report goes on to situate this effort within the larger, "Great Migration"-era effort to manage the residential patterns of in-migrating black residents, noting that the area, "is not naturally a negro area but has through obsolescence, been partly repopulated with Negroes immigrating to Baltimore." The black residents, "which would be evacuated from this area should form a part of similar development for low rental families in a more desirable location." The "desires" the report is preoccupied with, it should go without saying, were the desires of white city officials and the deeper desires of white civic identity. That "more desirable" location was the Douglass Homes, built several blocks north in the Caroline Street corridor, at the center of

[141] "Report of the Joint Committee on Housing in Baltimore."

already underdeveloped black space in what would grow to be the heart of East Baltimore's "black ghetto."[142]

The McCulloh Homes were sited and developed on the northwest side of the central business district. According to the State Commission, the site was "emphatically a colored area."[143] Adjacent white and "Negro" housing projects were originally planned to "offer a splendid barrier against the encroachment of colored" into an adjacent "good white residential neighborhood," the Bolton Hill area, according to a federal inspection and study of the sites done in 1934.[144]

Some community members fought to expand black public housing beyond the center city. Several landowners advocated for suburban sites for public housing construction. Carl Murphy, president of the *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper, wrote an appeal to the Federal Housing Division of Public Works Administration, suggesting three specific suburban sites that were available for development. He never received a response. Housing officials would not entertain the possibility of suburban development, in spite of the fact that the economics were such that vacant land outside the city was far cheaper to develop than inner-city spaces with already existing housing (i.e., slum clearance).[145] This could be seen, for instance in the significant difference in costs associated with developing the vacant Cherry Hill area ($716 per acre) compared to what the average slum clearance site cost

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[142] "Report of the Joint Committee on Housing in Baltimore."
[143] "Report of the Joint Committee on Housing in Baltimore."
[144] Memorandum to H. Tudor Morsell from Homer Phillips.
[145] Letter from Carl Murphy, President of the Baltimore Afro-American, to Federal Housing Division of Public Works Administration. Public Housing Administration, Project Files, Record Group 196, Box 208, National Archives, College Park, MD (September 6, 1935); Commission on City Plan, "Redevelopment of Blighted Residential Areas in Baltimore," Baltimore Development Plans, Sheridan Library General Collections, Johns Hopkins University (July 1, 1945) https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/59079.

("approximately $60,000," according to the ACLU's *Thompson V. HUD* lawsuit).[146]

In this first wave of public housing development, no "Negro" housing projects were built on vacant land. What would become the Gilmore Homes was initially planned by HABC to be built on a vacant lot in the Washington Boulevard area of southwest Baltimore. That site "was abandoned after many protests had been filed against it" by the area's white residents.[147] In substitution, "slum" houses were cleared in the black neighborhood of Sandtown. As it became clear to federal and local planners that the vacant land for black residential space would be politically impossible to acquire, places like the Gilmore Homes were designed for the highest possible density, producing a need to pack as much black residential space into as small an area as possible.[148]

White projects planned for vacant land on the other hand, (for example, at Philadelphia Road and Horner's lane) were approved without incident. For example, HABC planned Armistead Gardens on vacant land in an outer city area as a white segregated project.[149] When it was completed in 1941, HABC sold it to the federal government as white war housing. Today it remains a highly segregated white community. In fact, Baltimore residents in a 1988 lawsuit won a claim against the neighborhood for maintaining antiblack real estate practices.

During the era of segregated public housing planning, in the aggregate,

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[146] ACLU, *Thompson v. HUD,* "Plaintiffs Statement of Material Facts Submitted in Support of Their Pretrial Memorandum" (Undated), 45, https://aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/statementoffacts.pdf.

[147] "Board Approves Housing Project," *Baltimore Sun* (June 28, 1939).

[148] "Negro Housing Site Approved by Board," *Baltimore Sun* (July 26, 1939); "Housing Authority Proposes Negro Slum-Clearance Plan," *Baltimore Sun* (July 19, 1939).

[149] "Armistead Sale Okay," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (March 13, 1941); "Going Up Fast," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (March 21, 1941); "Estimates Board Gets Slum Plans," *Baltimore Sun* (June 1, 1939).

roughly equivalent numbers of white and black housing units were built. What made early iterations of public housing policy so devastating for black residents in Baltimore was that the vast majority of black public housing built was constructed on land that was cleared through the destruction of already existing black residential space. While white public housing development increased the housing options for white residents of the city, the pairing of public housing construction in black neighborhoods with slum clearance produced a net loss in housing options for black residents. Fewer public housing units were built for black occupancy than were demolished. While the black population increased by over 24,000 residents between 1930 and 1940, public housing development during that period was conditioned by the eviction of roughly 2000 black families under the auspices of "slum clearance."[150] While public housing was a palliative for white residents in Baltimore – an expansion of the "commons" that provided working class whites one of many material staging grounds from which to increase their influence over how resources were distributed during the New Deal-era – racist housing siting worked to situate blacks outside of this "common struggle." Public housing often translated to black displacement and, ironically, for many, subjection to even harsher market forces. As the Executive Director of the Housing Authority noted in one article, tenants being moved to make way for slum clearance often saw their rent double.[151]

All told, the five housing projects built for black residents during this stage of federal public housing construction – Poe, McCulloh, Gilmore, Somerset and

[150] "Plight of the Non-Defense Workers," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (September 26, 1941).
[151] "Tenants of Slums Hard Hit in Moving," newspaper article (no masthead / undated) Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, Urban Renewal Files, Box 1, Folder 2; "Editorial, Plight of the Non-Defense Workers," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (September 26, 1941).

Douglass Homes – were each placed in spaces that were already exclusively black.[152] While each of the white public housing projects were built in racially mixed, contested spaces, which had the effect of expanding white hegemony over that space. As Arnold Hirsch notes, overall, HABC demolished 2,733 apartments and housing units to make way for public housing during this era. Sixty-eight percent of that housing was black-occupied. In its place, it built 2,514 new public housing units; 1,125 of those (45%) were designated for black use. In other words, public housing policy worked to expand the spaces of white domestic life and the material resources of white citizens, while further circumscribing black residential space and reducing those same opportunities for black residents of the city.[153]

War Housing, Production, and Segregation:

The material and infrastructural build up to WWII continued the work of concretizing the racialized inequities in Baltimore. While the federal government attempted to present a public face of race-neutrality, which became increasingly important during wartime, wartime enactments of housing policy at the local level produced unequivocally race-determined effects.

In preparation for the war, the US consolidated a number of building programs – including the US Housing Authority – under the auspices of the Federal Works Administration (FWA).[154] The Defense Housing and Community Facilities and

[152]Taeuber, 19; Hirsch, 24.
[153]Hirsch, 22-24.
[154]Heathcott, 364; Szylvian, Kristin. "The Federal Housing Program During World War II," in *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-century America* eds. J. F. Bauman, R. Biles, & K. M. Szylvian (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

Services Act of 1940 (aka, The Lanham Act) provided municipalities like Baltimore funding to develop low-cost housing for war workers, typically close to sites of industrial production. From 1940-1945 Congress authorized the use of public appropriations that lead to building significantly more housing. Baltimore's housing authority, via the Lanham Act, built four public housing projects, each still in use today.[155] These developments, Cherry Hill Homes, O'Donnell Heights, Brooklyn Homes, and Westport Homes, were each planned and sited reflecting the continued policy commitment to racist housing siting. Each was planned as segregated housing for defense workers.[156] Brooklyn Homes was constructed for white workers on vacant land in the white Brooklyn neighborhood in south Baltimore. O'Donnell Homes was built for white workers on vacant land in east Baltimore near the Baltimore County line. Fairfield Homes was built for white workers on vacant land in a census tract containing both Black and White residents, and therefore worked to expand white claims to space while continuing to crowd black residents out. When white realter groups, along with politicians and residents protested the clearance of white homes in Locust Point, this project was moved to a vacant land site in southwest Baltimore, to what is now Westport Homes.[157]

This wave of public housing construction in the city was heavily shaped by state production needs brought about by the war. This meant, in part, that in addition to attentiveness to white land use politics, these siting decisions also reflected a desire

[155]"Federal Defendants' Answer," *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 74, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[156]"Federal Defendants' Answer."
[157]"Housing Authority Proposes $1,400,000 New Slum Clearance," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (October 22, 1940); "Realtors Protest Low-Rent Project," *Baltimore Sun* (January 1, 1941), 10.

to provide white war workers access to centers of production (Baltimore's major wartime production sites: Bethlehem Steel, Liberty Ships, Glenn L. Martin Aircraft company). Increased production saw thousands of black and white migrants pour into the city from the rural south and Appalachia. With the incoming migrants, the rental housing market boomed. Somewhere on the order of 5,600 units of residential space were built in 1943.[158]

While public housing construction of any sort generated at best qualified support, there was typically more local political support for public housing construction that brought white residents into close proximity to industrial jobs than housing construction that brought black residents into close proximity to white neighborhoods. The Fairfield project built 300 whites-only units next to the Liberty Shipyards. The O'Donnell Heights development was built for white residents within mere blocks from Bethlehem Steel. Seven hundred units were built in what were becoming the white industrial working-class enclaves of South Baltimore, in Brooklyn and Westport. Yet no public housing for black residents was built in or near spaces of industrial production. Only in historically black spaces, much of which were far from the centers of wartime production, such as West Baltimore and East Baltimore, were public housing projects successfully proposed for black residents.[159]

A 1943 Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting Colored People exposed the fact that while blacks made up one fifth of Baltimore's population, they were confined to only two percent of its available land. [160] As one resident noted,

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[158]Peter Henderson, "Local Deals and the New Deal State: Implementing Public Housing in Baltimore, 1933-1968," (Ph.D dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1993).
[159]Email correspondence with Barbara Samuels, Maryland ACLU (April 8, 2008).
[160]"Pressure for better housing will continue," *Baltimore Afro-American* (October 20, 1943); Staff

commenting on the lack of access black workers had to sites of production, "there are practically no habitable vacancies in areas of Baltimore accessible to war industries."[161] Further, this limited access to land intensified the overall housing shortage black residents experienced in the city. While Baltimore's black population grew by the thousands during the build up to the war, by July of 1943, of the 35,000 housing units available to black residents in the city, "99.9 percent were occupied."[162]

Herring Run: A Study in the Production of White Civic Identity

In response, the federal government allocated some $8,000,000 in order to construct a proposed 2,000 temporary housing units designated for in-coming black residents. Federal agencies selected sites around the city for this housing, including one site along Herring Run Park, north of the Dundalk shipyards, and adjacent to the city's eastern suburbs. Herring Run promised to be the first black public housing complex built in space not already racialized black. Its construction was seen as necessary, even if it defied the established patterns that reinforced Baltimore's racial geography. Even white labor leaders seemed to back the project. A spokesperson for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) argued that the dearth of housing options facing black war workers meant that "Herring Run is needed."[163] Yet neither appeals for class solidarity nor appeals for a nationalist common cause during the war effort (as Hirsch reminds, this housing was, after all, built in the service of "a national

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Correspondent, "Baltimore Housing Authority Yields to Racial Opposition," *Baltimore Afro-American* (March 27, 1943).

[161]Henderson, "Local Deals and the New Deal State*,"* 214 n.123.

[162]Kennith Durr, *Beyond the Backlash: White Working Class Politics in Baltimore, 1940-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24-25.

[163]"Negro Foes Cancel Housing Protest," *Evening Sun* (July 26, 1943).

emergency, a war against Nazism") seemed to trump white residents in East Baltimore's commitment to anti-black spatial practice.

Immediately, white resistance to this proposal mobilized. The Eastern Confederation of Civic Associations (ECCA) held meetings and planned protests. Some 800 white protestors descended on city hall to protest plans to build Herring Run. "Middle class defense workers," local Lutheran minister and ECCA leader Luke Schmucker asserted, "would be beset upon by blacks in the streets, in the cars and busses, in the stores and movies, and even in the schools."[164] Catholic priest John J. Dolan, whose church was located ten blocks from the proposed site, warned that people would move out of the surrounding neighborhoods if the project was built, asserting, "people in Maryland have known their place and have kept that place."[165] As this protest would suggest, anti-black resistance to these residential struggles was animated less by notions of biological superiority, and more by converging investments in private property and the productive capacity of white workers. When Congressman H. Street Baldwin made his argument against Herring Run before the City Plan Commission hearings, he warned that black housing in white residential space would encourage sloth among white war workers, threatening the war effort. Black residents were idle, working "one day but not the next."[166] Exposing white working-class residents to black residents would drive down productivity.[167]

While local Democrats, such as Baldwin and Senator Millard Tydings,

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[164]Quoted in Durr, 25.
[165]Quoted in, Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 73.
[166]"Crowd of 800 Boos Mayor for Favoring Colored War Homes," *Baltimore Afro American* July 17, 1943.
[167]Quoted in Meyer, *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door,* 74.

attempted to kill the project, the Federal government continued to pressure the city. Republican Mayor Theodore McKeldin, caught between his commitment to address this housing crisis and his commitment to white populism, attempted to hedge, constructing the proposed development in terms of federal edict: "I am as much opposed to in-migrant colored people coming here as you are."[168] Nevertheless, he continued, there is "a problem of colored housing," that needs addressing, he told the crowd of protestors, "whether we like it or not."[169]

The city's endgame was to threaten to pass an ordinance that would make the construction of Herring Run illegal. Ostensibly responding to a 10,000 signature petition, the city council passed an ordinance that prohibited the construction of any housing project without first receiving authorization from the mayor, city council, or the board of estimates.[170] Of course, this is a clear violation of federal law, which endows the FHA with the right to select whatever sites it chooses for the construction of federally funded housing. When the FPHA once more attempted to establish Herring Run as a site for black public housing, Baltimore sued. Though clearly in the right, legally, the federal government conceded, and re-appropriated the resources toward other housing projects in the city, namely, Cherry Hill, Turner Station, and Holabird, each site isolated from white residents, and, as the *Afro American* reported, "bounded...by water, railroads, oil refineries and highways." Cherry Hill, it was noted, was bounded by both an incinerator and the B&O Railroad. The Cherry Hill site, Arnold Hirsch pointed out, "could not have been calculated to be more isolated

[168]Quoted in Meyer, *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door,* 74.
[169]Quoted in Meyer, *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door,* 74.
[170]Meyer, 75.

to win assent of local authorities."[171] Further, staying true to its commitment to white residents to keep black war housing temporary, the city demolished 1,000 units of black housing following the war, while leaving all white housing intact.

It should be noted that Herring Run is illustrative of just how deeply intransigent white commitments to a normative racial order were in relation to black residential life. The context of the war and the nationalistic advancements of the war effort enabled the enactment of de-segregative measures. As Rhonda Williams notes, racial liberals like Harold Ickes, the white former president of Chicago's NAACP and secretary of the Department of the Interior, and Robert Weaver, the department's black advisor, had mandated under the PWA that black workers receive a proportion of construction jobs and subsidized apartments.[172] However, federal insistence on nondiscrimination policies stopped short of addressing the kind of residential apartheid that was shaping the cities within which this industrial labor was happening. Any "attempts to attack segregation or dictate cities' racial policies," Williams notes, "would have likely sounded the death knell for much New Deal legislation, including its public works, relief, and housing programs."[173]

Post-War Housing and HABC's Plan:

The HABC's post war housing plan, as it related to black residential space and those who populated it, did not initially stray much from the war years policy. HABC remained preoccupied with the concerns of Baltimore's earlier, progressive planners.

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[171]Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore," 31.
[172]Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing.*
[173]Williams, 35.

The threat of "racial incompatibility" obtained. Preoccupied with "satisfactory habitual ways of living" and "destructive" influences over "real property values" the HABC redoubled its commitment to "racial distribution" (i.e., segregation), in order to reinforce "the existing social and economic structure of the city."[174] "Under the American idea we can't shoot or poison the slum dweller," The chairman of HABC commented, "we are being forced to either rehouse him or pay the cost of keeping him where he is."[175]

The housing crisis for Baltimore's black residents intensified by the end of the war. The Citizens Planning and Housing Association in 1944 stated,

> Weekly some Negroes are coming into the city. No new homes are being built for them. No vacant homes are available for them. They must pile up on and share accommodations with those who already live in these densely populated and segregated areas. Where one family lived a few years ago, there now live three or four.[176]

The contradictory approaches that Baltimore planners endorsed – sometimes within the same document – illustrate city planners' growing anxiety about housing policy and its power to regulate black residential life. For example, the Maryland Commission's City Plan, issued in July of 1945, supported the growing claims that Baltimore's black enclaves were profoundly over-crowded – no place more so than West Baltimore. (It pointed out, for example, that a tenth of the residential spaces

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[174] Cleveland R. Bealmear, "Post-War Housing Program for Baltimore: General Statement," American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records 3A. Baltimore Regional Studies Archive (January, 1944).

[175] Bealmear, "Post-War Housing Program for Baltimore: General Statement."

[176] CPHA, "Memorandum on Negro Housing in Metropolitan Baltimore," (August, 1944), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore; Ralph H. Weese, "FHA, Report on the Housing Market: Baltimore, Maryland Standard Metropolitan Area," Library (September 1, 1953), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 111A, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale.

occupied by black residents were housing more than 1.5 persons per room.)[177] Yet, the report argued for the demolition of wartime housing – effectively exacerbating this housing crisis – on grounds that its (semi) permanence would breed "dependence" on public resources.[178] Turning publicly held space over to the market, the report argued, created conditions in which "the physical abolition of one slum," could produce "an extra amount of tendency to slum conditions somewhere else."[179] Further, the report argued that displacement of black residents would produce greater concerns for white residents. Black "slum" residents, they argued, "take their poverty with them."[180]

HABC's answer to this growing crisis, was – in an echo of the pre-war approach – to construct a post-war housing plan that would raze areas designated "slums" and to re-build in those spaces (on slum clearance sites) higher density public housing projects. From the outset, the plan remained consistent with the city's larger history of conflating black residential space with "slum" space, and with the demonstrated commitment to the containment of black residential life within highly circumscribed built spaces. An HABC statement (issued April 1945) recognized as much: The plan intended to constrain "racial...movements within the city."[181] This was rationalized through, again, a progressive appeal to orderly governance.

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[177]Baltimore, Maryland Commission on City Plan, "Redevelopment of Blighted Residential Areas in Baltimore: Conditions of Blight Some Remedies and Their Relative Costs," (Baltimore: Commission on City Plan, 1945).

[178]Meyer, 73-76.

[179]"Redevelopment of Blighted Residential Areas in Baltimore."

[180]"Redevelopment of Blighted Residential Areas in Baltimore."

[181] The Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Effects of the Post-War Program on Negro Housing" (September 25, 1945), 4, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 113, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

Managing black residential mobility through the construction of public housing was supposed to militate against the "very violent neighborhood resistance" that would be provoked by the fact of "any in-migration of Negroes" into the city's established white neighborhoods.[182]

Local Government, Housing Siting, and the Antiblack Practice of the "Cooperation Agreement"

The 1949 Housing Act authorized city councils to negotiate directly with housing authorities.[183] This was a marked difference from earlier local implementations of federal housing policy, which in Baltimore, was coordinated by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) and the Board of Estimates, which was charged with overseeing city expenditures.[184] HABC was free to select prospective public housing sites, while the Board of Estimates would give final approval of payment.[185] This new arrangement made housing siting decisions more susceptible to localized power, as city council members became the object of lobbying and conduit for the interests of racial capital. Opponents of public housing, including the real estate board, used the Ordinance hearings to raise the specter of decreased property value and unfair tax burdens that public housing foisted onto white property owners, even as the housing authority initially disputed the tax argument and testified to the "pervasiveness of slum housing."[186]

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[182]The Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Effects of the Post-War Program on Negro Housing," 4.
[183]J. Hugh Rose, "FHA Housing Analyst, Report on the Current Housing Situation in the Baltimore Housing Market," (January 10, 1950). American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[184]Rose, "FHA Housing Analyst."
[185]Rose, "FHA Housing Analyst."
[186]HABC Monthly Report, (June, 1950) Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

By 1950, Baltimore's City Council enacted a "cooperation agreement" through which the newly empowered city council authorized HABC to develop up to 10,000 units of additional public housing under the Federal Housing Act.[187] In so doing, however, the city council asserted its own authority over the process of federal housing siting. The Ordinance incorporated the requirement that the City Council would need to "approve of" all future public housing sites.[188] As discussed above, this was an extension of the 1943 conflict over Herring Run housing, animated by the same concerns about white control over black space and black bodies. By granting itself this power, Baltimore's City Council asserted the right to determine the housing options for low-income black residents.[189] This assertion of local power did not go uncontested, but, ultimately, the power to determine the racial geography of the city was not a battle the federal government wanted to engage with Baltimore (in fact, power to approve housing siting remains with the city councils to this day). As the *Baltimore Sun* reported at the time, this imposition by Baltimore's City Council over the housing authority was read as egregious by many housing authority actors. The chair of the of Housing Authority Board quit as a result.[190]

Ultimately, the ordinance authorized the creation of 10,000 new public housing units, but limited the number that would be immediately constructed to 1,550, in the outlying sites of Armistead Gardens, Westport, and an expansion to Cherry Hill.[191] The Ordinance stipulated that all additional housing would be in "slum

[187]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077, (March 20, 1950), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.
[188]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077.
[189]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077.
[190]"Dr. Fenn Quits H.A.B., Blames City Council," *Baltimore Sun* (May 2, 1950).
[191]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077.

clearance areas."[192] This would maintain a shortage of black residential space. For each public housing project built, a "substantially equal" number of houses designated slum would be destroyed.[193] For each of the two newly built developments on vacant land (Armistead and Westport), those housing developments targeted for demolition were obligated to be from the same council district as the new public housing project. For every public housing unit built, in other words, an equal number of "slum" housing units would be demolished. In the Waverly neighborhood and in the residential spaces adjacent to the Johns Hopkins University Hospital campus, for example, roughly 1,000 Black residents were displaced while 178 units intended for Black use were built. By contrast, roughly 200 white residents were displaced, while 769 units intended for white residents were built.[194] This, coupled with the stricter income criteria established by the 1949 Housing Act, ensured that the local/federal nexus of policy interventions markedly decreased housing options for low-income Black residents of Baltimore.[195]

This public policy commitment to a Black housing shortage was only intensified by the fact that 1950 saw virtually no new housing construction designated for black residents. In July the Urban League wrote Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. to emphasize the fact that virtually none of the 8,000 building permits issued by the city so far that year were intended for Black housing development. In a letter to the

[192]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077.
[193]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077.
[194]"Report of Field Trip to Baltimore, Maryland March 19-22, 1951, by Richard H. Kline, Assistant Director of Development, memo to Charles C. Beckett Philadelphia Field Office PHA," (April 1951). Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.
[195]Baltimore City Council, Ordinance No. 1077; "The Fight for Public Housing in Baltimore," (April 1, 1950). *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 115B, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

Philadelphia field office, a Housing and Urban development official touring Baltimore housing sites noted that local policy precipitated, "an appreciable displacement of families" from available housing.[196] No matter where one was situated on the continuum of political ideology or what scale of governance, the debate and its resolution centered on an "across-the-aisle" commitment to the containment of black residential life.

The local conflicts over public housing siting shaped not just the local racial geography but the racialized spatial dynamics of the entire metropolitan area. While HABC had the authority through Maryland Law to develop housing up to 10 miles outside of Baltimore, the 1950 Ordinance limited all future public housing sites to the City.[197] While HABC drew up plans for building projects on vacant land in the outer-city white neighborhoods of Violetville and Belair-Edison, white popular resistance made this impossible. White populists in and outside of the city feared that nominally "white" public housing projects built in white residential space would quickly become open to black residents. Reading the tea leaves, white residents also anticipated that in the wake of the *Shelley* decision, and the changing national commitments to overt-white supremacy (a growing embrace of the doctrine of "race-neutrality"), the housing authority would soon abandon segregated public housing altogether. Quoting the "Fight for Public Housing in Baltimore":

> There was...a fear that the project [Violetville and Belair-Edison] would actually be occupied by Negroes despite the Authority's statement that it was intended for white occupancy. An ingenious variation on this theme was the allegation that in view of the Supreme Court's recent decision barring enforcement of restrictive covenants, it would only be a very short step to a

[196]"Report of Field Trip to Baltimore, by Richard H. Kline."
[197]Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Practice," 38-41.

similar Supreme Court decision barring segregation in public housing projects.[198]

In the face of this white opposition, HABC substituted the Westport Extension site, adjacent to Westport Homes, and the Claremont Homes site, adjacent to the Armistead Gardens project, for the Violetville and Belair-Edison sites. Federal and local officials restricted these two sites to white occupancy.[199] HABC was aware that the City Council would not approve the Cooperation Agreement without a provision permitting the Council to approve sites. As a compromise, it initiated a proposal to limit the Cooperation Agreement to the three vacant sites and require that the Cooperation Agreement could only be extended by future Council action. The City Council, however, went on record as opposing further consideration of vacant site projects, and indicated that future low-rent projects in Baltimore must be restricted to slum sites.[200] The Mayor signed the legislation only after obtaining HABC's assurance that the two vacant land projects in white areas, Westport Extension and Claremont Homes, would be limited to white occupancy.[201] By rearranging the ways in which public housing was sited, and asserting local stratagem in order to circumvent the federal government, local property interests were attempting to

[198]"The Fight for Public Housing in Baltimore."

[199] "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-14 (Armistead)" (Sept. 27, 1950), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 116, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-13 (Westport)" (Sept. 8, 1950), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 117, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[200]"The Fight for Public Housing in Baltimore at 9" (April 1, 1950).

[201]Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore," 38-41; "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-14;" "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-13;" "Sinclair Project Rumor Denied By Mayor," *Baltimore Sun* (1950), Maryland Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore-Housing.

frustrate a race-neutral housing order to come out of DC.

The vacant land next to Cherry Hill war housing project was determined to be the "only politically acceptable vacant negro site in the City."[202] Federal and local housing officials were fully aware that the Cherry Hill site and the slum clearance sites approved by the City Council in the early 1950s were not sufficient to address the crisis of black residents displaced by urban renewal projects. It was clear to all the actors involved that displaced black residents would be forced out into a housing market in which severe racialized segregation produced "shortages," making it difficult for black Baltimoreans to secure other housing. Further, Federal officials acknowledged that "the availability of housing for either rental or sale" for those white residents ineligible for public housing was "practically non-existent in the private housing market" for black residents.[203]

The federal government funded the development of FHA-subsidized rental housing limited to white occupancy in Baltimore and its suburbs while acknowledging, in a 1950 report on the housing situation in Baltimore, the urgent need for "Negro housing," the "shortage of land that can be used for new housing for non-white occupancy," and the roots of the shortage in "opposition to changing land use in the market." Ultimately they endorsed the logic of continued segregation. The "land on which housing for the Negro population can be developed," they noted, "is much more difficult to obtain [than for white occupancy]. Traditional land use can be

[202] Quoted in Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore," 38-41.
[203] Hirsch, 37-38; J. Hugh Rose, "FHA Housing Analyst, Report on the Current Housing Situation in the Baltimore Housing Market" (Jan. 10, 1950) Maryland Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore-Housing; "Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline, Report of Field Trip to Baltimore, Maryland March 19-22, 1951," (April 25, 1951), Maryland Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore-Housing.

changed only gradually in this respect in Baltimore as in other cities."[204]

HABC abandoned efforts to obtain approval for another vacant land site for black residential space in addition to the Cherry Hill site approved by the City Council. After considering 39 possible vacant land sites, HABC concluded in a 1951 memorandum that "[a]ny other [vacant land] sites within the City would either be highly undesirable from a planning point of view or would precipitate a major political controversy," i.e., white opposition. Further,

> Detailed investigation of each of three possibilities indicated that Numbers 1 and 34, both in the Cherry Hill neighborhood, were the only ones which could be selected for negro occupancy with some degree of assurance that a political storm would not ensue. The southern half of Site #27, for example, would appear to be about as thoroughly isolated from surrounding development as is possible within the City limits, and yet this is the area that precipitated the well-known Herring Run controversy during the war.[205]

As a result, between 1950 and 1956, black residents were pushed out to the far flung Cherry Hills development, where Cherry Hill Extensions I and II were erected, adding 993 units of black residential space to the 600 units already built initially as war housing.[206] The Cooperation Agreement that gave control of public housing siting to the Baltimore City Council, what the ACLU, in its lawsuit against the city on the grounds that "poverty concentration" disproportionately disadvantaged black residents, gave the racial formation project that was postwar housing policy a "pocket

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[204] Rose, "FHA Housing Analyst, Report."

[205] "Memorandum from Philip Darling to Oliver C. Winston," (July 18, 1951). Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

[206] "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-12 (Cherry Hill)" (Sept. 8, 1950), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 119, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; "Development Program, Project No. MD 2-17 (Cherry Hill)" (July 19, 1951), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 119A, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

veto" to marshal in the face of any federal threat to practice race-neutrality.

The 1950 ordinance remains effective, governing the selection and approval of sites for public housing. Since 1950, each new public housing site has required City Council approval "extending" the Cooperation Agreement to the site and, for any project located on vacant land, a lifting of the slum site requirement. The 1950 ordinance remains a continuing "vestige of de jure segregation."[207]

Historicizing the Housing Towers:

Family high-rise towers like the Murphy Homes were historically unique constructions. To fully understand the political and intellectual labor of their residents, it is necessary to historicize (and therefore, make legible the political and ideological dimensions of) the Murphy Homes and the specific policy approach that produced them. In succession, two distinct yet articulating processes unfolded during the 1950s that shaped the conditions of possibility for the Murphy Homes and the invention of public housing towers as the "family high rise" replacement to the predominantly black residential "slums." First was an expansion of Urban Renewal and its use increasingly as a demolition project. As elaborated above, the sustained campaign of housing demolition shrank the number of housing options available to black residents in Baltimore, particularly those available through the private market.

[207]Letter from Thomas Perkins to Betty Parker with attached ordinances (July 26, 1989), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 123, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; "Legal Basis for Housing Authority of Baltimore City" (undated),), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 124, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

Second, what HUD documents referred to as the "handwriting on the wall," portended a coming federal commitment to desegregation, which as will be discussed below, did not necessarily expand housing options for black residents, so much as it circumscribed them within a public housing program, one which was pushing residents into more densely concentrated housing arrangements and becoming increasingly racially homogenous while not coincidentally becoming more stigmatized by the larger society. Add to this the fact that the black population in Baltimore was growing, and what emerged in the mid-century city was a set of housing policies that gestured toward inclusion and the liberalization of public resources, while accelerating the transformation of public housing into an exclusively black and increasingly denigrated institution. This transformation laid the groundwork for housing officials and policy makers to leverage the presence of densely populated black residential spaces – imagined, socially, as deviant spaces, while simultaneously alienating those who populated them – in ways that ultimately drove land use practices that were framed as reforms in the interests of the residents, but which clearly were most beneficial to private capital.

Urban renewal

Under the progressive rubric of "Urban Renewal," between 1951 and 1960, the city demolished thousands of housing units. Much of that housing was black residential space, "razed to make room for government buildings and other businesses."[208] This work would come to displace thousands of black households (as

[208] Office of Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, An

well as some white households as well) and continue a process of limiting black housing options. As an exchange between the director of Baltimore's Urban Renewal and Housing Agency and the director of the Commission on Civil Rights noted, between 1951 and 1960 close to 4,000 black households were displaced by urban renewal projects (along with 252 white households).[209]

Like pre-war public housing siting, resources for the redevelopment of blighted city neighborhoods came from a federal fund, but target neighborhoods were determined by the local government. This dynamic lends itself to what might best be described as non-democratic modes of decision making, as the logic of private development insinuated itself into the governing process.[210] The City Council, actively influenced by the local real estate interests, stating "blighted and unruly enclaves in east and north Baltimore threaten to drive down the property values of their more surefooted neighbors," focused redevelopment efforts on sites that were either historically black (Hopkins-Broadway) or characterized as "mixed race" (Waverly).[211] This process in most instances produced residential spaces designed exclusively for white consumption, and more perniciously, produced those spaces

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Historical and Baseline Assessment of Hope VI, Vol. I, Cross-site Report (August 1996).

[209]"Letter from RL Steiner to Berl I. Bernhard, (June 27, 1961), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 156, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[210]This is not to suggest that it is through this dynamic alone that private interests insert themselves into otherwise independent democratic processes or even that there is such a thing as a democratic process that operates independent of capital within a capitalist society. Rather, I highlight this in an effort to elucidate one specific mode through which the private converges with the public. In this case housing reformers have framed privatization as the natural, non-political, and *only* approach worth acknowledging. Likewise they have framed the state as a moral actor animated by a drive to "clean up" the "blight" of under-developed space. The conflation of racial and sexual difference with "blight" instrumentalizes this difference in a way that facilitates resource transfers; in this case the transfer of access to land away from more marginalized residents (low-income, and non-white residents) and toward those who have historically been less marginalized.

[211]"Agency Approves Home Plan Shift," *Baltimore Sun* (October 4, 1958).

through a logic that was shaped entirely by white governing prerogatives.[212]

"In the Waverly area," for example, the Urban League noted at the time, "for 50 years white and colored families have lived side by side harmoniously."[213] The substance of the Urban League's claim (however clouded it may be by the sentimentalizing language) was true. As urban renewal re-shaped the Waverly neighborhood, the redevelopment project removed 100 black families from the area and built an additional 291 units that would be inhabited by white residents.[214] Pointing to this, the Urban League began its campaign against the segregative effects of urban renewal, asserting that it portends "a further contraction of land available in the city for the housing of Negroes."[215] These efforts, utilizing public funds to displace black residents and build up white housing stock, the Urban League called "abhorrent," arguing the program gave "official sanction to segregation in the name of redevelopment."[216] As the NAACP argued at the time, to the federal government, these redevelopment initiatives represented "a backward step because it clears an area where the population is interracial at this time, but requires racial segregation when the new dwellings are constructed."[217]

Another example of this dynamic would be the Hopkins-Broadway re-

[212]HABC Monthly Report (June, 1950).
[213]"Letter to Nathaniel S. Keith, Director, Division of Slum Clearance and Urban Development, from Clarence Mitchell, Director, Washington Bureau, NAACP," (December 17, 1951), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 127, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[214]"Letter to Nathaniel S. Keith."
[215]"Memorandum to the Mayor and City Council from the Baltimore Urban League," (July 6, 1950), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 125, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; "City Warned on Two Housing Programs," *Baltimore Sun* (June 30, 1950).
[216] "Memorandum to the Mayor and City Council from the Baltimore Urban League."
[217] "City Warned on Two Housing Programs."

development. This project forced another 956 black families from their homes (as well as 106 white families). This housing was replaced with 478 housing units quickly populated by whites (with an additional 178 units on the outskirts of the neighborhood reserved for black residents).[218] As discussed above, targeted neighborhoods reflected the converging priories of local government and local capital, which was sometimes at odds with larger federal shifts. For example, the Racial Relations Office within the federal Housing and Home Financing Agency (HHFA) chastised local authorities, accusing them, of "'Negro clearance,'" and pointing out that the project converted what it termed a "racially flexible area" to one shaped by racialized exclusion "and the reduction of land areas available to Negro residence."[219] In spite of the HHFA's recognition of the racist practice underway, the institution nevertheless approved the Baltimore projects and rejected attempts made by civil rights organizations and its own Racial Relations office to address the segregation. Here, then, with these two early urban renewal projects, we see the blueprint that produced a postwar black housing crisis that high-rises responded to: Public resources were mobilized, steered by local governance and a public-private alliance to protect and expand white property interests, in this case through the displacement of hundreds of black residents from historically black or integrated residential space and expanding prospective land claims of white residents.[220]

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[218] "Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline."

[219] "Memorandum to N.S. Keith, Director, DSCUR, from George B. Nesbitt, Special Assistant (Racial Relations), Racial Policy in the Delineation of Project Areas," (August 30, 1951), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 128, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[220] "Letter from R. L. Steiner to Berl I. Bernhard," (June 27, 1961), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

The Housing Acts of 1949 and of 1954 along with such personnel shifts as the appointment by Eisenhower of conservative banker Albert Cole to the head of the HHFA, signaled further business friendly interventions to public housing and urban renewal.[221] The mid-century federal housing program deemphasized providing immediate housing assistance to moderate income families, and intensified clearance programs in predominantly non-white spaces in order to make room for market-rate residential and commercial construction. The Housing Act of 1954 required local housing officials to demonstrate how urban renewal efforts and proposed housing programs contributed to the elimination of "blight," which, as noted above, lacks a precise urban planning definition, and as such grafted an ideological component to these housing acts that translated in practice to the further elimination of black residential space. These policies had the effect of further displacing black residents, while also abandoning any pretense of concern for the ongoing housing or broader social and economic needs that earlier public housing approaches maintained. While it is important to not lose sight of the negative effects of earlier housing programs' social engineering agendas, it is clear that the government's move away from resource allocation to family housing led to further anti-black outcomes. Hirsch and others have observed an ironic convergence of an anti-segregation discourse beginning to circulate through the federal government, HUD, and local housing authorities, at this moment when policy choices seemed to have exacerbated already existing racialized housing schemes.[222]

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[221] Arnold Hirsch, "'The Last Most Difficult Barrier': Segregation and Federal Housing Policy in the Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1960," (Washington DC: Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 2005) https://www.prrac.org/pdf/hirsch.pdf.

[222] Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago:

Public housing worked to further instantiate the city's racial geography by serving as the destination for those displaced by urban renewal. As Baltimore's Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., noted in 1956, "[p]ublic housing has carried a substantial part of the relocation load in the past and it may be expected to carry a similar proportion in the future."[223] A contrite HUD, but one no less committed to the discipline of black residents through housing policy,[224] admitted in 1985 before the US Congress that "[t]he link [of public housing] with urban renewal was explicit." Moreover, siting policies "promoted the provision of replacement housing in the same general area as that from which the displacement occurred," ensuring that non-white residents displaced by urban renewal did not make their way into white neighborhoods (not that these neighborhoods were ever actually open to them, considering the political economic impediments).[225] The inevitable result, HUD notes, "was that a large portion of public housing units built during the 50s and 60s" were built in historically non-white spaces. As such, public housing siting choices operated to preserve the spaces of white private property, utilizing public housing as a way of partitioning residential space along racial lines, and further, rendering those lines as demarcating both black from white space, but also public from private space, which is to say, space opened up to or violable by state intervention from that closed

University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[223]Report of the Urban Renewal Study Board to Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. (September 12, 1956).

[224]Here, as in most places in this project, I am in conversation with the work of Rosemary Ndubuizu, see Rosemary Nonye Ndubuizu, *"*Where Shall the Monsters Live?" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers University, 2017).

[225]"John J. Knapp, General Counsel, US Department of Housing & Urban Development, Submission to the Hearing of the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development, Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, on Discrimination in Assisted Housing," (November, 1985). *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 32, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

off from the state acting on it with impunity. “It is largely because of progressive urban renewal policies and their dependence upon public housing as a relocation resource,” HUD's attorney, Knapp, noted in 1985, “that the tenant population” became increasingly, and then close to exclusively, black.[226] It is during this moment that public housing was being racialized as black residential space, and simultaneously (and consequently) that public housing space was being re-imagined both as “disreputable,” and therefore inviting of punitive state practice.

By 1954 seven of Baltimore's public housing facilities were exclusively Black. There were 3369 units in total: McCulloh Homes (434 units), Poe Homes (298 units), Douglass Homes (393 units), Gilmor Homes (587 units), Somerset Homes (420 units), Cherry Hill Homes (600 units) and Cherry Hill Extension I (637 units). Each remains between 99-100% black today. By contrast, of the seven *de jure* white public housing projects in Baltimore City, those built for exclusively white populations prior to mid-century -- Perkins Homes (688 units), Latrobe Homes (701 units), Brooklyn Homes (500 units), O’Donnell Heights (900 units), Claremont Homes (292 units), Fairfield (300 units), Westport Homes (200 units) and Westport Extension (232 units) – each was “desegregated” throughout the 1960s. By 1980 each of these, too, was almost exclusively black.[227]

In fact, the recognition that segregated public housing of the pre-war and early post-war era was on the verge of becoming racially homogenous housing during the Civil Rights Era pushed some housing officials to advocate for policies that would

[226] “John J. Knapp, General Counsel.”
[227] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, https://www.habc.org/.

encourage more white residents into public housing. Assuming (correctly) that increased presence of black residents, and an affirmation of an already existing sense among reactionaries that public housing was "black housing," would serve to further alienate public housing from public support, some policy makers advocated for higher income ceilings as a means of catering to white applicants. Housing officials viewed a white public housing exodus coupled with income regulations that discouraged white applicants as threatening the reputation of public housing, opening it up to the material disinvestment that comes with antiblackness. Ironically, Williams notes, "white people, who earned more money than black people, received special attention because they represented disappearing stability for officials."[228] In general, this was part of a larger effort on the part of white housing officials to "make public housing more attractive to non-welfare families."[229]

The "Handwriting is on the Wall:" Housing Choice and Black dispossession:

In spite of housing officials' efforts to court and maintain white residents, by the time of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Baltimore's public housing had transitioned to an almost exclusively black residential project, and housing policy was singularly focused on managing black residential populations within exclusively black residential spaces. What processes facilitated this transformation?

The ACLU, in a *Thompson v HUD* brief, noted that "as late as 1958...the official federal policy was that public housing could be provided on a 'separate but

[228]Williams, *Politics of Public Housing*, 105.
[229]Quoted in Williams, 105.

equal' basis."[230] In April of 1954, in a memo to Eugene M. Feinblatt, the Housing Authority's general counsel, HABC Director of Management Ellis Ash asked for a summary of cases from around the US that had found "segregation in low-rent projects...unlawful"[231] By June, HABC recognized the need to "embark, at the very least, on a policy of limited integration." The dominant "separate but equal" approach was losing favor. As HABC observed, while "there is no rule of law which would prohibit segregation, as such, in public housing unless it can be found as a factual matter that the effect of segregation is so detrimental to the occupants of public housing that they have been deprived of the 'Equal Protection of the Laws,'" it nevertheless would become a concern of the court sooner or later. "Whether or not the Supreme Court is prepared to make such a factual finding," they note, "is something that only time will tell."[232] Director of HABC Ellis Ash noted that members of the Housing Authority's commission and staff "had sensed, for some years, that the policies and practices of the Authority inevitably would change," prompting "some rearrangement of attitudes."[233]

In its assessment of *Brown*, HABC initially concluded that the decision did not itself specifically require desegregation of public housing.[234] And in the

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[230] Memorandum from Julian Zimmerman, General Counsel to Albert Cole (June 27, 1958), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 35B, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[231] "Ellis Ash to E. M. Feinblatt," (April 26, 1954), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

[232] "HABC, Segregation in Public Housing," (June 16, 1954), 8, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

[233] Ellis Ash, "The Baltimore Story: An Account of the Experience of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City in Developing and Applying a Desegregation Policy to its Low-Rent Public Housing Program," (St. Louis: Human Rights Day Institute, 1955), 2.

[234] Oliver C. Winston "Report on Racial Occupancy Policies of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City," (June 24, 1954) Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

immediate aftermath of the *Brown* decision, the prevailing interpretation of local housing officials was that no action was immediately necessary. *Brown*, after all, did not require desegregation of public housing. However, HABC did recognize that it would ultimately have "to embark, at the very least, on a policy of limited integration."[235] Looking out at the shifting landscape, "notwithstanding the lack of legal rulings which require a policy of integration," they noted, "the 'handwriting is on the wall.'"[236] Conclusive legal findings outlawing segregation "are a possibility in the near future." Soon after, Feinblatt advised that HABC change "admission practices as soon as possible, even though such a change would require us to abandon or substantially alter our present racial occupancy practices."[237] His determination was that under current interpretations of the constitution, the public housing segregation practiced by HABC was "illegal." On June 25th, 1954, HABC announced an official policy of "open occupancy," which would stand in for their de-segregation effort.[238]

It needs to be noted that whatever measures housing officials took to counter public housing segregation necessarily took place within a context produced though over half of a century of segregationist policy. From the early local segregation ordinances, to the private racial covenants, to the federally sponsored racializing efforts of the FHA and HUD, by the time the *Brown* decision provoked action on this

[235]Winston "Report on Racial Occupancy Policies."
[236]Winston "Report on Racial Occupancy Policies."
[237]"Eugene M. Feinblatt to Ellis Ash," (July 16, 1954), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.
[238]"Racial Relations Service and Office of the General Counsel, Nondiscrimination Clauses in Regard to Public Housing, Private Housing and Urban Development Undertakings," (October, 1957) *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 136, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

front, decades of policy choices had deeply embedded a racial geography that would limit the impact of any reform efforts. Baltimore's segregative policy history had rendered not just buildings or developments segregated, nor was it limited to whole neighborhoods. Rather, vast expanses of multi-neighborhood regions – "East Baltimore" and "West Baltimore," to name two – had been rendered almost exclusively black and impoverished through these decades of public-private action.

Granting the reformers the fact that an active campaign of de-segregation, much less a thoroughgoing integration campaign, would be an immense undertaking, HABC did very little to address itself to the challenge. Instead, it immediately set out to reassure white residents that there would be no program of affirmative integration. In a November 1954 memo, Oliver Winston told white residents that a desegregation policy was "not to be applied promiscuously."[239] Care will be taken, he assured, to guard "against an excess number of problem families and other considerations."[240]

Instead, HABC took a modified open occupancy approach it referred to as "freedom of choice," which endeavored to organize city housing resources by neighborhood, offering housing applicants options, allowing each housing applicant to choose their desired neighborhood, but not a specific development. This approach, coupled with the history of entrenched segregation, ensured that those white residents in historically black neighborhoods would move out and likewise that newer white applicants would make choices to stay away from housing within historically black residential space.

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[239] "Memorandum from Oliver Winston, Meeting with Community Agencies, with attached HABC Meeting of Staff on Visiting Community Agencies," (November 3, 1954), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

[240] "Memorandum from Oliver Winston," 3.

> "When occupied sites are to be used," an open occupancy study noted, "it is apparent that racial integration in the completed projects would be hampered to the degree that site occupants represent only one racial group. Indeed, the greatest difficulties are to be anticipated – especially in the face of the acute housing shortage – when only slum sites are chosen for project development or when those occupied predominantly by racial minorities are the only occupied sites selected. These difficulties far transcend the question of achieving racially integrated projects, which cannot be entirely dissociated from…the need for living space and the limited supply of housing in the racially restricted market recognized as an essential part of the problem public housing seeks to alleviate"[241]

That concluding point is key. Not only was HUD and HABC well aware that white housing residents would not move into historically black residential spaces, they were also quite clear on the role that the private housing market played in facilitating this segregation. Those housing projects that were already black would remain so, and, in fact, remain so to this day.

This would ultimately result in the conversion of two inner-city slum clearance projects adjacent to black residential areas (Perkins and Latrobe) and the three outer-city projects built on vacant land near black residential areas (Fairfield, Westport, and Westport Extension) to exclusively black developments.[242] Simultaneously, the city took no steps to integrate the three white projects in white outer-city areas (Brooklyn Homes, O'Donnell Homes and Claremont Homes), which remained 100% white in 1966.[243] In a deposition during the *Thompson V. HUD* suit William Tamburrino admitted that "Freedom of Choice" did not reduce segregation in the city's public housing. [244]

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[241]"Open Occupancy in Public Housing Report," (1953) Enoch Pratt Free Library Vertical Files: Baltimore-Housing, 14.
[242]Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Practice," 59-64.
[243]Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Practice," 57-64.
[244]"Deposition of William Tamburrino," (November 21, 2002), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit,

Famously, Philadelphia's Mayor Richardson Dilworth once described the growing effects of postwar housing policy, which produced material incentives for whites with even modest means to invest in an emergent suburban ideal and residential space while leaving blacks to negotiate an increasingly underdeveloped inner-city, as a "white noose" choking the life from the increasingly black city.[245] That the mayor of what Countryman calls the "up south" city of Philadelphia chose to evoke the lynch mob in describing this phenomena – effectively linking so called "white flight" with the organized antiblack terror – does not seem incidental.[246] From the outset, the policy was intended to, at best, result in only "limited integration," preserving the existing racial geography. And as HABC's director observed in the moment, private "institutional resources, such as shopping, entertainment, and religious facilities," all bolstered housing segregation in ways that invited policy makers to take an incremental approach that accommodated antiblack housing practices.[247] "The Baltimore Authority" he reassured a conference audience, "has not applied its policy on the premise that integration must be achieved throughout the program, if this means that families are required to either live in particular projects or sacrifice their opportunities for housing."[248] The "Freedom of choice" approach can be read as a study in how policy choices worked in concert with already existing anti-black practices of urban racial capitalism, in order to both reproduce white supremacy

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Exhibit 12, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore.

[245] Quoted in Jon Birger, "Race Reaction, and Reform: The Three Rs of Philadelphia School Politics, 1965-1971," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 120, No. 3 (July, 1996), 181.

[246] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[247] Ellis Ash, "The Baltimore Story," 12.

[248] Ellis Ash, "The Baltimore Story," 12.

within a spatial context and intensify already existing segregationist housing policy, expanding the delta between white civil society and black residential space, even as it expanded the number of public housing units for Black residents.

If I may choose one example from the list above, the Fairfield housing complex elucidates the complicated ways through which white racial housing logics transformed and re-asserted themselves within mid-century housing policy. While they were timid, Baltimore's first steps into the era of housing desegregation did begin with an uncharacteristic opening of white residential space to black residents. At the time of acquisition in October 1953, Fairfield was initially intended to be transformed by HABC into black residential space, in part in response to the mounting black housing crisis in the city. However, as the tide was turning against the idea of single-race public housing developments, HABC walked back its original segregationist language. Instead, Fairfield was framed as a white housing development that would be opened up to black residents.

While the Fairfield Homes were exclusively white, unlike most white residential spaces, they had few residential neighbors, and those that they did have were primarily black. While higher concentrations of white residents would serve as pretext to keep black residents from accessing housing in other historically white residential spaces, the relatively small number of white residents in this area rendered this space politically weak comparatively. Further, unlike in other parts of the city where white housing developments were embedded within white neighborhoods that were themselves adjacent to other white neighborhoods, no such clustering existed here. Instead, the neighborhoods adjacent to the Fairfield Homes were either black

residential spaces or industrial spaces.[249] This isolation from other white residential space and white owned property weakened this space, politically, and conditioned the policy thinking. As Edgar Ewing observed at the time, it would be "difficult to conceive an organized group of white residents in the area protesting the shift to Negro tenancy."[250] As such, because "too few whites" were in the area to mobilize the kind of protest they understood would be provoked if attempts were made to shift the racial demographics of more densely populated white spaces, "there would seem to be no reason for protesting that a Negro-occupied Fairfield would tend to make the surrounding area more completely Negro."[251]

By "opening the area up" to black residents, the housing authority imagined itself addressing two growing problems at once. First, it would serve as a counter to the claim that it prioritized white property interests, using housing siting as a tool to establish racialized housing patterns. And second, this development would be a necessary intervention into the growing black housing shortage brought on by urban renewal.[252] This second point imagined black residents as appreciative of a housing authority willing to open up historically white spaces to them. "While the area surrounding the project is a poor housing environment," the housing authority would go on to speculate, "the central point is still that the accession of 300 units of good quality, permanent low-rent public housing for Negroes is a valuable and needed

[249]Edgar Ewing, "Untitled Report" (March 6, 1953), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 141, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 141, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, http://archives.ubalt.edu/aclu/pdfs/R0002_ACLU_S03A_B05_F020.pdf?

[250]Ewing, "Untitled Report," PL031586.

[251]Ewing, "Untitled Report," PL031586.

[252]See for example, "Letter from Oliver Winston to Charles L. Levy, Director, Washington Field Office," (November 16, 1954), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore. See also, "Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Notes on Management Division Staff Meeting," (November 3, 1954) Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

addition to the city's limited supply of decent housing open to Negro low-income families."[253]

Unsurprisingly, as white residents of Fairfield saw that the housing authority was unwilling to preserve the racial homogeneity of this development, white dispersal from the space ensued. By 1955, less than a year later, Fairfield had already seen a significant decrease in its white population.[254] Ultimately, Fairfield would become an exclusively black residential space. It was unique, in part because it wasn't built on the ruins of older black residential spaces. Fairfield would become the first black public housing development in Baltimore that was not built as an effect of the clearance of already existing black residential space. This meant, among other things, that it was the first black public housing development to not represent a net loss of housing units available to black residents. Nevertheless, it remained a compromise with the prerogatives of white land use politics.

This uneven, white mediated "desegregation" expanded in the city in 1955. In a memo from May of that year, Edgar M. Ewing identified the Latrobe and Perkins Homes as the next projects slated for "desegregation."[255] Both were "low rise," two-story complexes, built initially as white war worker housing and remained segregated white public housing in the postwar era. Each was built in East Baltimore, their locations valued at the time of construction because they would locate white workers

[253]Ewing, "Untitled Report," PL031586.

[254]For racial demographic changes to housing populations, see the Housing Authority of Baltimore City's "Tabulation by Cost Center" (December 31, 1955), (June 30, 1956), and (December 31, 1956); "Memorandum from Harry Weiss to Edgar Ewing," (February 1, 1957); "Memorandum from Maulsby," (September 11, 1964) Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore. Here, HABC admits that Fairfield was not part of a "real desegregation program," but rather was a deliberate change in racial occupancy.

[255]Memorandum from Edgar M. Ewing to Ellis Ash, "Further Steps on Implementing Desegregation," (April 5, 1955), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

close to wartime manufacturing. The sites were also valued initially because of the work housing siting did to further establish the white footholds in otherwise racially mixed areas. Each site had large black populations prior to the construction of Latrobe and Perkins. In both cases, the clearance that precipitated the public housing construction pushed black residents out, in order to make way for these white developments. By the mid-twentieth century, however, neither site remained especially valuable to industrial production, and as such, neither site remained coveted by white property interests. Similar to Fairfield, the smaller, marginal white populations surrounding the Perkins Homes did not seem to command the political power necessary to maintain the racial homogeneity of that development. While Baltimore's Little Italy remained at the southwestern border of Perkins, its proximity to that historically white space was not enough to maintain its status as white residential space. Directing HABC personnel to "sit down and develop a plan for the application of the desegregation policy to their particular project," Ewing put the housing authority on notice that demographic transition was imminent.[256] In a letter to a white resident of the Latrobe Homes, Jacob Fisher notified him that "both white and Negro families will be moving into the project this week."[257] By December 1955, 44 units at Latrobe and 30 units at Perkins were occupied by black families. A year later, 194 units at Latrobe and 139 units at Perkins were occupied by black families.[258] Currently each of these developments is almost exclusively black, with

[256]Memorandum from Edgar M. Ewing to Ellis Ash.
[257]Jacob Fisher, "Dear Resident," (May 23, 1955), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 12, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore.
[258]Karl Taeuber," Public Housing and Racial Segregation in Baltimore: Expert Report of Karl Taeuber." *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 1, American Civil Liberties Union of

the Perkins Homes now the object of intense scrutiny as the location's value to white capital has shifted yet again in the wake of a spate of redevelopment projects in southeast Baltimore.

Proximity to black residential space, in fact, was what linked all of Baltimore's early "desegregation" projects. By 1964, the racial conversion for the projects chosen for "desegregation" was virtually complete. Westport and Westport Extension were both over 95% black. Fairfield was 100% black. Perkins was 78% black. Latrobe was 56% black.[259] Significantly, O'Donnell, Brooklyn, and Claremont, the three outer-city white projects in white areas, were not selected for "desegregation." And, in fact, not only did no desegregation occur, but these three projects remained exclusively 100% white until 1967.[260]

Conclusion: Building the High-rise

As noted above, housing officials were trying to manage two tensions at once; a commitment to housing segregation that maintained extensive restrictions on black movement. While the simultaneous understanding that large scale black displacement and growing population, coupled with shifting attitudes at the federal level toward segregated housing, meant that the governance of racial apartheid might not hold. The high-rises emerged within this context and as such register these tensions. The Racial

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Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[259]"Letter from Sara Hartman to Margaret King, with attached Racial Occupancy Tables," (April 17, 1964), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 149, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[260]Taeuber, tables 1, 2, 5, 6.

Relations Service, for example, expressed concern about how a "reduction of land area available for non-white occupancy" would induce "excessive and disproportionate displacement of racial minority group families." To the extent that this displacement was not absorbed by new housing construction, black residents would force their way into restricted market-rate housing and bring with them "the spread of blight and slums."[261]

This anxiety was met by a push to expand public housing stock. Toward its stated goal of building quality homes to promote both personal and national health, the Housing Act of 1949 committed to producing 810,000 units of public housing by 1951. While a modest goal relative to the growing housing needs of low income residents (and, as it would turn out, one that policy makers would fall significantly short of realizing) it nevertheless "began remaking cities" in familiar ways.[262]

The tower approach to building met a need for both the federal government and the city: They were high density, high rise structures, which enabled the construction to come at reduced land costs per dwelling unit while maximizing the amount of housing that could be built. Further, transition to a tower model would allow larger amounts of housing units to take up a smaller geographic "footprint," enabling planners to address growing housing needs for black residents without challenging the established racial geography.[263]

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[261]"Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline, Report of Field Trip to Baltimore, Maryland March 19-22, 1951," (April 25, 1951), Maryland Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore-Housing.

[262]Williams, *Politics of Public Housing*, 96

[263]Office of Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, An Historical and Baseline Assessment of Hope VI, Vol. I, Cross-site Report (August 1996) https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/hopevi_vol1.pdf.

But high-rise planning was also an ideological labor. From the beginning high-rises – like their low-rise antecedents – were imagined with an eye toward population management. As Jonathan Meades notes, the modernist architects of high-rise public housing, "did not regard themselves as builders or artists, but as social engineers." While modernist housing towers met a material need, they also represented an effort to fold the larger national population into what Nikolas Rose called "a single matrix of solidarity."[264] Residents of the high rise towers would enter into public housing during a time when stricter "character" based criteria that had been central to the resident placement in earlier iterations of the program were being displaced. Employment status, marriage status, whether or not individuals' personal lives comported to the normative domestic standards were relaxed or eliminated altogether. This had the dual function of at once conditioning a radical rewriting of public housing spaces in racially and sexually non-normative terms, while simultaneously providing the reactionary discourse an institutional site against which to exercise a critique of blackness. As Rhonda Y Williams argues, ideological constructions of black deviance continuously unsettled any possessive claims the black women occupying these spaces made on them.

By the time the buildings were open, HUD had rebuked formal segregation. Yet, as a consequence of the initial planning process, and the overall commitment on the part of white policy makers in Baltimore to preserve white property relations, the high-rise family towers were nevertheless a product of racialized logics of early

[264] Nikolas Rose, "The Death of the Social? Re-Figuring the Territory of Government," *Economy and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (August, 1996), 333.

housing planning. Three of the four high-rise sites were initially planned as black housing that would accommodate the displacement produced by urban renewal of predominantly black neighborhoods in East and West Baltimore. In practice, this would be how they functioned, in spite of the fact that HUD would explicitly designate them mixed race housing.

It should also be noted that while the goals to expand housing options for low income urban residents were already compromised, the pivot toward tower construction never did adequately address the housing shortages that black residents in particular had to navigate. HUD produced only roughly 84,000 units in the first two years following the Housing Act of 1949.[265] In subsequent years, the construction of public housing dropped to closer to 24,000 units per year by 1964. It took until 1975 for the initial target of 810,000 units to be met.

While this project centers the George Murphy Homes and the built spaces that have emerged since its demolition, it is worth briefly discussing the other three developments, as a way of providing a context for their descriptions of life in Baltimore's public housing towers. Lafayette Courts was located in what had long been an industrial area. Its construction was consonant with the larger effort to limit the presence of black residents in or near historically white neighborhoods. Lafayette Courts contained six high rise buildings, each eleven stories tall. It also contained seventeen “low rise” buildings, for a total of 805 residential dwellings. In total, this development was capable of housing a population one-third greater than the residential space that was demolished to make way for it.

[265]“Provisions of the Housing Act of 1949,” *Monthly Labor Review* Vol. 69, no. 2, (1949), 155-159.

The Flag House Courts were unique relative to the other three developments in that they were planned and imagined as a white segregated residential space. While they were built in a nominally "mixed" area, the development's construction displaced 213 white households and 75 black households, cleared from the site in order to make way for 490 planned white units. The displaced black families were to be relocated to the Lafayette Courts project or Cherry Hill, both planned for black occupancy. HUD's Racial Relations Service reported that the plans for the Flag House site "call for changing the racial pattern of the neighborhood."[266] They further reported that the proposed project violated "two of the major principles of the PHA: (a) An occupied site should not be selected for development of a project excluding any of the racial groups comprising the present site occupancy, and (b) sites which would result in reducing the total land area available to racial minorities for residential use in the locality should be avoided." It was nevertheless approved and developed. [267]

Further, there were sexualized assumptions that shaped how these spaces were designed, which correspond with racialized assumptions about whiteness and family life. While the seeming uniformity of mid-century brutalist design typically associated with high-rises suggests a certain uniformity among the apartments, in fact, the two buildings had very different apartment layouts. As the Racial Relations Service noted at the time, the number of bedrooms that were in the standard Flag

[266]"Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline."
[267]"Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline."

House apartments was different from the number of bedrooms standard in Murphy, Lafayette, and Lexington Terraces. The imagined "chaotic living conditions and management problems" projected on to those developments planned for black residents informed an uneven distribution of three-bedroom apartments.[268] The construction of racialized space was also the construction of sexualized space. Urban planning projects that attempted to inscribe racial meanings in space were also attempting to inscribe sexual norms.

The sites for HABC's third and fourth high rises, Lexington Terrace and Murphy Homes, were approved by the City Council in 1952. Lexington Terrace, built on an urban renewal site adjacent to Poe Homes, was designed to house 677 black families in five high rise and several low rise buildings. The Murphy Homes was built on the George Street urban renewal site, on fifteen acres sandwiched between McCulloh Homes and the Lexington Terrace high rises. At the urging of federal officials, HABC increased the size of the project from 643 to 758 units, according to the ACLU, "an unreasonable density, and far more than the 539 families that had been displaced from the site."[269]

Further, while federal officials entertained the idea of an "experimental" plan, which would have placed larger families into federally controlled single-family rowhomes with yards, local officials and property interests pushed against it. The plan would have expanded the "foot print" of low income black residents at a time when the public housing policy was successfully being deployed to decrease that access. As

[268]"Memorandum from Charles C. Beckett to Richard H. Kline."
[269]"Housing Officials Begin Plans for Final Project," *Baltimore Sun* (June 8, 1957).

the *Baltimore Sun* reported at the time, the plan was rejected because the population density would have been below 35 households per acre, while the planners understood that they could get away with (and, thus, were pressured to pursue) densities of over 50 households per acre.[270]

The Murphy Homes was the final of the four high rise projects to open in Baltimore. It was located directly north east of Lexington Terrace. The apartments were located in four 12-14 story high-rise towers and 20 two-story walk-up buildings. Because the Murphy Homes was "expected to serve as an important source for the relocation of families displaced from the proposed Madison-Park North renewal project," the state insisted on increasing the initial project size from 643 units to 750 units.[271] While it contained little open space, there were modest playgrounds outside each of the four high-rises and a central community building. Like the other two high-rise projects situated in historically Black residential spaces, Murphy opened as, and remained, 100% Black.

The Murphy Homes' towers and "low-rise" buildings (those below 4 stories) straddled the border between West Baltimore and the city's downtown. The Murphy Homes upon opening its doors became (and remained) the most densely populated black residential space in the city.

Baltimore's response to the "writing on the wall," demonstrates well how for whatever personal commitments to integration that individuals within planning circles may have maintained, they were not sufficient to counter the material pressures of

[270] "Agency Approves Home Plan Shift," *Baltimore Sun* (October 4, 1958).
[271] "New Home Project Due in the Fall," *Baltimore Sun* (March, 19, 1963).

white property owners operating in tandem with an austerity government. These structural forces pushed a reproduction of racial segregation within public housing, even as individuals within local and federal housing government were making symbolic gestures away from segregation. Baltimore residents applying for public housing access were able to designate which region of the city they wanted to be placed in. Because each region was racially over-coded, white residents were given license to "avoid" black residential space. This compromise plan lasted until 1992. By then, each of the four housing tower complexes were almost exclusively black. And by virtue of that fact, they were opened up to significant resource divestment. Well before the state set out to "address the problems" of "high-rise families," those developments found themselves effectively cut off from resources or access within the policy channels to act materially on their own behalf. The following chapter utilizes oral histories to explore both the cultural and material implications of this transformation.

Chapter 3: "They wanted to talk family dysfunction; we wanted to talk plumbing": A Case Study of Resident Mutual Aid and the Demolition of the George Murphy Homes

High-rise Towers: Life and Critical Practice

The meeting was bigger and more spirited than she thought it was going to be. In fact, what Etta Barnes imagined was something closer to "an instruction, a class" than a meeting – a skill share among a few friends who lived on the twelfth floor of Building 4 of the George Murphy Homes Family High-rise Towers.[272] The plan was to brainstorm and share some basic maintenance and plumbing techniques. There were supposed to be three women present. Barnes, who by way of study, discussions with relatives over time, and the fact that "when you're poor, you teach yourself things," had developed a set of practical maintenance skills that had raised her profile among her neighbors, and often impelled her into work among friends around her building. She expected her neighbor Joanne, who was hosting the group in her apartment, as well as another neighbor from across the hall. It turned out that "something like eight or nine other people came...friends, people from other floors,

[272]Barnes reflections are drawn from Henrietta "Etta" Barnes, (514 Duncan St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 11/7/12. Upper Fells Point, Baltimore, MD; Henrietta "Etta" Barnes, (514 Duncan St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 1/15/13, Upper Fells Point, Baltimore, MD; Henrietta "Etta" Barnes, (514 Duncan St.), Interview via email with Robert Thomas Choflet, 5/20/13; Henrietta "Etta" Barnes, (514 Duncan St.), Interview via email with Robert Thomas Choflet, 5/21/13.

someone from another building...some kids...you name it."[273] Her intention was "for me and Joanne and her friend to teach each other how to change out the drain trap in the sink – Joanne's was clogged, no one from maintenance was coming to fix it...I kind of knew what to do. She wasn't slow...it's good to know how to do these things."[274] The others had come because they too were frustrated by maintenance problems and a housing authority that seemed to have "given up on fixing anything," certainly not the low-priority, individual unit issues that Barnes and her neighbors were discussing. "How are they gonna fix a leak in one person's apartment when the whole elevator didn't work," noted one former public housing resident, to this point.[275] And while those who showed up to Joanne's meeting may have initially overestimated Barnes' skills – "they thought I knew how to do way more than I knew how to do. I rolled with it...The more people we could get together I thought the better chance we'd have of either figuring it out or getting [the housing authority] to do their job" – they nevertheless agreed that it had become necessary for residents to learn how to make their own repairs and to incorporate these skills and this work into the range of other laboring activities that they were already forced to take on as residents within rapidly degrading housing towers[276]. Years later, reflecting on her life in the final years of the Murphy Homes, Barnes points to this initial meeting as that moment which drew her into the work of building organizing.

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[273]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.
[274]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.
[275]Comment by Lawrence Tanner, Heritage Crossing homeowner, recorded during interview with Patricia Scope (914 McCollough Cir.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 2/11/13, Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD. While Scope was the primary interviewee during this meeting, Tanner who was a resident of Lafayette Square, from roughly 1978-1986, volunteered this from an adjacent room.
[276]Barnes interview, 1/15/13

Argument

Through the construction and engagement with an archive of oral histories – centering here on the reflections of Barnes, as well as fellow Murphy Homes resident Bonnie McKinley[277] – I want to explore an emergent tendency among public housing residents in the final years of the Murphy Homes. During a period of severe underdevelopment, informal mutual aid groups began to organize in these buildings out of necessity. While housing officials were building a case against their continued maintenance, and while sustained exposure to poverty and under-development engendered sometimes fatalistic responses among residents and surrounding communities, for some residents these conditions shaped a turn toward local, pragmatic, materially-grounded practice and advocacy.

This chapter is interested in how this material practice disrupted housing officials' claims that high-rise demolition was inevitable, a foregone conclusion given the disrepair the buildings had fallen into and the lack of political will to do otherwise. Housing demolition was a specific choice. It reflected a more far reaching drive toward privatization, which itself remains bound up in racial capital's need to absorb and transform once common public spaces.

Close reading of the oral histories Barnes, McKinley, and others provide paints a picture of residents equipped to both address their immediate material

[277]McKinley's reflections are drawn from Bonnie McKinley, (1800 block of Mosher St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 8/1/11, Harlem Park, Baltimore, MD; Bonnie McKinley, (1800 block of Mosher St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 8/8/11, Harlem Park, Baltimore, MD; Bonnie McKinley, (1800 block of Mosher St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 1/5/12, Harlem Park, Baltimore, MD.

concerns and imagine larger-scale responses to the chronic under-development they were living through. This archive registers moments of creativity, capacity, and political imagination that pervaded the public housing space during a time of deep austerity. Faced with the need to live within structural underdevelopment, residents fashioned a tradition of mutual aid.

I want to pose this mutual aid against what I name here a "cultural politics" constructed by the housing authority and the various other actors invested in or aligned with the project of privatization. This cultural politics centered idealized notions of family and the imagined role normative family plays within the process of social reproduction. I will argue that resident mutual aid progressed with an eye toward material intervention on the order of improving housing conditions, while the state's cultural politics conditioned a material agenda of a different sort, one which would ultimately forgo improvements in favor of demolition. What is meant here by "cultural politics" is a politics whereby cultural signifiers, imagined norms, and the role power assumes as arbiter of morality are leveraged in what is ultimately a contest over material resources. The tendency, for example, to elide discussions of poverty and underdevelopment in favor of assessing the less distinct but ideologically loaded notions of "family life," "stability," and "neighborhood," represents in this instance the type of cultural politics this project is considering. This practice allows for poverty to shift within the context of policy discussions away from something that in and of itself needed explaining and addressing, to something that is taken for granted – an immutable background, worthy of note only to the extent that policy could mitigate against the negative consequences of its existence. Through this lens,

housing policy reform becomes a practice of steering people away from the negative consequences of poverty, rather than the push for undoing poverty itself.

A key to mobilizing this cultural politics comes through the public dismissal of specific resident concerns in favor of a set of more broadly conceived social concerns. This gesture tends to displace as "provincial" the concerns of one or another public housing resident or resident group, in favor of the more "universal" objective, given voice by housing authorities – the push, for example, to "restore" a certain "quality of life to West Baltimore," as Mayor Schmoke put it when discussing the demolition of Lexington Terrace in 1990, rather than the residents of that development's call to fix broken elevators.[278] By displacing the specific calls of the residents in favor of a "universal" call, housing authorities allow for a different (and arguably, antagonistic) set of material needs to form the basis of its universalizing claim.

Interviews with residents reveal two key things about this cultural politics. First, the emphasis on family life, safety, and stability worked to construct public housing space, and by proxy, residents themselves, as racially and sexually non-normative subjects, while framing state and private intervention as a moral and normative practice. Second, while policy makers presented housing reform efforts as resident-centered and interventions as responses to resident demands, they employed a very selective approach to hearing and engaging resident voices. Many residents labored within under-developed public housing projects to improve their lives.

[278]Gerard Shields, "Schmoke Leaving Mixed Legacy; Mayor Said He Tried to 'Address the Rot Under the Glitter,'" *Baltimore Sun* 1 (February 5, 1999).

Likewise, many sought to participate in cooperative projects with the housing authority. However, only some voices were given space

It should be noted that this process was not intended to silence black women residents. Rather, housing officials solicited participation, but incorporated resident voices unevenly, elevating those whose demands were less distinct, while crowding out those with more concrete demands. Planners found currency in the affective expression of black women's alienation, as long as it was expressed in indistinct ways. Terms like “anger,” “isolation,” and “danger” featured prominently in discussions by residents in the 1990s *Baltimore Sun* articles. Deloris Miller, a Murphy resident who was close to the housing authority, was quoted in the *Sun* saying “they should have never built those high-rises.”[279] While housing officials were quick to cite “resident voices” in the build up to demolition, they were equally quick to displace perspectives of residents who offered competing visions to their own. Below, I explore the tensions that emerge when what Cedric Johnson calls “black political life” – that overdetermined site issuing from the alienation produced by racial capitalism – pushes up against a politics that attempts to appropriate and manage that energy.[280] The housing authority did not “ignore” black women's political energy, but rather made a political choice to try and mobilize the affective labor of some residents, while simultaneously displacing the material labor of others.

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[279]Tom Pelton and Amy Oakes, “Murphy Homes Falls Victim to Change; Demolition: Building High-rises fir Public Housing is an Idea Whose Time is Past,” *Baltimore Sun* (July 2, 1999).

[280]For a discussion of “black political life,” and the way it contrasts with “black politics,” one as grassroots energy issuing from black lived spaces in response to pervasive exploitation, the other a class project that operates to manage that energy and channel it into a politics amenable to racial capital, see Cedric Johnson's, *Revolutionaries To Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

Resident Voices and "Maximum Feasible Participation":

A discussion of the housing authority's relationship with "resident voices" should be understood within a longer history of "community centered" approaches to addressing poverty that had played out in Baltimore over the previous six decades. Maybe the most significant development to push resident voices into the planning process was the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The mandate put forward by Title II, Section 202(a) of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) was "maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served." Because the language was intentionally vague, the mandate was open to interpretation by local political actors.

Baltimore had been experimenting with various localized, private and semi-private approaches to resident poverty for a number of years prior to the EOA. While an extensive discussion of this history falls outside the scope of this project, it should be noted that earlier civic organizations like the Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA), focused primarily on privatized approaches to "slum" clearance, sought local input in their efforts to demolish and rebuild tenement housing. Their example demonstrated that the incorporation of "community voices" within the decision-making process could, with enough massaging, be folded into the "free enterprise" objectives of the group.

In a precursor to what would become the Community Action Program (CAP), the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA) set out terms that CAP would inherit and put into action, with a "Letter to Ourselves," made public in

January 1962. In it they note the importance of a revitalized "welfare industry" with "innovative" and "experimental" approaches to making that happen. They centered "community organization" efforts, the development of local leadership, and the treatment projects that center cooperative approaches and families.[281] As Rhonda Williams notes, rather than "bricks and mortar," the plan focused on "'human renewal," "providing new and better-coordinated services aimed at rehabilitating the poor."[282]

It should be noted that these early calls for community voices were in effect calls – and, further, serve as a constitutive base – for the elevation of a black leadership class. That is to say, a call for a mediating group who would function to take on the project of both translating the suffering of impoverished black residents while endorsing (and later, enacting) policy on their behalf. Unlike the unruly and sometimes directly antagonistic mass politics of poor black residents, a mediating class of black "leaders" offered the interests of private property, who held sway over local government, greater possibilities to work in accord with their agendas. Further, by elevating a black leadership class as the natural governing body to manage black poverty, these early moves toward "community control" would wind up authorizing intra race stratifications. As historian Michael West has demonstrated, the notion of an internally coherent, distinctly "black community" in need of a leadership class proficient in "race relations" both reifies internal class hierarchies, and instantiates a notion that immiseration – the negative effects that racial capitalism produces, which

[281]Morton S. Baratz, "The Community Action Program in Baltimore City, 1965-67," Appendix D in *Power & Poverty: Theory & Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
[282]Rhonda Williams, "To Challenge the Status Quo," in Annelise Orleck, ed., *War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 65.

condense within impoverished black space – are local problems, rather than the problems necessarily produced by urban capitalism.[283] In this way, the push to center black voices smuggled into such local political processes as housing reform was a push to further displace the low-income black women who lived in housing, replacing the white property interests who spoke on their behalf with a black leadership class that would function in distinct but no less paternalistic ways.

In March of 1965, the city council approved the top three administrators – "the front line commanders in the city's 'War on Poverty'" – Dr. Melvin Humphrey, Morgan State Economics professor, Stanley Mazer, aide to the Mayor, and Dr. Richard W. Bateman, executive director of the youth services agency.[284] In Humphrey, the city found an example of a willing black leader who was both responsive to impoverished residents, while amenable to the interests of property. CAP was "the poor's program," he noted; "[w]e are working for them and they need our help...when they speak to us, we better listen."[285]

Maximum feasible participation, as expressed through housing policy in Baltimore, signaled a reorientation on the part of the state and racial capitalism toward black women. Trading an older approach to the black women who occupied substandard housing as deviant, slum-dwelling objects of urban policy[286], policy makers within the paradigm shaped by the "war on poverty" approached black

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[283]For discussion of "race relations" and the work it has done to further stratify black political life, see Michael West, *The Education of Booker T Washington: American Democracy and the Idea of Race Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[284]"Council Approves Poverty Directors," *Baltimore Afro-American* (March 30, 1965).

[285]"Local War on Poverty Needs Poor's Help," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (June 1, 1965), University of Baltimore Archives, Commission on Government Efficiency and Economy VI Manuscripts, Box 145, Folder "June 1965."

[286]See Chapter 1.

women residents of high-rise towers as deviant subjects. This may not seem like much of a shift at all, but the slight re-valence makes room for some attenuated forms of participation in housing policy deliberations. But in so doing, it also propped up the state and racial capital as integrative institutions, capable of rendering moral claims. This section is not a history of black political life within public housing. Rather it maps an appropriative relationship between planners and residents. Alienated public housing residents maintain a long, complicated, storied history of political life. By mapping the shifting locus of decision making – from one uninterested with "community voices" to one that fashions a moral authority from a public perception that it operates on behalf of or in concert with resident will (as though that were one, coherent and bounded expression) – this section attempts to sketch a set of conditions that made the appropriation of black women's struggle possible. The state, emboldened by the perception of community solidarity, engages in a material practice that intensifies the various forms of rent generation and privatization of land that was once public.

The call to center marginalized voices, in the absence of specific political demands, can be manipulated by power in sometimes unforeseen ways. As discussed earlier, Baltimore signaled its exit from the public housing construction business and its entry into the public housing demolition business with the demolition of the Murphy Homes.[287] This transition was given cover by a parade of select high-rise residents who prominently exclaimed their frustration with the status quo, while crowding out other residents whose practical engagements with underdevelopment

[287]See the Introduction to this dissertation.

were gesturing to a different approach.

Barnes and McKinley

I want to provide a brief sketch of Barnes, followed by another of McKinley. In each instance, I will foreground the specific work they were doing to improve the lived conditions within their housing developments. Then I will draw from Barnes and McKinley's oral histories to discuss the work of the Family High-rise Modernization Task Force, and the role it played in simultaneously absorbing black women's reformist labor, while displacing the political imaginaries they produced and materialist prescriptions they offered.

In the end this chapter will demonstrate how the resource transfer conditioned by housing demolition and the displacement of black women was enabled by a cultural politics that served to reproduce normative racial and sexual categories while obscuring the material resistance of some black women who resided in public housing. The project represents an effort to explore what kind of critique can emerge when we look historically at the intellectual, social, and political labor done by the primarily low income black women who lived in public housing during the era of public housing demolition.

There isn't much writing that thinks through the value of maintaining public housing as a public resource – and often writing that valorizes public housing can get bogged down in sentimentality. Oral histories with housing residents – particularly high-rise residents who lived in these spaces in the late 1980s and early 90s – can reveal materialist critiques of housing conditions without losing sight of the fact that

public control over land and built space, and social commitments to the housing needs of city residents, were shared assets. This is why the voices of housing residents are essential in re-constructing histories of these spaces. Not because these voices sentimentalize something that in practice was deeply flawed (and they certainly sometimes do), but because these voices also maintain a strong sense of what could be, if only the resource was understood as such.

Etta Barnes and Mutual Aid:

Henrietta “Etta” Barnes is currently in her late 60s, a mother of three adult children, and grandmother of two. She has been a public housing resident for much of her adult life. She moved into the Murphy Homes when she was in her early twenties. She lived there until they were demolished. The story of her public housing life, her somewhat reluctant organizing, and her subsequent displacement as those buildings were demolished, provides insight and dimension to this study of housing transformation. Her reflections help us to better understand emerging tensions within these buildings during their late period, between a nascent form of organizing focused on small scale material interventions on the part of some residents, and a cultural politics that was mobilized by both private and state interests which would grow to obscure the former's work, ultimately ending in the buildings' demolition.

Barnes referred to her Murphy Homes work as “informal” organizing. In reflecting on that first meeting, she describes the coming together of what can be understood as a working group of like-minded neighbors who wanted to do something about the deteriorating housing conditions they were living through. As

she noticed services diminishing, as broken elevators went unfixed, leaky kitchen sinks and bathroom pipes became the norm, as trash began to accumulate in common areas, hallways, stairways, etc., she felt compelled to organize some kind of response. It was, by her admission, a "small" group, never more than 15 people – one of what she estimates were many small groups of residents who were meeting and developing forms of mutual aid.[288]

"In those days, I learned what a drain trap was. Risers, a compression nut, watertight gaskets...ask me anything," she says, jokingly, about how she and other residents taught themselves plumbing basics as a way of fixing chronically leaking bathrooms – the kind of work she would do when maintenance ignored them[289]. They became skilled at fixing apartments, at sharing these skills, and at identifying the limitations of the housing authority and its relationship to maintenance.

The group's work could be organized into three primary categories: First was the immediate and practical work of repair. Barnes and her fellow residents tried to make themselves available to other residents and to help them address their own immediate repair problems. "They had people coming through and picking up trash. So that wasn't the kind of work we were doing," Barnes notes.[290] Instead, their contribution to the broader assemblage of mutual aid activity unfolding within the Murphy Homes was to help make small scale practical repairs. They fixed broken and moldy drywall. They repaired bowing and warped linoleum flooring. A member of their group who had done some side work for a carpeting company had procured

[288]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.
[289]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.
[290]Barnes interview via email, 5/20/13.

the use of a carpet stretcher and heavy-duty stapler that was used to address buckling carpeting. “We were the group who knew our way around the hardware store,” she recalls.[291]

The second category of work the group focused on was pedagogical – skill sharing with fellow residents. Like the original meeting, residents regularly made their homes available for Barnes and others to share what they knew and then learn together. After a particularly rainy spring, people got together to share tips for abating a mold outbreak that was accumulating on outdoor facing walls in some apartments. Barnes recalls organizing a training with people from another floor in her building that focused on how to patch holes in ceilings and the walls – “there's a difference between patching drywall and patching plaster, you know.”[292] And she talks of many informal encounters where she or another neighbor would give advice or counsel on how to address one or another maintenance concern.

The third category of the group's work was political work. Informal as the group may have been, they maintained a political vision. They understood themselves as a body that could try to hold maintenance staff accountable. As Barnes notes, because of how intimately familiar they had become with repair issues around their building and other buildings in the development, they often made attempts to bring those to the attention of the staff. “We'd run them down – 'Did you get to such and such, yet?' – It got so they'd see us and turn the other way (laughs).”[293] It was this type of work that lead Barnes and others to fashion a set of demands that they'd direct

[291]Barnes interview via email, 5/20/13.
[292]Barnes, interview via email, 5/21/13.
[293]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.

at the housing authority to encourage a larger improvement campaign at the moment the housing authority was deliberating the building's viability.

Life in a place like the Murphy Homes in the late 1980s – that is to say, life within public housing in moments of deep austerity – occasioned (invited, almost insisted on) this kind of community labor. As Rhonda Williams has explored in detail in her study of an earlier moment in the history of public housing, this mutual aid work was a register of both these residents' tenuous relationship to state resources as well as their capacity to reproduce their own social lives and conditions outside of and beyond state aid.[294] In so doing, what Barnes and others in the Murphy Homes – as well as high rise tenants throughout the city – proved through their collective practice was that public housing communities existed not simply as objects of governance, nor as passive recipients of underdevelopment, but as assembled bodies through which the construction of alternative forms of self-governance and mutual aid were both possible and necessary.

As it happened, Barnes and her cohort and the larger collection of residents she refers to were not the only people meeting about the conditions of the Murphy Homes. Under pressure to assess the "highly distressed housing" and a growing spate of fair housing lawsuits initiated by liberal reform campaigns, expressed locally through the ACLU's *Thompson v. HUD* suit, the local housing authority convened a task force to assess Baltimore's high rise towers.

[294]See Rhonda Williams, *Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Bonnie McKinley and "the Other Task Force:"

"It just felt weird...like we were out of place."[295]

This was the way Bonnie McKinley summed up her participation in the Family High Rise Modernization Task Force. McKinley, too, was a resident of the George Murphy Homes. In 1990, she was 38 years old. She had spent most of her life as a recipient of housing aid. She had moved into public housing when she was 5 years old and was raising two children in a building there. Three of her sisters also lived in public housing – one in Murphy's "low-rises," two in the neighboring Lexington Terrace – along with six nieces and nephews.

McKinley was approached by the housing authority to participate in the task force because, as she puts it, "I had a reputation in my building....for better or worse."[296] She, too, had taken an unorthodox path toward building organizing, one grounded in securing social spaces for her community and children, a contest that is familiar to many public housing residents.

As a young mother, she had pitched in with others in the development to clear space in the courtyard for children's sports:

> It was that park at I think Hoffman and Argyle, that belonged to the project [HABC / Murphy Homes]...where my youngest and his friends couldn't play because there was just too much *other activity* if you know what I mean...So some of us just started going out there...You be visible...We had this idea that if we wore these reflector vests – you know, the kind that a crossing guard has...this way of showing dealers that we weren't there for them...that maybe just being out there and around maybe would push some of them out and

[295]McKinley interview, 8/8/11.
[296]McKinley interview, 8/1/11.

> make more room for our kids. We had a lot of kids there that no one wanted getting involved with the drug dealing.[297]

This work leveraged visibility and presence as a way of creating space. The ethic that McKinley and other residents developed was one that imagined a park as a commonly held space available to the diversity of groups interacting with it. While there was clear unease in her discussion of drug dealing ("*other activity"*), as she describes their community response, she describes an approach with little moralizing or knee-jerk appeals to punitive power. Rather, there was the practical understanding that that work is violent and particularly exploitative of younger, economically vulnerable people – "they're in the park 'cause they look for project kids...they get project kids wrapped up in that quick."[298]

As she elaborated, their response was not an appeal to the police, but an attempt to crowd out what they perceived to be a negative presence. "We decided to do soccer for the kids in that park. So on Saturday morning we'd bring out those nets and a ball and gather up the children we could and just let them play a game."[299] Like Barnes, McKinley's work may not be immediately read as either issuing from or gesturing toward an overtly political imaginary. But in their practice, the women who donned reflective vests, set up soccer nets, and attempted to disrupt illicit markets in their backyard were making political claims on publicly held space. In their actions they were narrating – making an argument for a commons that existed in the service of communal rather than commercial (i.e., exploitative) use.

Beyond this work, McKinley helped raise money for school supplies each fall.

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[297]McKinley interview, 8/1/11.
[298]McKinley interview, 8/1/11.
[299] McKinley interview, 8/1/11.

In fact, to this day she remains active in organizing an annual reunion of Murphy residents each summer. Her work as tenant council leader often had her at odds with city and housing authorities. In the 1980s she was instrumental in a campaign to stop the police from “harassing” the buildings' teens, and later, she and other tenants circumvented the Housing Authority in order to hire the Nation of Islam to provide private security for the buildings when tenants began to blame the Housing Authority's contracted security force for increased incidents of violence.

The Politics of Murphy's Undoing

All of the above then is to demonstrate that the public buildings that McKinley and Barnes occupied were monumental constructions occasioned by mid-century racial capitalism and its dominion over land use policy. This policy was sometimes expressed through the politics of racial restriction, while other times its racialized agenda was coded through appeals to stability and freedom. Their siting, the planning processes that produced them, and the array of policies that governed these spaces were all shaped by ideological processes that centered the race and sexuality of the residents who inhabited them. These spaces were from their inception planned as racially exclusive and register the accumulated effects of decades worth of racialized policy making. As such it makes sense that their ultimate undoing was likewise produced through racially coded appeals. On this measure, the high-rises went through a period of sustained official scrutiny both through media spectacle and by local and federal policy makers.

As developers along with city planners began to rediscover the potential value

in underdeveloped land downtown, and as that same cohort began to imagine a "new front door" to West Baltimore linking to the downtown, private capital sought to harness and instrumentalize the state's claims to moral authority[300]. The underdeveloped public high-rises that lined the northwestern border of downtown and had been for years constructed within public discourse as sites of criminality and sexual disrepute, these spaces were increasingly imagined as impediments to private growth. The disreputable high-rises needed to go.[301]

"The Task Force gave them the ammo that they needed to look good on the news, even when they were putting people out of their housing," Lorraine Greene notes.[302] An administrator at Morgan State University, Greene was a West Baltimore resident as a teen and had "many, MANY" friends in the Murphy Homes and its neighboring Lexington Terrace. "It was a home away from home," she notes, laughing.[303] Her observations align with a certain reality that was unfolding during this period of time: A renewed interest in downtown land had instigated new conversations asking "what to do" about the high-rise towers. The *Baltimore Sun* had run a report in early 1990 that suggested as much: Developers had mocked up a vision for the state center and the area around the University of Maryland Medical Campus that had, among other claims, curiously erased completely the high-rise towers' existence. In their place was a new urbanist sketch depicting well maintained

[300]For discussion of the "new front door" to West Baltimore, see the Chapter 5 discussion of the HOPE VI planning process.
[301]For a discussion of high-rise towers and the notion of "disrepute," see Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing.*
[302]Lorraine Greene, (Rossiter Street), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 4/18/15, Morgan State University, Baltimore Maryland.
[303]Lorraine Greene, (Rossiter Street), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 4/18/15.

town homes lining the West side of MLK Boulevard, and a vibrant shopping district. "Expanding the promise of downtown commerce west," it noted.[304]

The Family High Rise Modernization Task Force became a mechanism through which the various and competing material claims on this space could be rendered in moral terms. The Task Force was initiated by Baltimore's then Mayor Kurt Schmoke and the executive director of the Baltimore Housing Authority, Robert Hearn. It was chaired by Michael J. Kelley, dean of the University of Maryland law school (not to be confused with Michael P Kelly, head of the DC Housing Authority from 2000-2010) and included politicians, education officials, lawyers and leaders of housing advocacy groups, fourteen members in all, including six public housing residents from across the city, McKinley being one. It convened a nine month study, in which it reviewed documents, heard oral testimony, and participated in "lively" public exchanges, in order to assess the "quality of life factors" within the city's high-rise public housing sites.[305] While its stated purpose was to assess the relative "safety" of the city's high-rises for the nearly 3000 children who resided there, it should also be noted that its creation coincides with what the *Baltimore Sun* reported at the time was "$100 million in federal funds that the Housing Authority expects to receive over the next 10 years." Here then, a city desperate to redevelop downtown began a process through which the perceived "dysfunction" of high-rises became an economic opportunity.

While McKinley was ostensibly a central member of the task force, she never

[304]Burke, *Baltimore Sun*, "Downtown Developers Eye New State Center Development," (January 20, 1990).

[305]"Letter to Hon. Kurt L. Schmoke and Robert Hearn from Michael J. Kelley," (March 12, 1991), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Vertical Files: Housing-Baltimore.

felt like an equal to the non-housing residents that she shared work with. “They'd ask for your opinion and then ignore it,” she notes. “Except when they needed us in front of the camera. They always encouraged us to go on and on about how bad the housing was when there were reporters around.” “But look,” she clarified during one conversation,

> the high-rises had real problems. But when I think about it now, what I think is that these lawyers, the mayor, these...I'll say it...these white people, they weren't really interested in us. Really. What I mean, is they didn't care about how we struggled or what was happening to us – even when they said they did. What they really wanted was to get us out...So they talked about how it was ruining our families. My entire family lived there. It didn't ruin my family.[306]

Her experience speaks to the complicated and sometimes contradictory relationships this process had with the black women who lived in this housing. The task force at once sought to incorporate the bodies and voices of residents, yet these residents were presented a highly circumscribed set of choices, ultimately all derived from outside of McKinley's own thoughts and experiences as a resident. As she can attest, the task force made a show of inviting and encouraging black residents to join public meetings, in surveys, and through inclusion in the task force itself. Of the 14 members that served on the task force, six, including McKinley, were black women and public housing residents.

On the other hand, Barnes' first exposure to the task force was at a meeting it convened at the Murphy Homes, many months into its research process. Entering the meeting, she assumed the committee “was about finding solutions to the problems”

[306]McKinley interview, 8/8/11.

that disrupted public housing life.[307] As Barnes describes it, she and her neighbors attempted to participate in meetings but never felt as though there was any room for them or for discussions that drew from their understanding of the buildings, its problems, or their visions for solutions. They presented the task force a list of recommendations which they believed would be helpful and reflective of their thinking, only to be rebuffed for not following protocol.

The recommendations as Barnes recalls them were straightforward: 1) Increase repair schedule which had recently felt like it had stalled out. 2) Address the chronic slowdowns and breakdowns of the elevators. 3) Address the pest problem which had spiraled out of control over the previous decade. 4) Address the crime. 5) Re-open a central paved courtyard, which was home to basketball hoops and a site of socializing, which had more recently had its gates chained by HABC due to, as tenants tell it, an effort to appease Baltimore City Police. They were moderate and grounded in the need for material improvements – an effort to "improve those buildings." The city had other ideas.

Barnes and others were not completely ignored by the task force. They were invited to meetings. But as she describes it, they were effectively expected to be an audience while the task force shared findings. Yet the material facts "uncovered" by the task force presented in the report-backs were not news to Barnes or to the other tenants present. The Murphy Homes were the most densely populated tract of public housing – and of residential space, more broadly – in the city. Those who lived there "felt" the disinvestment as one former resident described, particularly as the buildings

[307] Barnes interview via email, 5/20/13.

aged and the political decisions accelerated disinvestment.

And if they didn't "feel" it, there were no shortage of local news segments, exposés, and newspaper articles that described in grim detail the underdevelopment of Baltimore's public housing and its perceived effects on public housing communities, particularly the youth populations. A spate of articles that ran between 1989-1991 covering the mayor's task force offered many observations about the high-rises and their perceived non-normative familial arrangements: "The buildings...house high numbers of pregnant teens and high school dropouts" one *Sun* article noted; another stated "Most of the residents are single mothers with two children under age 12."[308]

Echoing the *Sun*, the task force published its "New Lease on Life" final report, in which it asserted that the high-rises as currently constituted were "unfit for family life." Its goal was to "make these communities more conducive for family living and revitalize the neighborhoods." In that spirit, the task force recommended that the HABC cut the number of high-rise housing units in Baltimore by 40%. "Demolish most of the Buildings," the task force recommended, "and replace them with new ones especially designed to strengthen family life." Practically speaking, this would involve reducing the 2,750 units of high-rise public housing to 1,650 units and moving those who relied on the remaining 1,100 units via a mix of housing vouchers and the scattered site replacement units. In the Murphy Homes, this would mean reducing the 758-unit site to 455 units and displacing the remainder of the

[308]Quoted in Ginger Thompson, "Getting Rid of High-rise Projects," *Baltimore Sun* (December 2, 1990); see also, Ginger Thompson, "No Children in High-Rise, Study Urges Baltimore Task Would Move Families," *Baltimore Sun* (November 21, 1990); Tom Keyser, "Families in City's High-rises Cope with Violence, Drugs, Children at Risk, *Baltimore Sun* (November 27, 1990); "Troubled Housing Projects," *Baltimore Sun*, (November 24, 1990).

residents. It also recommended to expand education and job training efforts, as well as requiring tenants to contribute service to the community. It recommended that anyone with children should be relocated. Further, it "recommended that the Housing Authority implement a program in which relocated tenants could be taught basic life skills, such as how to manage a household, budget their money and care for their children."[309] As one tenant confronting Mayor Schmoke asserted, "my children aren't safe in a place they call home."[310] And another told him, "this is no place to bring up children…there are too many people crowded on top of each other."[311]

While all of this initially came as a shock to Barnes, what bothered her most (and continues to bother her) wasn't that the committee ignored the residents – it didn't: as noted, there were residents represented on the committee, likewise there were residents featured prominently at all press events; "they had a person who worked with residents to tell their stories to the media when they told their stories."[312] What Barnes observed, however, was that there was no sincere effort made by the committee to connect to organizers in the buildings – to plug into and to draw from the mutual aid practices of those like Barnes and her cohort and to think through their vision for rehabilitation instead of demolition. "We weren't useful to them" she asserts. "The city was ready to tear those buildings down and they wanted the people who had given up...or the ones who would focus on the problems, the ones who weren't doing the work to make those apartments better, the ones without that vision

[309] Ginger Thompson, "No Children in High-Rise, Study Urges," 1A.
[310] Quoted in Michael Fletcher, "Work Crews Follow on the Heels of Mayor's Visit to Public Housing," *Baltimore Sun* (January 31, 1993), 5B.
[311] Quoted in Paul Valentine, "Baltimore Mayor Tours the Terrain of a Complex Crisis," *Washington Post* (January 31, 1993), B01.
[312] Barnes interview, 1/15/13.

for making it better."

A local news segment that ran in January of 1990 supports this claim. In it images of a reporter navigating a vacant high rise apartment, highlighting warped kitchen floor linoleum and growing mold, are juxtaposed with sober commentary by Hearn and reflections from a resident named Meredith Marine (a member of the Murphy Homes Residents Association). "We can't keep going on like this" she says to the camera. The piece cuts to more images of a hallway cluttered with waste, adds some reporting about the housing authority's changing approach to high-rise towers, before the piece is punctuated by Marine's exclamation that "we need help!"[313]

Here, Barnes's observations are invaluable. "There were stories and there were politician visits and there was a lot of concern, but they didn't come to our meetings...they didn't ask us what we were trying to get done to fix these problems...They wanted the people who had given up, not the people who were working to get things better."[314]

This choice by the media and the housing authority to narrate housing decline in a way that foregrounds the affective performance of residents – the ways that housing reformers mobilized and presented black women as suffering subjects – effaced the work of the building's organizers and their interventions in and demands for rehabilitation over demolition. The material work of organizing and mutual aid seemed to have less value to the task force than the affective performance of distress.

The mutual aid work of Barnes and McKinley, etc., shouldn't be idealized.

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[313] WBAL-TV 11, as described in Ginger Thompson, "Maintenance Trouble for Murphy Homes Residents," *Baltimore Sun* (January 15, 1990).
[314]Barnes interview, 1/15/13.

Nor should it be assumed that simply scaling up their work would have radically improved the high-rise towers. Rather, what discussions with residents reveal is that they maintained a materialist (rather than cultural) understanding of the very real problems with high-rise housing towers. In spite of housing authority gestures that gave the impression that they were expressing resident will, the reality was they made political choices about how to narrate their intervention, the consequence of which obscured tenant organizing and gave the impression that demolition was inevitable. Barnes's slightly tongue in cheek observation rings very true: “They wanted to talk family dysfunction, we wanted to talk plumbing.”[315]

McKinley described the task force as split in two. On the one hand, there were the residents. “[W]e weren't unified,” she noted of the group, “there were some folks who had more of a say than someone like me.” Yet, “we all lived in those towers.” On the other hand, there were what she referred to as “the mayor's people.” This group she described as primarily white, as members of the professional class, and as having had little exposure to public housing life and no experience living within it. According to McKinley, this group set the task force's actual agenda. While everyone was present at the meetings, they facilitated the meetings. They also wrote the reports, and directed all of the interactions with the city, the housing authority, HUD, and with the media. Further, they maintained culture within the group that would keep the resident participants at arm's length. “We would be pleasant with each other, but we weren't friends or anything like that.” “There wasn't much of a connection” between the residents and the other members of the task force.

[315]Barnes interview via email, 5/21/13.

That divide McKinley would argue went well beyond interpersonal insensitivities.

> When I think back on it, I think about who these people were and what they meant when they said family – again, this task force was about how the buildings weren't safe for families...Their lives were so different from ours, so different. What did they think about when they thought about our families?...What did that white lawyer, who's from I think [the historically white and wealthy north Baltimore neighborhood of] Roland Park...What'd she know about Ms. Jean or this one right here [gesturing to a photo of Murphy Homes resident Elanor McDonald] or the other people they talked to or that she coached into running one of these meetings – what did she really know about their families?[316]

"I'm not trying to say that rich white people understand their families different from poor people from the projects...from black people," she said, then adding, "but...maybe I am (laughs)"[317]

When asked why the maintenance of competing ideas about family mattered, McKinley notes, "it meant they didn't need to solve our problems how they would solve their own." Roland Park has long been a signifier for what Lipsitz would call the "white spatial imaginary" in Baltimore, a reputation it has well earned.[318] Initially a suburb of the city, founded by an upper middle class, establishing countryside residences in part in response to the early demographic shifts unfolding in the city, as the population was urbanizing and the city population was expanding and growing less white. Annexed by the city on January 1, 1919, it has continued to earn its reputation as an over-resourced white enclave. It is defined within Baltimore by its concentration of large homes, large property lots, winding tree lined residential

[316]Interview with McKinley, 1/5/12.
[317]Interview with McKinley, 8/8/11.
[318]See George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

streets. It is known for the heavy concentration of exclusive private schools at its northern edge, and the kind of "exclusionary amenities" that have come to define a certain form of classed/raced residential segregation within the post-civil rights city.[319] Its outsized influence over both social and political life within the city, and its outsized claim to the city's resources, are often justified by its ability to make claims about itself as a site of "safety," "stability," and "family" life. Its over-resourced status has been justified precisely because of the role it plays in maintaining the "fit"-ness of family life within Baltimore. Likewise, its persistence as a site of concentrated resources for over a century, could be attributed to its initial planning, its "defensive framework," among other factors.[320] By mobilizing the idea of Roland Park in discussing the demolition of the Murphy Homes, McKinley linked the over-accrual of resources necessary to produce Roland Park as a place "fit" for family life with the extraction of resources from low-income black residential space. Further, the connection she makes speaks to how "family life" does fundamentally different work when mobilized around the idea of white space versus the work it does when mobilized to address black space.

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[319]On "exclusionary amenities," see Tobin Armborst, Daniel D'Oca, and Georgeen Theodore, "The Dream of a Lifestyle: Planned Communities and the Tools of Exclusion," International New Town Institute, newtowninstitute.org/spip.php?article1055, as well as their larger treatment of the "arsenal of exclusion," in *The Arsenal of Exclusion and Inclusion* (New York: Actar, 2017). For a history of Roland Park, see Robert Fogelson, *Bourgeoise Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870*-1930 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), in particular, 59-115; see also Roberta Moudry, "Gardens, Houses, and People: The Planning of Roland Park, Baltimore" (Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 1990); James Waesche, *Crowning the Gravely Hill: A History of the Roland Park-Guilford-Homeland District* (Baltimore, 1987); a recent reinterpretation of Roland Park that emphasizes the roots of residential segregation in larger histories of racism and empire is found in Paige Glotzer's *How the Suburbs Were Segregated: Developers and the Business of Exclusionary Housing, 1890-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

[320]See Mary Corbin Sies, "Paradise Retained: An Analysis of Persistence in Planned, Exclusive Suburbs, 1880-1980," *Planning Perspectives* Vol. 12, Issue 2 (1997).

The notion that "unfit for family life" should translate in policy terms to demolition, McKinley maintains, comes in part from this ideological commitment that working class black women and the kinship structures that policy makers encountered in public housing towers existed outside of normative definitions of family maintained by whites, particularly upper middle class white liberals, the kind who populate places like Roland Park. Where "family" – and in particular the preservation of family safety and stability, family "fit"-ness – is mobilized to justify the profound over-resourcing of an area like Roland Park, it is mobilized here to justify the further extraction of resources from this historically black space and the further construction of partitions that keep black women from accessing resources.

The welfare state has historically set its claims of moral authority against a notion of black female dysfunction, and in particular, the perceived dysfunction of black mothers.[321] The findings of the Family High Rise Modernization Task Force were in keeping with that tradition. The facts of underdevelopment, which were at the center of Barnes and McKinley's materialist politics, which necessarily foreground the state and capital's complicity in reproducing the suffering of public housing residents, were displaced by a task force that, as Barnes notes, was more interested in the presentation of affect than of the political observations or the material and intellectual labor of resident organizers. To insist on the innate "harmfulness" of the space was to re-position those attempting to preserve their housing as negligent parents. Likewise, this notion of "harmfulness" provided ethical cover for the state to

[321]See for example, Hazel Carby's discussion of this dynamic in "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18 No. 4 (Summer, 1992).

present its demolition campaign as acting in the interests of black children, protecting them from their negligent parents. In spite of the state's own failures to look after the welfare of black residents of public housing, it nevertheless mobilized possessive claims on the children living in high-rise housing as a way of arguing for the high-rises' demolition.

This is not to say that the poor were malleable or easily manipulated. Rather their lack of real power, combined with the overdetermined character of these struggles, allowed for the far more organized forces of upward redistribution to selectively appropriate their pain. Further, it allowed that appropriation to stand in for "resident voices." Resident frustrations and the public performance of suffering was instrumentalized by the task force. Their pain was massaged, and blanket expressions of alienation were transformed into a call for demolition.

Conclusion:

Barnes and McKinley's social practice -- like that of many other high-rise residents – was occasioned by the presence of direct state aid, but was necessary precisely because that aid operated unevenly. The welfare state produced racialized asymmetries in resource distribution and historically ignored the ways in which those effects materialized within black residential space and residential life. Further, it ignored how these same communities were able to produce their own material interventions as well as a politics that came from their own understanding of their material interests. The social action of public housing residents turned what McKittrick calls "geographies of containment" – or what Yousuf Al-Bulushi called

"zones of non-being" – into "zones of being differently" or of "living otherwise."[322] Their work existed as a register of both a profound disconnect from the welfare state, as well as a capacity to produce life-worlds outside of and beyond welfare state channels. In so doing, what those in the Murphy Homes – as well as tenants throughout the city – proved through their collective practice, was that public housing communities existed not simply as objects of governance, but as an assembled means through which the construction of alternative forms of self-governance were not only possible, but necessary.

As private forces further unravel the welfare state, a discourse of "family responsibility" has emerged to shift onto private actors what in another context would be understood as social obligations.[323] While a "family responsibility" discourse often works to discipline working and middle class people, pushing them to absorb increasing obligations during moments of austerity, McKinley, Barnes, and the mutual aid groups within the Murphy Homes demonstrate that these dynamics operate differently within spaces of racialized and sexualized poverty. Black women living in public housing have been expected to make up for under-development throughout the history of the welfare state, from its height to its nadir. This work, often carried out by people connected through kinship and sustained through intimate bonds, nevertheless is rarely read as "family responsibility" in any normative sense.

As McKinley notes, the task force was incapable or unwilling to see the

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[322]Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Yousuf Al-Bulushi, "The Struggle for a Second Transition in South Africa: Uprising, Development, and Precarity in the Post-Apartheid City," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2014).

[323]Cooper, Melinda, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone Books, 2017).

"family responsibility" on display among local organizers. The work of McKinley and Barnes, like their social groups and their extended kinship structures, existed precisely because the state made direct material investments into urban life and also because the state and capital failed to provide the resources sufficient to address the mounting material needs of these residents.

The culture of poverty myth – which I will argue in subsequent chapters has stubbornly remained at the center of liberal housing reform efforts, even if it presents itself in more nominally progressive terms today[324] – asserts that direct state aid is a threat to family life. This aid, they argue, impedes resident industriousness and dis-incentivizes normative coupling and the production of two-parent households. McKinley, Barnes, and others demonstrate, to the contrary, that direct material aid, in the form of public housing, conditioned a robust social life just as intimate and just as linked by way of kinship as the more narrowly defined notions of family used by policy makers and normative ideologues. It would follow, then, that what was threatening about the conditions of the high-rises was not the deforming effects that these housing arrangements had on family life. Rather, I take this archive of policy decisions and resident interviews to suggest that what was threatening was the myriad alternative forms of family life that emerged from those conditions, politicized by struggles over resources and focused on a materialist form of political engagement. McKinley, Barnes, and others relied on extended kinship structures, mutual aid, and community formed outside of and independent of the normalizing bounds of the

[324]See Chapter 3 of this dissertation, "Dr. Wilson's Neighborhood: Poverty Scholarship, the 'Absent Father,' and HOPE VI Planning."

nuclear family, made possible by direct material aid from the state to the poor. Demolishing these spaces didn't solidify "family life," broadly defined. Instead, demolition foreclosed on particular forms of sociality, forms that could be perceived as threatening to the particular development agenda that had taken hold during this period. Resident critique of this moment provides a firmer understanding of what specifically is meant when housing planners designate public high-rises "unfit for family life."

The tragic conclusion to this story is that the housing authority did not choose to follow the task force recommendations, but instead chose to far exceed them. Ultimately, the housing authority chose to tear down the Murphy Homes in its entirety. All 758 units were demolished, and in its place a HOPE VI project was built that contains roughly 140 privately owned homes alongside 75 public housing units. This vast public holding was effectively privatized.

Decades of under-resourcing low-income housing arrangements had conditioned among residents a material politics that sought to mobilize public resources in order to make improvements on and rehabilitate failing housing arrangements. The housing authority's own work to shift the set of concerns into the cultural terms of "family" and child safety reframed the organizing work of residents as the calls of "vulnerable" populations, issuing from the deep concentrated poverty, in need of help. This re-framing of housing activism as a "cry for help" obscured the material politics of organizers like Barnes and McKinley, and displaced that work in favor of moralizing.

Chapter 4: “Dr. Wilson’s Neighborhood”: A Discursive History of HOPE VI

On April 29, 2003, the House Committee on Financial Services held a hearing entitled “Strengthening and Rejuvenating our Nation's Communities and The HOPE VI Program.”[325] The purpose of the hearing was to convene a group of housing, governance, and economic experts in order to assess HOPE VI and deliberate funding renewal. By 2003 the program had been operating in some capacity for ten years. In those ten years, HOPE VI had distributed hundreds of millions of federal dollars to local housing authorities and overseen or funded the demolition and rebuilding of dozens of public housing developments throughout the US. The program's stated set of objectives included the rebuilding of “distressed” inner city landscapes (which invariably included elements of housing demolition), the initiation of broader private investment in those areas both through direct and indirect subsidies, the “de-concentration” of impoverished residents (arguably mislabeled, “poverty de-concentration”) and the provision of “opportunity” for those living in poverty, primarily by way of moving them within closer proximity to those with greater access to resources. To liberal law-makers who developed this program as well as the primarily conservative ones who oversaw it for much of its first decade, these goals were acceptable, and HOPE VI was generally considered a worthwhile program.[326] In

[325] The title of this chapter refers to the April 29, 1996 *New Yorker* profile of William Julius Wilson, in which it is discussed that his “truly disadvantaged” thesis served as an ideological underpinning of the Clinton administration's drive to dismantle mechanisms of public aid (public housing, “welfare,” etc.). The relationship between this scholarly tradition and the austerity politics that are done in its name is discussed in some detail below.

[326] See, for example, former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros’s reflections on the program in his oral history with the University of Virginia Miller Center Presidential Oral History. Republicans and

keeping with this general satisfaction with the programs' larger objectives, most who testified that day offered little substantive critique, but rather suggestions for how to more efficiently function.

One exception was Howard Husock. A School of Government professor at Harvard's Kennedy School and a Taubman Center research fellow, Husock made a very clear case against the renewal of HOPE VI funds intended to provide much needed housing assistance to low income residents in places like his hometown of Boston, MA or the site of this particular study, Baltimore, MD. While he began his testimony acknowledging that the HOPE VI redevelopment projects represent an aesthetic improvement over the older public housing developments that they had come to replace, nevertheless, he asserted, the housing represented a net negative, because of the potential that could be wrung from the properties and the land they occupy if turned over wholesale to the market. Further, his argument honed in on the residents, arguing that these reform projects fail, on capitalist terms, not because of how they look, how they function as communities, or whether or not they do the work of providing quality housing for residents needing them. Rather, these projects fail because of *who* lives there. The objections he brought before Congress centered the relationship between the potential value of urban space, and the negative influence over that value that low-income black women represent by virtue of being low-income black women. He objected to HOPE VI funding renewal because it provided

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Democrats, he notes, "had a good working relationship" around questions of HUD upon his arrival. "It was hard to argue the merits of some of the policies that we were articulating; homelessness, for example, public housing. They believed in HOPE VI." "Henry Cisneros Oral History, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development," University of Virginia, Miller Center, Presidential Oral Histories https://millercenter.org.

low-income black women, and, in particular, low-income black mothers, access to residential space that could only realize its maximal value if it were inhabited by someone else.

Most HOPE VI projects were developed on land that HUD had maintained control over since prior to World War II. HOPE VI siting, then, is primarily a function of utility: new housing schemes developed on land that housed the previous ones. Husock's objection, however, was attentive to a different set of concerns – land that was undesirable to mid-century urban capital had become desirable again to late twentieth century capital. When Baltimore's Perkins Homes was built in the 1930s, for example, the land it occupied was surrounded by industrial space, shipyards, and Jewish and Italian ethnic enclaves. The same was true two decades later when the multi-story buildings of the Flag Homes were erected some four blocks East of Perkins. Today, Baltimore's old industrial spaces have been radically transformed by capital into sites of high-end consumption, hotels, and leisure. What was once an assemblage of poor people's housing, scattered among the sites of production and distribution, now feel more like islands among a sea of high-end commerce and residences, marketed as the “Harbor East” neighborhood. Shaped by this new context, the land that still houses the Perkins Homes holds out the promise of a very different kind of value. Husock's argument before Congress fixates on this dynamic. A program that took valuable land, and granted low-income single parent families access to it, represented for Husock and others, a “perverting influence” over the proper functions of the market, even if the program had supporters in Congress. “It's not easy to speak, in effect, in favor of a moratorium, or perhaps a phase-out, of an admittedly popular

program," he began,

> And there is no doubt that HOPE VI developments have replaced distressed housing and provided homes which are better than their residents could otherwise have afforded. But beyond a superficial attractiveness, there are significant questions about HOPE VI which, especially at a time of budget constraint, must be taken quite seriously.[327]

Husock goes on to elaborate a series of questions pertaining to this observation. "Are we confident that HOPE VI developments will be well-maintained?," he asks,

> It's important to keep in mind that the developments which previously stood on their sites were also hailed, at one time, as a great step forward. This was true even of the public housing high-rises now so thoroughly discredited. It is far easier to cut ribbons on new projects than to maintain those projects over time and, like other public housing before it, HOPE VI faces fundamental maintenance challenges because by design, so many of its residents have low incomes and thus pay low rents. These developments will depend on a combination of market-rate rents and public subsidies. Neither is an assured income stream. Moreover, we must always wonder whether those managing subsidized housing have the capacity and competence to maintain it over time. The track record in this regard has not been reassuring.[328]

Further, he wonders about how the class make up of HOPE VI residents – both those renting and those purchasing homes – shapes the developments. "Will middle-income tenants choose to live in HOPE VI developments?," he asks.

> Just because a development has designated a number of units for middle-income tenants or owners is no assurance that such households will move in, especially in a period when declining rents and real estate prices make other options more affordable. I've already been told by a HOPE VI developer in Chicago that he is doubtful that he can attract the requisite number of middle-income tenants for a development in the city's State Street corridor. This is a crucial question for two reasons. Not only will the developments need income from market-rate residents to ensure proper maintenance but income-mix is a

[327]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities and the HOPE VI Program," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity of the Committee on Financial Services, US House of Representatives, One Hundred Eighth Congress (April 29, 2003), 83.
[328]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities," 84.

> key part of the theory of HOPE VI; based in the belief that higher-income households will set good examples for those of lower income. If it proves too difficult to attract--or just as important, to retain-higher-income households, the developments could quickly become new versions of the housing they replaced.[329]

His next question continues the work of linking those living in poverty to a set of behavioral practices, and that connection to a set of concerns about proper land use and property value, making clear that the HOPE VI program has marketed itself within the policy making community as a social engineering endeavor as much as if not more than a program of housing aid – which is to say, that HOPE VI is clearly understood here as aspiring to a moral dimension, rather than one simply of resource distribution.

> Can we be sure that the HOPE VI social experiment will work? We have proceeded on the supposition that the presence of middle-income households will provide positive role models for those of lower income. But we should keep in mind that this is a hypothesis, not a proven approach. Sociologists, after all, have long recognized that it is difficult for households of significant divergent incomes to establish relationships. We cannot rule out the possibility that there will be friction between these two income groups, as has happened when Section 8 rent voucher households have moved into higher-income neighborhoods, such as the south suburbs of Chicago. Nor can we rule out the possibility that under-supervised children in lower-income households – in which, overwhelmingly, there is only one parent present – may provide negative role models for children in middle-income households.[330]

Again, Husock's reservations reveal that policy-makers in the post-high-rise housing era have placed considerable value in the idea that housing policy should maintain a moral dimension – that the negative effects of poverty are properly and effectively addressed through the practice of socioeconomic intermingling and role-

[329]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities," 84.
[330]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities," 85.

modeling among others. HOPE VI has been imagined by planners as a cross-class residential space, and the key selling point of that has been the promise that home-owners and those who can afford market-rate rent can function as "role models" for public housing residents. That discussions such as this obscure the material reality of housing aid and the underlying conditions that have rendered that aid necessary is not lost on those who are living in this housing and living through the transformations that he is describing.

Husock's closing questions draw an even finer point, foregrounding a set of ideas that this research project will argue sit at the center of this new era of housing transformation. Namely, a politics of resource distribution that links racial-sexual categories and the normalizing work those categories do to the practice of land and housing distribution within a capitalist marketplace managed, in part, through moral claims by the state.

> Is new housing designated for those of very low income in keeping with our larger goals for American family structure? By designating large numbers of HOPE VI units for households of very low income, we ensure that we will be reserving units for single-parent households. Such households dominate existing public and otherwise subsidized housing. HUD figures show that only 8 percent of public housing households have two parents and children as residents. HOPE VI is providing new units for single-parent households which, in contrast to our overall public assistance policy, will come with no time limit. We must ask whether we are providing-at costs which have topped $200,000 a unit, not including any implicit cost of land acquisition--better housing for single-parent families than that which lower-income two-parent families could afford-and are thereby sending a message inconsistent with our broader efforts to encourage the social stability and effective child-rearing which two-parent families, in the aggregate, provide.[331]

Further, he asks, "is HOPE VI making the best use of the land on which its

[331]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities," 85-86.

developments have, or will, be built?"

> In plain English, it is quite possible that subsidized housing may not be the best economic use for some past or potential HOPE VI sites. In Boston, for instance, the HOPE VI development in the city's Mission Hill section occupies a site adjacent to some of the best hospital and medical education facilities in the world. It is quite possible that, were the land put up for public bid, that other private or non-profit use might well have been made of it – boosting the city's economy and providing jobs for rich and poor alike. Should we assume that, simply because public housing has occupied a particular site, that subsidized housing of some kind must always occupy that site? If we do so, we risk creating what I have termed a frozen city, one in which economic growth is much more difficult to attain. Keep in mind that public housing in New York City occupies acreage equivalent to 156 World Trade Center sites. I would be less than candid were I not to concede that I am skeptical, indeed, about the wisdom of the HOPE VI program. Still, I hope that those committed to improving our cities and, especially, improving the prospects for the poor, will understand the importance, and sincerity, of the questions I've tried to raise here today. The fact that, in my view, the answers to all are very much in doubt makes the proposal to pause, at this point, and take stock of the program, the right policy choice.[332]

Husock was not the most well-known of those expert witnesses to speak to the HOPE VI funding discussion that day. Nor are his own personal political investments in keeping with the original spirit of the program – he would clearly identify to the right of the Clinton administration, HOPE VI's ideological and actual architects. It is clear that he is both opposed to the expansion of this housing program and would seem opposed to public housing programs more broadly. Nevertheless, his testimony is worthy of note here because it draws to the surface some very important aspects of housing policy and the longer arc of housing programs that have shaped urban spaces and lives. First, it makes clear that housing policy issues from an intersection of material and ideological concerns, by way of public-private agreement. Second, it

[332]"Strengthening and Rejuvenating Our Nation's Communities," 86-87.

illustrates how those most immediately affected by housing policy choices, while rarely present, and even more rarely part of the decision making, visioning, or planning process in any substantial way, are nevertheless hyper-present in the imaginations of policy architects. Third, as I will demonstrate below, this imagined resident has been constructed through decades of urban sociology that has worked to link the fact of poverty to arguments about residential behavior, and decades of liberal policy-making which works to offer the private market as the ideal site for addressing and correcting these poverty-linked behaviors. Husock's testimony, in its vulgarity, and as such stripped of the idealized language of liberal boosterism, helps to foreground the tension that emerges between these two processes.

I want to introduce this chapter by looking at Husock's testimony in detail, not because it is representative of a larger consensus. Rather, like much of the reactionary discourse concerning late 20th and early 21st century welfare reform policy, it mistook the marketing of a welfare program for what the actual program looked like in practice. In insisting on how crucial it was for HOPE VI to deny low-income black mothers' access to valuable real estate, Husock misses how HOPE VI has worked in fact to deny low-income black mothers access to valuable real estate. His testimony is useful because it represents a vulgarization of something that typically circulates through policy in more subtle forms: policy makers unevenly value residential spaces, because they unevenly value lives. And the history of housing policy is a history of this uneven development, where the cultural assessments of who inhabits certain spaces has done significant work shaping how policy has been oriented toward those spaces. I choose to open this chapter with Husock's testimony for precisely that

reason. It provides an unadorned look into how the ideological interpretations of identity link to narratives about who does and does not deserve to inhabit certain spaces, and how those two processes link to a material project that is always oriented toward the upward distribution of material resources.

Husock brought his pro-market perspective to his Congressional testimony, laying bare a certain, arguably, hegemonic idea about how the state should best engage land use politics. While the social and political implications of that position may be troubling, his honesty is nevertheless useful in clarifying elite priorities. While not monolithic, and while Husock himself has his own specific and personal political commitments,[333] drawing this voice out of the larger archive helps to shed light on the links between post-Civil Rights urban sociology and late twentieth century policy making. It also reveals the tensions that exist between a discourse that centers social outcomes and a set of material investments held by policy makers that centers the value of land and the processes of racial capitalism that organize that value.

In this chapter, I will situate the HOPE VI housing reforms within an intellectual genealogy that worked to obscure market concerns with a culturalist approach to poverty. This cultural work imagines black life and black space both in terms of what they are imagined to lack (absence) and in how little they are imagined to comport to local norms (deviance). Conversely, this cultural work re-imagines fair housing in terms of "opportunity," grounded in conceptions of normative family life,

[333]For example, Husock is a frequent contributor to the conservative think tank the Manhattan Institute and its journal, *City Journal.* In his 2003 book *America's Trillion Dollar Housing Mistake: The Failure of American Housing Policy* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishing, 2003), he calls affordable housing efforts "misguided" and that it "has harmed those it set out to help," 5.

private property, and an upended welfare state that it argues, contrary to its foundational logic, functioned to deprive black residents of access to resources. It is out of this discursive milieu, I argue, that a new attention is directed at the housing conditions of the de-industrializing city. Versed in the scholarship of mid- to late-twentieth century urban sociology – "the culture of poverty," "the underclass," "concentrated poverty" – contemporary housing reformers have mobilized a specific imaginary that centered the figure of the racially and sexually non-normative public housing resident, and endeavored to couch their material interventions as reforms to resident behavior. I will argue that this cultural work ultimately obfuscated a materialist agenda that siphoned resources out of public and into private hands.

The late 1980s through the early 2000s saw radical transformation of the built and cultural landscapes of the urban US, where thousands of public housing units were simply liquidated and thousands of residents in hundreds of housing communities within the US were dislocated from the permanent federally built and maintained structures and sent out into the rental market (or worse), sometimes with vouchers, other times without. As a wave of redevelopment efforts swept through cities like Baltimore in the 1990s, once public housing developments were privatized, the communities populating these newly developed spaces took on fundamentally different characteristics, different sets of social concerns, and new forms of sociality. Within the policy literature of this period that argued for privatization, there exists a sexualized racial politics that links notions of black domestic instability with an assertion that market forces discipline and stabilize black families.

The "Absent Father": From a "Culture of Poverty" to a "Culture of Hopelessness"

By the mid 1960s, black poverty became a concern to be deliberated by the popular discourse. The publication of Michael Harrington's *The Other America* and John Kenneth Gabraith's *The Affluent Society*, for example, signal a kind of post-Depression anxiety among elites about a perceived resurgence of poverty. This "rediscovery" of American poverty, like its early 20th century antecedent, initially focused on (and reserved its most sympathetic gestures for) rural whites.[334]

As discussed in Chapter 1, the earliest iterations of a government organized social welfare system disproportionately excluded impoverished black people. This was not only true of public housing, it was also true of Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). And like housing, as the federal government expanded access to aid, black people's access to these resources grew. For example, in 1936, only about 14% of recipients of AFDC nationally were black. By 1969 – the peak of black participation in AFDC – 45% of recipients were black.[335] Yet, just as the increase in non-normative public housing residents – that is, black recipients of housing assistance who did not conform to the nuclear familial ideal – gave way to what Rhonda Williams called a narrative of "disrepute" surrounding single black women in high-rises, increased black access to AFDC coincided with what Gilens observed as a "moral shift" in how the general public thought through and discussed

[334]The early Kennedy administration, for example, proposed a number of anti-poverty programs.

[335]Martin Gilens, "How the Poor Became Black: The Racialization of American Poverty in the Mass Media," in *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform* in eds. Sanford Schram, Joe Soss, and Richard Fording (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 101-130; see, in particular, figure 4.1, p.105; see also, Irene Lurie, "Major Changes in the Structure of the AFDC Program Since 1935," *Cornell Law Review*, vol. 59, Issue 5 (June, 1974).

poverty and systems of aid to the poor. During this period, the categories "deserving" and "undeserving" poor sharpened and for all intents and purposes reduced to racial categories. Grounded in changing conceptions of poverty, it was during this period that resource transfers for the poor (i.e., "welfare") and underdeveloped public housing within urban spaces "became black" within the imaginations of the larger public.[336]

That's not to say that these changes in media interpretation and public discourse happened independent of material change. As discussed earlier, postwar housing policy incentivized white suburbanization and gutted urban centers of material resources and revenue streams. This resource inequity – mediated by urban/suburban political boundaries, and often exacerbated by federal infrastructure projects like mid-century highway and building programs – began to peak during this period. Further, this era also saw an increasing tendency toward urban insurgency most vividly expressed through uprisings but also expressed through new forms of affiliation, organizing, and political movement building. A continuation of early / mid-century migration, the Civil Rights movement, and the emergence of Black Power each increased the profile of Black American life in their own ways.

This interest was met from both the academy and popular media with a renewed fixation on black domestic life. A Johnson administration report and a raft of articles in the popular press, most notably by Oscar Lewis, re-packaged pre-Civil Rights images of black deviance into a post-Civil Rights discourse centered on the

[336]Gilens, "How the Poor Became Black," 101-130; on the notion of "disrepute" and social conceptions of high-rise public housing residents, see Rhonda Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); see, in particular, Chapter 4, "'When Then Came the Change': The Fight Against Disrepute."

perceived cultural pathologies of black urbanites living in poverty. Like earlier discourses of black deviance, this emergent discourse focused on notions of disorganized home life, dysfunctional sociality, and non-normative sexuality. Like the "slum-dweller" discourse discussed in Chapter 1, here, too, the cultural life of black residents was elevated over their material conditions. And in reproducing a narrative that a dysfunctional culture, rather than access to material resources, was the cause of the very visible expressions of black urban poverty circulating through the society in the mid-twentieth century, the practitioners of this discourse freed policy makers to create policy that focused on perceived cultural deficiencies while in fact intensifying material dislocation. Below I map some of the more significant examples in an effort to demonstrate the centrality of these ideas – even as they have nominally fallen out of fashion in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The "culture of poverty" first emerged in Lewis's anthropological scholarship, notably, his 1959 book *Five Families* and *Children of Sanchez*.[337] This would become a foundational post-Civil Rights text within urban sociology, a discipline the Johnson Administration would draw from in order to make sense of growing urban unrest during the 1960s. The work of Daniel Patrick Moynihan would provide the account Johnson sought. Like Lewis, the nominal concern in Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action w*as the perceived "breakdown" of the black family. The "breakdown" Moynihan was concerned with was grounded in a mid-century sociological observation that male-female, two parent households were

[337] Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family* (New York: Vintage, 2011).

decreasing in prevalence among low-income black urbanites. He framed this observation as “absent” black fathers and contrasted it with observations about the general white population, in order to make the case for black poverty being an issue of black domestic non-normativity. The “absent father” and the non-normative home, the argument went, both over-burdened and overly-empowered black women, particularly single black mothers. This was imagined to produce negative consequences in black children, who were subjected to over-bearing matriarchal influences, which limited a range of life chances including school performance. Most importantly, according to Moynihan, the non-normative family undercut black people's capacity to integrate into normative society. This was imagined to be essential for ascending out of poverty according to Moynihan and the Chicago sociological school he was clearly informed by here. “It is clearly a disadvantage” he wrote “for a minority group to be operating on one principle while the great majority of the population and the one with the most advantages to begin with, is operating on another.”[338] Further, according to him, this process was not fixed, but was dynamically reproducing itself in ways that can only be described by a materialist analysis as “magical.” That is, they were imagined to be generative outside of material context – reproduced as the population itself reproduced.

Moynihan's work provoked push back from its inception. And while it is important to understand the ideological opposition, which I will elaborate below, it's also worth assessing the work on its own terms, as a work of social science. The

[338]US Department of Labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, (Washington DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, 1965), 75.

indicators he used to measure "family stability" were fairly straight forward, if reductive.[339] He contrasted data from the 1940 Census with data from the 1960 Census, looking specifically for material on family composition. He gathered data on single parent households (i.e., "absent fathers"), divorce rate, and children born to single mothers.[340] He noted that 23% of urban black women were living without husbands, while in general, 8% of white women were living without husbands.[341] He also noted that 24% of black children were born to unmarried parents, as opposed to 3% of children born to white parents. Drawing from IQ data, he contrasted average scores of black children from two parent households with those from single parent households.[342]

Around these seemingly empirical data, he built an elaborate explanatory narrative about the preponderance of black children living in "broken homes." The narrative winds through a discussion of slavery as a system that built into racial capitalism a material incentive to tear apart black community and kinship structures. It went on to imagine a white fear of black males as a principal motivation for post-Reconstruction black codes. Drawing liberally from the work of E. Franklin Frazier, he situated an emasculation narrative within a context of migration and urbanization – particularly as that movement lead to a life within urban "slums." "If these families have managed to preserve their integrity until they reach the Northern city, poverty,

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[339] United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington DC: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Print. Office, 1965).
[340] For Moynihan's use of Census data, see United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, 27, 31, 37-38.
[341] United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, see in particular, p. 8 and the Tables 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14, pp. 59-70.
[342] United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, 35-38 and Table 18, p.74.

ignorance, and color force them to seek homes in deteriorated slum areas from which all institutional life has disappeared." While he marshals employment data to demonstrate a paucity of job opportunities available to black urbanites midcentury, he does so, curiously, in the service of more culturally preoccupied conjecture: lack of work and resultant idleness lead to "family desertion."[343]

Ultimately the Moynihan report made a causal argument: He presented a set of observations about coinciding phenomena but situated these within a causal chain. He arranged what he decided were a set of observed negative effects (poor test scores, unemployment, welfare use, perceived high dropout rates, perceived high teen pregnancy rates, children born to single mothers), and asserted that what was productive of these effects was "family instability," defining this instability as "absent father," while situating as incidental the actual material conditions these "unstable" families had to negotiate. Ultimately, the Moynihan report is bad on its own terms. As Swan points out, when one observes the 1960 Census data and controls for both income and geography – rural vs. urban – one finds there was actually very little difference in gendered composition of family structures among white and black households.[344] It is misleading to contrast the family lives of low-income black urbanites with the general white population. A better faith comparison would control for class and situate low income black residents alongside low income white residents. Looking at the 1960 census shows that when one controls for those variables, an entirely different picture of poverty and family composition emerges.

[343]Moynihan, The Negro Family, 67.
[344]L. Alex Swan, "A Methodological Critique of the Moynihan Report," *Black Scholar* Vol. 5, Issue 9 (1974).

Family composition of whites inhabiting the same residential and socioeconomic space as these highly scrutinized black families looks close to identical.

Nevertheless, this cultural narrative moved from academic and policy circles into popular circles by the mid 1960s. In October of 1966, 14 months after the Watts rebellion, two months after riots in Cleveland, OH, Lewis published an article entitled "Culture of Poverty" in *Scientific American* wherein he clarifies that while poverty may be a universal condition, the *culture* of poverty describes something more specific: "There are many poor people in the world" he asserted, "[b]ut not all of them by any means live in the culture of poverty. For this way of life to come into being and flourish it seems clear that certain preconditions must be met." What Moynihan implies, Lewis makes explicit: the norms and behaviors of specific groups of impoverished people should be understood in cultural, rather than materialist terms. That what the "culture of poverty" narrative enables is the theorization of poverty as a subculture. Those who were folded into it were understood to be constructing a "distinct way of life," defined by low aspirations and a disinvestment in the normative modes of familial relationships.[345] Further, and maybe most significantly, this subculture was imagined as self-perpetuating, that is, poverty, low aspirations, and sexual deviance are imagined as phenomena generated by culture and passed along through birth from one generation to the next.

There was a not-so-subtle argument running through much of this discussion: The cultural pathology of impoverished black urbanites should disqualify them from

[345]Oscar Lewis, "Culture of Poverty," in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ed. *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, ed. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 187-220; Moynihan, *The Negro Family*.

access to state aid. This was a group "undeserving" of the social safety net constructed through the New Deal that served the white poor so well in the decades after the Great Depression. As discussed above, fixation on impoverished black communities and the popular constructions of these communities as pathological and socially "destabilizing" coincided with their growing access to the welfare state. While the New Deal policies that had historically shut them out, the victories of the Civil Rights movement opened up some – if gradual, and qualified – avenues through which the black poor could experience some measure of antipoverty policy. In spite of this, 1969 represented peak access for black Americans to AFDC. By the mid 1980s, black access had fallen to below 40%.[346] And this number gradually fell each subsequent year, continuing to decrease into the present.

The mid-1980s scholarship of Charles Murray made the case that decreased black access to social welfare was in fact a social good. Picking up where the culture of poverty narratives left off, Murray made explicit what the above arguments implied, that this cultural fixation was deeply tied to the material reality of a political economy moving further toward austerity. Focusing on the most visible expression of the welfare state, AFDC, Murray made the argument that the cultural pathologies that Lewis, Moynihan, and others fixated on were grounded in the material incentives produced by the welfare system. In his book, *Losing Ground*, he asserted that welfare policies encouraged black women to have more children than they could support, and remain unmarried as a way of qualifying for greater amounts of state aid. It was this set of distorted incentives – effectively producing a rational economic argument for

[346]Gilens, "How the Poor Became Black," figure 4.1.

the non-nuclear family – that lead to unwillingness to work, unwillingness to marry, and a desire to reproduce in unsustainable ways.[347] This, of course naturalized the nuclear family and postulated that what kept black Americans from embracing it was the disincentives produced by the promise of welfare.

Wilson's urban sociology proceeded down a similar road, if with something more of a materialist sheen. He offered the category of the urban "underclass" by situating the "culture of poverty" narrative within an historical context. While the above work thought about poverty and its reproduction in almost biological ways – poor parents beget poor children, and so on – Wilson's work in *The Truly Disadvantaged* looked to changes in US political economy over the latter half of the twentieth century as a way of explaining the fact of black poverty.[348] He outlined how suburbanization of manufacturing drew jobs out of urban centers, and relatedly how suburbanization of housing drew white and eventually black middle- and working-class residents out of urban centers, while leaving the lowest income black residents fixed in these spaces. Deindustrialization and a shrinking urban population lead to a decreased demand for low-skilled labor and shrinking city budgets crippled city schools. It became close to impossible by the 1980s for non-skilled black labor to find entry points into the political economy that could produce the kind of working class livelihood often associated with the postwar industrial city (though, one could argue that that kind of life was rarely available to much of the black working class – a fact that may have been masked by postwar urban segregation).

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[347]Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 2015 [1984]).

[348] William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Wilson argues that demographic shifts in black residential spaces have a determining effect. He pointed to a growing "black youth" that out-paced both older generations of black residents as well as their white contemporaries. Between 1960 and 1970, he notes, the percentage of black youth ages of 14 to 24 increased by 78 percent. The percentage of whites of the same age group increased only 23 percent.[349]

He also pointed to "isolation" as a determinant that separated black from white communities. While earlier forms of racial segregation imposed on black residential spaces were impediments to movement irrespective of class, post-Civil Rights residential politics created opportunities for middle-class out-migration. This out-migration, he argues, fractured communities and robbed the young and the impoverished of access to "opportunity." The resultant "isolation," he argues, rather than deindustrialization, accounts for the vast underemployment effecting these communities. It is isolation that has disconnected these spaces from the informal job networks, from "role models," from mainstream institutions, and "mainstream patterns of behavior" necessary for reproducing normative life.[350] As such, this isolation undermined the "sense of community, positive neighborhood identification, and explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior" that were necessary for keeping impoverished black urban residents situated within the mainstream of urban civic life.[351]

The perniciousness of this argument lies less in his reading of the political economic dimensions of segregated black spaces, and more in his nostalgia for what

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[349]William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 36.
[350]Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged,* 3.
[351]Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged,* 141.

was lost during their late twentieth century transformations. The absent middle and working classes (akin to Moynihan's "absent father"), were important for disciplinary reasons, according to Wilson. Their cultural influence (rather than, say, their tax revenue), he asserts, sustained a social order that was lost as they moved out. Their absence, he continues, undermined the social organization that was built up in the community at an earlier period, and the stability of basic community institutions (i.e., schools, churches, and businesses). Further, without this disciplining middle class, no one remained within these spaces to reinforce the social norms and values that were essential for integrating into the dominant society. According to Wilson, this cultural influence had defining effects relating to employment, education, and family structure. It is, in the end, this *absence* that Wilson is most concerned with when discussing the effects of what he termed "concentrated poverty."[352]

The "Absent Father" and the Parentified Market: Welfare Reform, Housing Reform, and the Market as Present Disciplinarian

The scarcity of domestic discipline imagined within Moynihan's discussion of the "absent father" or through Wilson's discussion of the "absent middle class" found policy expression in 1990s reforms meant to address such things as "welfare abuse" and the "chaotic" social worlds of underdeveloped public housing.[353] Planners synthesized the assumptions about black domestic dysfunction discussed above with a policy agenda that nominally set out to address itself to these concerns. What I will

[352] William Julius Wilson, "Keynote Address: Combating Concentrated Poverty in Urban Neighborhoods," *Journal of Applied Social Science* 7, no. 2 (2013): 135–43.
[353] Moynihan points to a "breakdown of the Negro family" which he argues leads "absent-father families" to "welfare-dependency" in *The Negro Family*, 12-14. Wilson discusses the "Black middle-class exodus" from "ghetto neighborhoods" in *Truly Disadvantaged*, 6-20.

argue below is that this policy agenda had material effects that functioned to undermine low income black families' claims to public resources, and effectively worked to redistribute these public resources upward. Material aid, such as food stamps, for black urbanites living in poverty, took on new moral valance when they were linked to discussions of family structure. The Moynihan fixation on single-parent families, which helped to both naturalize two-parent families within the public discourse and to alienate black domestic life from this norm, was elaborated through these reform discussions. Likewise, Murray's fixations on "welfare dependence" as engendering patterns of disinvestment – that is, the "demotivation" of recipients of aid to establish possessive claims to the political economy – undergirded ideas about private ownership and the need to reduce the role of the state as direct provider of aid as a means of addressing housing reform. Policy makers compromised with and elaborated on the social consensus (as articulated by the above scholars and popular discussions) that confused a reduced willingness on the part of the state to provide aid to the poor as the over-burdening of the system by the poor.

The growing commitment to austerity meant that those agencies that maintained the shrinking social safety net needed to adjust in order to survive. Like the welfare reform that came before it, the housing reforms that found concrete expression in the HOPE VI program were born, in part, out of compromise with a set of converging interests – those invested in reducing public discretionary commitments; those invested in a growing market orthodoxy; and those invested in the pervasive cultural narratives about how poverty and family dysfunction are generated by the practice of issuing and receiving state aid. Policy makers

internalized and cultivated a material understanding that the most effective way to both preserve their institutional existence and address themselves to growing concerns about the urban "underclass" was to suture state commitments to austerity with market commitments to dispossession with an emergent "common sense" that poor recipients of public aid, such as public housing tenancy, needed a new austerity as a behavioral corrective.

The HOPE VI program was an outgrowth of the Major Reconstruction of Obsolete Properties (MROP) initiative.[354] In 1992, Congress committed $200 million in an effort to begin to address public housing needing "modernization" and "rehabilitation."[355] In an effort to efficiently utilize these funds, the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing was established.

The commission was chaired by Congressman Bill Green of New York and Vincent Lane, Chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. The commission was populated by sixteen other people, a mix of other housing authority directors, former mayors, municipal employees, non-profits, one tenant council president, a representative from the banking industry and Richard D. Baron, of McCormack Baron and Associates (now, McCormack Baron Salazar), a non-profit developer "and asset manager of economically-integrated urban neighborhoods."[356]

The commission did not identify specific sites, but rather produced a working definition that would then be used to assess local proposals for housing

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[354] National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," (Washington DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1992) https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Publications/pdf/HUD-11659.pdf.
[355] "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," 1-8.
[356] McKormac Barron and Associates, "Biographies," (accessed 1/2014), http://www.mccormackbaron.com.

redevelopment. “The NCSDPH developed the definition of severely distressed public housing with the intention that it be used so that PHAs can apply for severely distressed housing designation and for these housing developments to then qualify for remedies proposed by the NCSDPH and enacted by the Congress.”[357]

The Commission convened public hearings and organized case studies in order to iron out what specific criteria they would use in order to define and identify examples of “severely distressed” housing. This included “public testimony from residents, PHA staff and directors, and local government officials.”[358] They designed “a point system” for designating developments as severely distressed. Severely distressed public housing was characterized by the commission through a combination of several factors, or an extreme degree of one. “The factors chosen to be included in the definition combine physical and social characteristics.”[359] The commission enumerated four initial identifying characteristics, informed by those laid out in the Congressional authorizing language in the 1989 legislation. These were: “500 or more units;” “elevators;” “vacancy rates of higher than 15 percent;” “tenants who are predominantly families with children.” Put differently, high-rises. Particularly those populated by children. Testimony from residents, PHA staff, and directors helped produce additional criteria: lack of applicant screening; housing stock age; lack of social services for residents in need, and, most tellingly, “resident

[357]National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, “Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing” (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1992), Chapter 2, p.1.

[358]“Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing,” Chapter 2, p.2.

[359]“Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing.”

apathy."

These criteria were then ranked and organized into groups: 1) conditions at the development itself; 2) conditions in the immediately surrounding neighborhood; 3) factors relating to PHA's management capability. Based on these criteria, the Commission found that six percent of US public housing stock (86,000 units) was "severely distressed." Their report recommended that Congress and HUD reform distressed housing by the year 2000, calling on them to support the "rehabilitation or replacement of existing units."[360] Beyond that, it called on Congress to increase support services to residents through workshops and/or direct employment.

This initial NCSDPH report did not represent the complete paradigm shift in public housing approach that the HOPE VI program would eventually become. The final report maintained what might be called the "containment" logic that informed mid-century public housing development. It did not advocate for moving away from dense residential building, nor did it make reference to "concentrated poverty," a phrase that would become a popular target of liberal housing reformers. In fact, the report specifically warned against moving families out of neighborhoods, and likewise warned against demolishing units without replacing them. While it focused much more on rehabilitation, it did not make reference to public-private partnerships as a (*the*) way forward. As such, their initial recommendations were not oriented toward displacing residents. In these ways, it was already out of sync with the direction housing policy and governance were headed. Nevertheless, it did recommend the lifting of regulatory barriers to building replacement units on site,

[360] "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," 10-2.

suggesting that "PHA's should be allowed to construct or rehabilitate the replacement units in the same neighborhood that contained the original units."[361] They also left open the possibility that unit replacement could be facilitated through Section-8 vouchers, rather than new construction or rehabilitation. These would very quickly become the official policy, accelerating the mass surrender of public land to private interests. As such, the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing represented an incremental step toward the current approach to housing policy and governance, which only intensified during this era of "welfare reform."

HOPE VI

In addition to the $200 million for dealing rehab and renovation of distressed public housing, Congress set aside $5 billion in 1992 to be awarded to local housing authorities over the next 10 years.[362] There was a general understanding that these additional funds would be tied to the effort to reform distressed housing. But in what specific way these billions would be used was the subject of significant policy discussion over the next year. And in order to refine the *how* of this process, what needed to be determined was the *why* of it. That is, a range of approaches could have been pursued under the auspices of a massive, federally funded, public housing reform campaign. The specific form this would eventually take – HOPE VI – was the result not just of the identification of "severe distress" but of the processes that made that "severe distress" meaningful. Not just what the underdevelopment looked like,

[361] "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," 5-47.
[362] "HOPE VI Program Authority and Funding History," Housing and Urban Development, (March 2007) https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_9838.pdf.

but *why* there was underdevelopment to begin with. The former questions are not hard to answer. They are discussed head-on in much of the policy literature. The latter questions are less visible, but their vague outlines are often recoverable within the literature and become clearer through discussions with those whose lives were most immediately impacted by these policy transformations.

By the time of the first Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in 1993, it was clear what prerogatives were shaping the new vision for housing reform.[363] While, like the NCSDCH, not yet proposing wholesale demolition of public housing stock, these first allocations of funding did introduce some techniques that would facilitate the incremental transformation of housing funding from public works to private subsidy. On some level, it differed little from earlier modernizing programs for public housing – it proposed to allocate $300 million for "grants to carry out an urban revitalization demonstration program involving major reconstruction of severely distressed or obsolete public housing projects, to be administered by local housing authorities."[364] And like the NCSDCH, it also said nothing about the "de-concentration of poverty" or partnering with private developers.

It did, however, float an initial funding proposal for $10 million for a Homeownership of Multifamily Units Program, which would be "available to mutual housing associations."[365] These arrangements would offer a mix of subsidies in order to encourage private homeownership for those who otherwise may not be able to afford them. The land would be provided by the government while the cost of the

[363]"Economic Opportunities for Low and Very Low-Income Persons," *Federal Register* Vol. 59, No. 125 (June 30, 1994).
[364]Public Law 102-89, 102d Congress, October 6, 1992, HR 5679, quote p. 9.
[365]Public Law 102-89, 102d Congress, October 6, 1992, HR 5679.

housing construction would be taken on by the prospective homebuyer. Thus, even in this early process of funding allocation, HOPE VI made clear what it intended to be, a program that privatized public resources.

This corresponds with the appointment of Henry Cisneros as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in 1993. A student of the urban social sciences, Cisneros during his tenure at HUD would synthesize the technocratic and moralistic elements of this new era in a way that would come to define federal housing into the present.

A Place To Live:

In order to understand Cisneros, and the emergent consensus he came to represent, it is important to begin with his statement of purpose – his "reinvention" of HUD – as articulated in the January 1995, *A Place to Live is the Place to Start.*[366] This was a "statement of principles" put together by the new HUD administration as a means of addressing the agency to the changing, and, in fact, quite fractious, landscape social welfare programs had to navigate during this time.

Clinton outlines what will be the main thrust of this re-visioning: The state has been bogged down in an unnecessary bureaucratic tangle that could only be undone by embracing the more efficient market forces. Simultaneously, state aid has hindered the capacity of communities to address their compounding problems. In a way, there is a kind of double privatism here – private forces to address the problem of an

[366] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start: A Statement of Principles for Changing HUD to Meet America's Housing and Community Priorities,* United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (Washington DC: US Dept of Housing and Urban Development, 1995).

inefficient state, and a turn to the private for addressing what in a different context may be considered social issues. “Complex regulations” and “cumbersome bureaucratic procedures,” Clinton notes in his introductory endorsement of the *A Place to Live* study, stymie both “local innovation and the ability of communities to solve their own problems.”[367] “Communities throughout America still need federal resources,” he notes, “which they can match with their own public and private resources.”[368]

With a focus on this, Clinton introduced the study with a full throated endorsement of a new look HUD: “Together, secretary Cisneros and I have made a commitment to bring revolutionary change to HUD, and this document describes our vision of a new, entrepreneurial Department.”[369]

It is instructive to begin the discussion of this document with a discussion of Clinton. After all, this re-thinking of HUD is a direct response both to Clinton and the political movements that he found himself making large concessions to during the mid-1990s. Thirty years after Congress created HUD, the Clinton administration and the “Republican Revolution” that mobilized to confront him politically were entertaining “dramatic changes” to “radically alter” housing policy that including nothing short of eliminating public housing all together.[370] “Today there are those who call for the dismantling of HUD,” Cisneros noted.[371]

This was the context in which Cisneros was operating. His effort to re-

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[367] See Clinton’s prefatory letter in *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, np.
[368] See Clinton’s prefatory letter in *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, np.
[369] See Clinton’s prefatory letter in *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, np.
[370] “Henry Cisneros Oral History, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,” University of Virginia, Miller Center, Presidential Oral Histories, https://millercenter.org.
[371] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, i.

imagine HUD can't be separated from the reality that the agency itself was on the chopping block. The so-called "Republican Revolution" of 1994 ushered into Congress the first Republican simultaneous House / Senate majorities in four decades, and they set out to accelerate the undoing of certain tenets of the welfare state.

Given the context, it is no wonder that HUD under Clinton sought to "shake off the old ways" of operating. The answer, again, dealt with the perceived inefficiency of the agency. "Step by step," Cisneros asserted, "we have been transforming HUD into a customer-oriented, performance-driven organization."[372] This new look meant, "managing for performance and results."[373]

HUD proposed that the key to this new efficiency was to work more closely and transparently with private interests. "When all these goals are pursued by a single agency like HUD, with its unique perspective and mission, the whole literally becomes greater than the sum of its parts."[374] The Cisneros-authored statement of principles focused on HUD's unique position within the state and political economy. "There are tasks no other federal department undertakes," which included "strengthening the role of cities" within the national economy; "advocating for private interests of 'the housing sector'" within the federal government, "an industry that is vital to the nation's economy and financial health;" and "providing federal dollars to leverage private resources and to engage businesses and nonprofit organizations in local initiatives for change."[375] Under Cisneros, HUD worked to

[372] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* ii; see also, Ruth Marcus, "Clinton Finds a Role Model on the Road," *Washington Post* (September 10, 1993).
[373] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 28.
[374] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 28.
[375] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, i-ii.

center its unique institutional position that was capable of brokering federal resources and private interests within the most essential element of the urban political economy, housing.

The clever synthesis of "big government" and "social dysfunction" argued that "public and assisted-housing rules have locked families into substandard housing, impeding their ability to lift themselves to better lives, and allowed badly managed agencies and absentee owners to operate with impunity. Federal policy must serve people, not institutions."[376] An emphasis remains on "local," on "community," and on "local government, private industry, non-profit organizations, and community-based groups," each apparently by virtue of a smaller scale better equipped to address the issues of underdeveloped housing than a large, cumbersome, federal department.[377] Little attention is paid to how this approach may contribute to intensifying the vulnerability of increasingly isolated populations of low-income residents as once federal responsibility is transferred to local authority. Where earlier post-Civil Rights anti-poverty work, such as Johnson's War on Poverty, established a "direct line to federal resources and a way around the discriminatory practices of local officials," in the form of Community Action Programs (CAPs), Cisneros's approach reasserted the authority of local governing and financing actors.[378] Questions that consider what kind of power community groups have relative to the transnational forces of capitalism that have increasingly come to shape local housing markets are ignored in

[376] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 1.
[377] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 1.
[378] Greta de Jong, *You Cant Eat Freedom: Southerners and Social Justice After the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 64.

this literature.[379]

The stated objectives of HUD during this transformation included, "strengthening competitive cities," "revitalizing" neighborhoods, expanding homeownership, "transforming" public housing, and "opening" housing markets. These objectives, Cisneros notes, "will gain new primacy under President Clinton's three components of reinvention": 1) the consolidation of HUD's operational programs into three funds,[380] 2) engendering a new "mobility" among housing tenants, through "rental certificates,"[381] and 3) the establishment of a "new entrepreneurial" approach to the FHA.[382]

Toward the first objective, HUD set out to consolidate the sixty different operational programs into three general "performance based" funds. The first of these funds, "Housing Certificates for Families and Individuals," sought to combine all rental assistance and Section 8 into one "single housing-assistance fund" administered by local and state governments, which would issue housing certificates to low-income people.[383] This set out to tie state obligation to the demand rather than supply side of the housing resource equation. Rather than tie housing resources to housing units, the

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[379]On questions of the global character of local housing markets, see Anthony Downs, *Niagara of Capital: How Global Capital Has Transformed Housing and Real Estate Markets* (Washington DC: Urban Land Institute, 2007). See also, Dallas Rogers and Sin Yee Koh, "The Globalisation of Real Estate: The Politics and Practice of Foreign Real Estate Investment," *International Journal of Housing Policy,* Vol. 17, Issue 1, (January 18, 2017); James Surowiecki, "Real Estate Goes Global," *New Yorker* (May 26, 2014). Hang Kei Ho, "Inside the World of Middle Class Hong Kong Transnational Property Investors: '5980 Miles to My Second Home,'" *International Journal of Housing Policy* (June 20, 2019), demonstrates how the transnational capital flows that shape local real estate practice have expanded recently, folding a newer strata of middle class investors into a sphere that was once populated exclusively by the wealthiest transnational investors, further limiting local actors' influence over local market forces.

[380]*A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 2-4.

[381]*A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 5-6.

[382]*A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 7-9.

[383]*A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 22.

proposition instead tied housing resources to residents. The tenant-centered rationale for this transition was that it would "maximize" housing choice for recipients. The prospect of mobility, it was argued, provided housing residents greater leverage relative to poor housing conditions and abusive landlords. If the conditions were bad, the resident could move. While this seems reasonable on one hand, this approach does seem to absolve the state from any responsibility for the substandard conditions of federally controlled public housing. It encourages movement rather than identifying, addressing, and resolving the problems of existing housing. Further, it would seem, if the state is deemphasizing this role, it is de-emphasizing its role as an adjudicator of housing grievance. Rather than facilitating democratic processes to protect the civic rights of neglected or abused housing residents, the state would instead employ vouchers and encourage voluntary relocation. This would ultimately have the effect of driving masses of public housing residents into the private rental market, where, conceivably, the only leverage they would have would be the threat of further movement. Significant increases in tenants fleeing substandard housing, of course, would make it more difficult to find affordable housing, as the market would be affected by this new pool of prospective tenants. And when considered alongside the range of other factors keeping someone in a particular neighborhood (schools, jobs, access to transportation, etc.), the potential that increased agency would translate to increased power becomes increasingly less likely.

The second fund – the "Affordable Housing Fund" – does address itself to the "development and rehabilitation" of affordable housing.[384] This would provide local

[384] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 1-12; 20-21.

and state governments with "flexible formula grants for acquisition, rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing and for home ownership that helps stabilize distressed communities."[385] While this represents a continued commitment to some form of supply-side affordable housing development, even this seems to de-emphasize the need for this kind of intervention for all but the most vulnerable populations, namely, the "special populations" that include those categorized as disabled or elderly. For everyone else, a new emphasis was growing for "homeownership efforts that draw moderate-income families back to or help stabilize distressed communities."[386] Again, the agency of vulnerable populations is being drawn from in order to reinvigorate "distressed" urban spaces, rather than the direct resources of the state.

The third fund, the "Community Opportunity Fund," was created to stimulate what HUD called, "economic revitalization," consolidating Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) and Economic Development Initiative (EDI) grants and other forms of local funding into one fund. Jurisdictions could use the federal grants for a range of activities beyond the building, development, and maintenance of federal housing. These include funding for community groups, loans to those HUD would identify as "entrepreneurs" promising things like "supermarkets or commercial centers in distressed areas," cleanup for brownfield sites, and, maybe most crucially, "mobility to work" programs that "link residents in distressed communities with job opportunities elsewhere in the metropolitan area."[387]

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[385] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 2.
[386] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 24.
[387] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,*16-17.

A single "Community Opportunity Fund" would direct all community economic development." The other two funds would be devoted to carrying out HUD's low-income and affordable housing roles – one funding the portable rental assistance to "enable recipients to obtain decent housing in the private market," while the other funded local and state initiatives to expand the supply of affordable housing.[388]

The second of the three Clinton supported objectives of this newly re-imagined HUD was what *A Place to Live* titled "Transforming Public Housing." Like much of the public housing literature at the time, here public housing has become a "trap for the poorest of the poor," rather than a staging ground for one's ascent into the middle classes.[389] And like other public housing literature of the time, public housing's failure is the result of "rigid" and "top-down" bureaucracy, producing "tens of thousands of people living in squalid conditions at a very high cost in wasted lives and federal dollars."[390] Transforming public housing, then, meant increasing the flexibility of the resident, encouraging "maximum market choice in search for affordable housing, particularly in underperforming projects."[391] Further, this proposed to "break the monopoly of housing authorities over federal housing resources.[392] HUD would require housing authorities to compete in a marketplace that included both for-profit and non-profit private actors for low-income residents with other providers of affordable housing.[393]

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[388] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 16.
[389] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 5.
[390] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 22.
[391] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 10.
[392] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 5.
[393] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 2.

Another concrete expression of this objective – and another clear moment where the housing aid, the market, and the normative objectives of the state intersect – is the priority preference that HUD would grant to "families," particularly those participating in education or work training programs. The money used to demolish "uninhabitable and nonviable public housing projects" would also be drawn from this fund. It also identifies some 3,000 "well-performing" Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and partnerships with state and local officials, which would earn a "deregulation," as well as "100 troubled PHAs," who would be "on probation," the result of which would be "a two-year process divesting them of properties and management control." The "tens of thousands of severely distressed units" would be demolished and those who relied on them for housing would be granted vouchers or reassigned housing among the scattered site public housing stock. The proposed second phase of the plan makes it even more clear that the ultimate objective here is the end of federally built and maintained public housing: "In the second phase, all direct capital and operating subsidies to PHAs would cease, with subsidy funds being converted to rent certificates to the maximum extent practicable."[394] Similarly, the second component created portable "rental certificates" which ostensibly freed housing recipients to choose which development best worked for them, forcing housing authorities into scenarios where each development needed to be competitive in order to attract tenants.

The third objective of the Clinton housing regime takes for granted the era's exploding financial sector and assumes its growth can replace the role of housing

[394] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 6.

finance that the FHA provided, even in public ventures. "In the last decade," HUD wrote in 1995, "the private housing finance market grew far more sophisticated and efficient at delivering capital to housing, but FHA – once an effective market leader – lagged behind."[395] Hindsight provided by the subsequent two decades suggests that that may have been a virtue, but HUD at the time believed this to be yet another bureaucratic inefficiency. Between 1980 and 1992 homeownership rates for young families (under 35yrs old) fell from 45% to 37.6%.[396] During a similar period, between 1978-1991, the number of families and elderly people paying more than half of their incomes for rent or living in severely inadequate rental housing grew 50% from 2.4 million to 3.6 million households.[397] Most of the affected households were families with children. While a materialist interpretation of this data would suggest that the stagnant, lowering, or disappearing wages that mark the post-industrial era render housing an increasingly difficult burden, particularly for younger families and families more precariously situated within the political economy, the Clinton-era HUD took this to signal a greater need to incentivize movement into the private homeownership market. The objective at the time was to take advantage of the growing and liberalized access to private debt and incentivize increasing numbers of lower-income urban residents to enter the housing market.

> President Clinton charged HUD with developing an unprecedented public-private partnership to help a record number of families achieve the dream of homeownership by 2000. To achieve this goal, HUD and its private-sector partners must make homeownership affordable for more first-time

[395] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 7.
[396] United States Census Bureau, "Housing Vacancies and Homeownership," Table 19, "Homeownership Rates by Age of Householder," https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/histtabs.html.
[397] A Place to Live is the Place to Start, 7.

> homebuyers, residents of inner cities, and other groups and communities currently underserved by the private market.[398]

And of course, the drive to push people out of publicly held resources and into the private market is couched in the national project of family building. "Americans agree that expanding homeownership is an important public goal because homeownership strengthens families and communities."[399]

While HUD did not advocate for the privatization of the FHA ("it must remain a public-sector institution"[400]), they did see the reinvention of HUD as part and parcel with the reinvention of the FHA.

HUD wanted a "streamlined, market-driven enterprise" that could use federal credit to finance a privately driven homeownership expansion.[401] This "new FHA would rely increasingly on partnerships with well-capitalized, sophisticated financial institutions" in order to "design a variety of products that meet market needs."[402] This amounted to re-imagining the FHA as an "entrepreneurial, government-owned" corporation, focusing on "expanding homeownership opportunities" and employing "private partnerships and market mechanisms" to achieve its purposes.[403] Their stated principles relating to this reinvention – greater "power" for low-income families to make decisions about their lives, greater self-sufficiency, and maximum flexibility – all posed a rigid "top-down" public bureaucracy against a dynamic and resident-centered privatization.[404]

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[398] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start*, 7.
[399] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 8.
[400] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 7.
[401] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 21.
[402] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 8.
[403] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 2, 18.
[404] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 5.

In a statement that would turn out to have a very clear impact on Baltimore, HUD announced that it would turn its attention to "one of the greatest challenges to America's urban future," which was "the persistent concentration and isolation of people and minorities in the central cities of our greater metropolitan areas."[405] By focusing on this "concentration," HUD opened the door to address issues of housing underdevelopment in ways that would actually lessen rather than strengthen federal investment in underdeveloped housing, in part through first vague and then, ultimately, quite specific forms of mobility. "The changes will enable HUD to truly fulfill the mission set for the Department 30 years ago when it was charged to ensure that every family in America can live in dignity in a decent home, in a neighborhood full of pride, a community replete with opportunity and a city burgeoning with promise and hope."[406]

Cisneros took over responsibilities at HUD with an eye toward internal reforms believed to "streamline" the department's work. He also set out to convert all public housing subsidies into tenant-based vouchers. These reforms, it was noted by housing scholars, would "end public housing as we know it."[407] For Cisneros, the market needed to play a larger role in managing these public resources. In testimony before the Housing, Banking & Financial Services Committee, he asserted that housing authorities and residents alike would need to "learn to operate under market discipline." Specifically, he argued that "[r]ental income – instead of arbitrary capital

[405] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* 1.
[406] *A Place to Live is the Place to Start,* ii.
[407] Yan Zhang and Gretchen Weismann, "Public Housing's Cinderella: Policy Dynamics of HOPE VI in the Mid-1990s" in *Where are Poor People to Live: Transforming Public Housing Communities* ed. Larry Bennett, Janet L. Smith and Patricia A. Wright (New York: Routledge, 2006).

and operating budgets" should "drive their property management decisions."[408]

Cisneros, HUD, and Market Discipline for "Undisciplined" Space:

The Cisneros regime committed itself to diversifying HUD revenue streams. He encouraged local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to re-imagine public housing as revenue generators. Likewise, by 1996, HUD began a policy of encouraging PHAs to partner with local development corporations in order to find new sources of funding to address housing needs. Further, he began a sustained campaign organized around the idea of "tenant mobility," which advocated for the use of a mix of rental incentives and vouchers to provide public housing tenants' increased (nominal) agency in housing choice. While those in support of this move framed it as HUD providing tenants leverage as a way of offsetting the power of inattentive housing authorities, it also functionally shifted resources and responsibility from federal intervention on the "supply side" of housing reform – resources that could have been mobilized to do the work of actually rehabilitating federally built and maintained housing – to federal intervention on the "demand side," treating tenants increasingly like consumers, with vouchers representing a promise of mobility (albeit, highly circumscribed mobility). It was residents who were "in the best position to identify management deficiencies and compel changes," Cisneros would argue, yet without the leverage to leave, they'd be,

> denied the ultimate tool available to consumers – the ability to take their business elsewhere. No matter how poor the physical condition of the apartment, no matter how crime ridden or economically depressed the

[408]Cisneros, Henry "Testimony Before the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee of the House Banking & Financial Services Committee," Washington, DC (October 13, 1995), 146.

> neighborhood in which the housing is located – subsidies are tied to housing units and cannot be transferred.[409]

Further, Cisneros would argue that rent structures within public housing were discouraging public housing residents' full integration into the economy. Echoing Murray, Cisneros argued that rent structures that set rents at 30% of income "dis-incentivized work" by assuring residents that increased earning would only increase the amount they were spending for housing.[410] For example, unemployed residents who found work would lose $.30 per every dollar earned.

It should be noted here that Cisneros did not invent this agenda. Rather, he operationalized it. HUD's commitment to deregulation and privatization came as the Clinton Administration made its defining pivot toward compromise with the mid-90s conservative backlash, epitomized by the 105th US Congress, and its legislative framework, the so-called "Contract with America." The 1994 midterm elections ushered in a coalition of reactionary congresspeople who, alongside an unsympathetic president, leveraged decades of growing resentment against public housing both in terms of racial politics and in terms of free market politics (to the extent that these are different things) and brought immense pressure to bear on HUD. It would be wrong to blame Republicans exclusively, as the policy reforms this Congress oversaw look similar to those reforms Clinton oversaw as governor of Arkansas (he did, after all, begin his crusade against welfare at the state level long prior to his presidency). Nevertheless, by creating an image of the housing crisis in cities like Baltimore as a confluence of moral failings of the poor and bureaucratic overreach, housing officials

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[409] *HUD Reinvention: A Blueprint for Action* (Washington DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1995), 34.
[410] *HUD Reinvention*, 50.

worked to secure their positions within this shifting political context. A shrewd operator, Cisneros directed HUD to actively cultivate the idea that privatization of once public spaces, facilitated by public actors like HUD, provided at once a disciplinary and liberatory mechanism in the lives of the urban poor.

Toward this end, Cisneros and HUD commissioned multiple studies in order to explore the effects of increased market influence over public housing policy and practice. One such study was authored by HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) and focused specifically on Baltimore. The Cisneros regime at HUD favored replacing public housing's traditional place-based subsidies with a vouchers system that mimicked Section 8, except rather than looking to the market for rental units, this approach would have each housing development compete for tenants. This, it was imagined, would incentivize individual housing developments to create attractive places to live. The *Public Housing in a Competitive Market* study examined whether such a plan could work within Baltimore's public housing landscape. What it found was that the Cisneros market plan of switching rental assistance entirely to a tenant subsidies scheme would result in half of the developments returning surpluses. Not coincidentally, those sites projected to return surpluses would be those closest to already gentrifying or transitioning neighborhoods.[411]

However the other half of Baltimore's public housing – those housing developments located in more physically or economically isolated areas, further

[411]Office of Policy Development and Research, Division of Policy Studies, *Public Housing in a Competitive Market: An Example of How it Would Fare* (Washington, DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996).

removed from other forms of redevelopment or economic activity – were projected to produce such large deficits as to render the entire project untenable.[412] As it happened, the isolated units singled out in the study were the almost exclusively black high-rise developments, including the Murphy Homes. In order to render these spaces productive of a surplus, the report argued that a massive overhaul of the "customer population" was in order.[413] Further, the report entertained the idea of changing the mission of Baltimore's public housing, in order to move away from providing housing for the city's poorest families and toward those who can pay higher rents.

Focusing on the Murphy Homes, the study argued that "a reduction of 400 units on site, plus increased rents possible from new townhouse unit replacement" could turn the former Murphy Homes into a surplus generating site.[414] Most striking, the report acknowledges that this wouldn't solve the problem of chronic lack of affordable housing. Rather, this study and other similar exercises were considerations of how profitable marketized forces would make public housing, again, with the primary concern seeming to be how to best reproduce HUD and HABC within a context of austerity and political antagonism to housing bureaucracy.

The report concludes, however, that a switch in tenant pools, away from the most impoverished and toward more economically secure tenants, would greatly negatively affect the city's other services. "[S]erving higher-income households," the report notes "means that fewer desperately poor persons get housed, potentially increasing the ranks of the homeless. If the dropping of Federal preferences causes

[412] *Public Housing in a Competitive Market*.
[413] *Public Housing in a Competitive Market*, 28.
[414] *Public Housing in a Competitive Market*, 20.

the homeless to fall back upon the emergency shelter care system, the casualty might be the Federal government's continuum-of-care philosophy of fostering independent living among the homeless."[415]

Sober and dispassionate arguments for the removal of the city's poorest residents to homeless shelters and schemes to turn public housing developments into revenue-generating mechanisms won't in and of themselves bring about those transformations. And, indeed, much of what this particular study advocated for, such as moving all residential rental transactions to a voucher-based system, did not materialize. Yet, what this report signaled was a full embrace of market logics and an embrace of the practice of turning public institutions over to market discipline. And while the report was not enough on its own to radically change policy in the way that private interests desired, it functioned as one piece in a larger tapestry. The report substantiated and lent increasing material weight to two pervasive arguments within the public sphere: First, that those who are in poverty are impoverished by their own making. Within public housing discussions in Baltimore, this has been demonstrated time and again by the racial and sexual alterity with which public housing communities have been constructed within public discussions of housing reform. Second, these arguments were then deployed to narrate austerity and the kinds of structural adjustments that drain material resources from domestic programs like public housing. As public sources of funding contracted in the 1990s, and as the economic "common sense" shifted a critical eye toward public programs associated with urban poverty, those interests invested in public austerity based their arguments

[415] *Public Housing in a Competitive Market*, 27.

against maintaining the material costs of public housing in a set of assumptions organized by racialized and sexualized ideology. I argue, then, that the reports like this from HUD don't in and of themselves dictate a privatizing change. Instead, they "articulate" – in the Stuart Hall sense of the word – with a range of complimentary and converging discourses to produce a shift that is meant to feel to those living through it as though it is inevitable.[416] Cisneros would come to focus on "concentrated poverty" and begin to reframe the HOPE VI program in order to direct federal resources toward addressing it. As he would note, "the concentration of very low-income families in dense, high rising housing" should be understood as the "central problem" facing housing reformers and residents alike.[417]

Conclusion: On "Common Sense"

These arguments became the "common sense" from which the housing reformers worked, and served to define the parameters of not only what was and was not possible within housing reform, but what was and what was not legible within the realm of political possibility. This common sense was further shaped by an insistence on maintaining a clear line of distinction between the technocratic housing officials at both the local and federal level and those who actually resided in the housing being scrutinized and ultimately reformed. That is, this turning of public housing and public space over to the market was conditioned by the systematic erasure of any notion that housing residents themselves were political thinkers.

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[416]Stuart Hall, "Popular Culture, Politics, and History," *Popular Culture Bulletin* 3. Open University.
[417]US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, Division of Policy Studies, *Public Housing in a Competitive Market: An Example of How it Would Fare* (April 1996).

As former Murphy Homes tenant, Rhonda Snell noted, "they didn't ask the poor people."[418] Indeed, while residents were most intimately familiar with life in public housing, and have spent the most time thinking about the possibilities for reforming housing, they were never looked to as a source of political imagination. There was no sense that residents could produce visions for housing. The "hope" discussed in the housing reform literature was not organic to and developed within the lived spaces of housing residents. Instead it was developed outside of and imposed on those within public housing. "It was a catchphrase" said Mary Holmes, resident of the Murphy Homes and Heritage Crossing.[419]

This chapter set out to map the connections between the post-Civil Rights culture of poverty discourse and the late 20th century welfare reform policy. Wilson's ideas helped shape a generation of post-Civil Rights urban sociologists. As one of his acolytes, Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh notes, Wilson's focus on "the plight of the urban poor for three decades," serves as a "nice counterpoint to the academic and popular reportage...where the city can sometimes look like a playground for the rich."[420] As the *New Yorker* notes, Wilson's influence has transcended the academy and has made its way into the practice of liberal reformers and policy makers. HOPE VI is no doubt a policy expression deeply indebted to Wilson's thinking and contributions.

Husock's testimony, in its vulgarity, helps reveal a central truth about these liberal transformations. There is arguably a tension between the sociological

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[418] "Murphy Homes in Transition: How Residents Are Planning Their Next Steps," *Afro-American* (March 1, 1995).
[419] Holmes, Mary, (Perkins St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet, 5/14/11, Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD.
[420] Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, "Urban Puzzle," *Boston Globe*, (March 31, 2007).

argument in favor of mixed income neighborhood building and a set of policy prescriptions that increase the market's influence over housing decisions. Separated from the idealist window dressing applied by liberals, Husock's testimony demonstrates how liberal policy makers and acolytes of Wilson in their push to privatize subject the black family to the mercenary logics of racial capitalism. As such, these reforms invite the construction of "rational" arguments that push to displace poor black families from public land, because their presence drives down its value.

Chapter 5: Making the "Rat House': Poverty Concentrations, Mobility Programs, and Liberal Approaches to "Community Capitalism"

The rats had made their way into the kitchen and had burrowed a hole through the baseboard below the sink. Over time they had established a path, a perimeter route, hugging the border where the cabinets and walls met the floor to a spot under the refrigerator, a spot no one in the house could reach, "or maybe we were afraid to reach it." First, these were surreptitious flashes of brown, seen only occasionally, "usually as the sun went down or if you were in the kitchen late, in the middle of the night." Over time, however, the rats "got more bold," making their baseboard to refrigerator sprints with more frequency, and less self-consciously. One night Annette Stanton killed one with a brick – fittingly, a brick that she taken inside some time earlier from the front of the crumbling house next door, an abandoned row house that she believed to be a staging ground for the rats. "It was where they nested." It was a row house, as it turns out, owned by Baltimore City. One in a vast number of "vacants" currently land banked by the city and offered for sale through its "Vacants to Values" program.[421] The rat had likely issued from a large crack that had formed in

[421]In an effort that is nominally concerned with Baltimore's abundant empty housing stock, the city has engaged a process of land banking that leverages public dollars in purchasing abandoned buildings, re-selling them at below market prices to buyers committed to rehabilitating them. It is out of this effort that the city's "Vacants to Values" program has emerged. Through "Vacants to Values," vacant properties are land banked by the city and listed for sale on a public exchange. While this program was initially administered by the city council, and the property's value determined by the board of estimates, it has recently been turned over to the Housing Department. Recent criticism circulating through local media has supported Stanton's claims that vacant properties lie dormant irrespective of who holds the deed. It is the position of this chapter that this is one of many programs that employs public resources in order to subsidize the larger process of private value

the cement courtyard at the rear of the house, due to shifting ground and years of neglect. “When I think about that house, I always think about killing that rat...it was a sign...when we decided we had to move...It's like he was symbolic...he's in my mind whenever I think about that house.”[422]

That rat and the shifting and cracking ground from which it emerged has clear symbolic value. “Big, heavy...disgusting,” the rat's circulation through the city scape, through the rubble of abandoned housing, through the Stanton's family kitchen, and through Stanton's imagination many years removed from the incident, was occasioned by a broken but nevertheless generative form of circulation, the resource circulation that is at base what animates housing policy in cities like Baltimore. The dislocations people like Mrs. Stanton describe in her discussion of the “rat house” pushed people further from claims to the land and further from the kinds of community that sustained prior generations of low-income urbanites. They also, in their efforts to access potential value, unleashed a raft of predatory effects, which, in the case of Mrs. Stanton included (but were certainly not limited to) rodents (“over a foot long and easily 10 pounds – bigger than some cats!”) carving paths through the domestic lives of families forced to absorb these breaks.[423]

ARGUMENT:

Mrs. Stanton here offers a partial glimpse of her decades-long endeavor to

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accumulation that is both occasioned by black poverty and ultimately proceeds at the expense of low-income black residents of the city.

[422]Stanton, Annette. Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/19/12. Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD
[423] *ibid*

negotiate the patchwork of built public housing, scattered site units, rental vouchers, and “below-market rate” housing that together make up the “affordable housing” landscape imagined by Clinton, Cisneros, and other planners discussed in the previous chapter. Her reflections will inform this chapter's approach. The implosions of the Murphy Homes and the other high-rise developments were local crystallizations of a larger national transformation in housing policy. Where their construction was a register of a political climate willing to transfer some amount of federal resources directly into the project of building housing for the poor, their demolition signaled the ascendance of a new political hegemony. Conservative regimes from Nixon to Reagan, often employing a language of white resentment, rolled back welfare policy, on the grounds that it was a drain on taxpayers (a classed and raced signifier, of course). This conservative discourse, steeped as it was in the language of cultural pathology, which conditioned the early austerity regimes of the 1970s and 80s, began to soften in the 1990s. But, as this project works to demonstrate the discursive push back didn't necessarily signal a new material politics. Instead, reformers in the 1990s fashioned a new discourse, one that centered concern for the public housing residents, rather than those in proximity to them. This approach identified the deforming effects of “poverty concentrations,” and re-positioned the promise of “mobility,” enabled by the same housing vouchers Nixon proposed, as a progressive intervention, wedding a “resident-centered” sentiment to a market friendly policy agenda.

Where Nixon positioned housing vouchers against the “monstrous, depressing” high-rises, this more contemporary approach centers the question of “fair

housing."[424] "Opportunity" for the poor and non-white residents who make up the majority of Baltimore's high-rise housing residents has emerged to take the place of the older language of white grievance, while continuing to steer the transformation away from federally built public housing developments and toward market based voucher programs. This more recent era of housing transformation is narrated publicly as a moral intervention – a discourse made coherent through a cultural politics that, as I argue elsewhere in this project, translates the alienation of black women living in public housing from a set of material questions to a set of racial and sexually normative assumptions about how to use publicly subsidized space, shifting demands to fix broken and run-down buildings into demands for demolition and privatization in the name of preserving normative "family life."

At the center of this chapter is a discussion and contextualization of the landmark *Thompson v. HUD* case, a local iteration of a larger national trend that saw housing reformers engage the courts in order to redefine the notion of "fair housing" as well as to assert new standards for the state to uphold. These cases will ultimately argue for "mobility" as the "fair housing" form of remediation of racial segregation and poverty concentration. I argue here that in so doing, they revive racial capitalism's preferred form of dealing with low-income housing, facilitating the transfer of public land into private hands and subjecting the poor to the whims of the market.

I read an archive of oral histories against this collection of legal briefs,

[424] Nixon quoted in Joseph Fried, "Nixon's Housing Policy," *New York Times* (September 29, 1973), 23.

plaintiff testimony, academic analyses, and policy papers, which together, I argue, capture the formation (if not yet complete crystallization) of a consensus involving the shifting definition of fair housing. Contemporary politics has conditioned a different mode of organizing state housing resources, which is shaping city policy. Where direct state aid in other contexts is desired, in the context of built public housing, it is framed as inefficient and not sufficient for addressing the kinds of investments that building and maintaining public housing require. But these kinds of austerity claims, like all austerity claims, are political rather than economic. And they set the stage for a preferred political approach, the "public-private partnership," which has emerged to do the work of managing much of contemporary housing policy. I concentrate on the *Thompson v. HUD* case in this chapter in part because I argue that rather than challenge this new approach – one that has transferred millions of dollars into private firms and enabled a new technocratic strata to navigate increasingly convoluted resource circulations – the liberal reformers who initiated the suit have in so doing leant this new regime a moral weight. The *Thompson* case, its original claims, its intellectual foundation as evidenced by the studies it commissioned and the larger case precedent it drew from, did the work of imagining a "fair housing" ideal that naturalized the private, market-centered approach to housing as a commodity. As such, I argue, it articulated with a longer history of conservative backlash against public housing, and has produced the conditions of possibility for Stanton's "rat house," a larger unmooring of former public housing residents, and the many thousands of black residents leaving Baltimore under the misleading label, "black flight." The residents' critique that emerges from the archive of oral histories

functions here to counter narrate against this emergent consensus. This chapter will assess the liberatory possibilities of offering access to "opportunity," via "mobility" – often in the name of resident "agency" – as a viable strategy for addressing uneven resource distribution within our current political economic context, and the extent to which individualizing the social problem of substandard housing articulates with current political objectives.

Part one of this chapter looks at *Thompson v HUD*. Part two of this chapter looks at how, in part, under the auspices of "fair housing," and "opportunity," the state is reorganizing how it distributes resources, turning much of the work over to private firms.

Part One: *Thompson v HUD* and Re-defining "Fair Housing"

As discussed in Chapter 1, public housing site selection was a racialized process. A white commitment to antiblack residential practice shaped both private, self-interested property relations as well as public policy enacted to govern those relations. This convergence of interest between white property owners, local governments, and the federal state would come to define housing policy in the city. It has also come to influence various forms of resistance to these laws that have emerged in recent years. As HUD has acknowledged the existence of "a profoundly disturbing pattern of racial disparities within the public housing system," a welter of legal cases has set out to shape HUD's post-Civil Rights approach. Beginning in the late 1980s, groups of residents, housing reformers, and legal organizations have brought upwards of 33 different desegregation cases against HUD, (with at least 6 others predating 1980), in 27 cities, some as big as Chicago, others as small as

Bogalusa, Louisiana.

Massey and Denton identified Baltimore as one of their "hyper-segregated" cities.[425] Among those cities so identified, Baltimore was one of three cities (along with Chicago and Buffalo) to experience a comprehensive fair housing lawsuit. The national impulse to legally address the legacy of racially segregative housing policy and practice found expression through the *Thompson v. HUD* suit. Here, a plaintiff class of 14,000 current and former black residents of city housing joined with the American Civil Liberties Union in charging that the severe underdevelopment that had plagued Baltimore's public housing communities for much of its history was the effect of an entrenched racialized policy agenda maintained by HUD and enacted in practice locally by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC).

The class-action suit, brought in 1994, unfolded within a context of the already underway high-rise demolition campaign and the pervasive displacement that accompanied it. At the heart of the lawsuit was the assertion – made by black residents in Baltimore for decades prior to the suit – that HABC was responsible for explicitly violating tenants' rights of equal protection against housing discrimination. The case asserted that policy decisions and administrative action were enacted in

[425]Race has always been grounded in spatial relations. Since the middle 20th century the segregation of residential space has been one of what Pettigrew (1979) called the "structural lynchpin(s)" of US racial capitalism. Wilson (1987) has argued that this segregation has concentrated black residents into spaces increasingly denied resources, which diminishes a range of life chances for anyone subject to those conditions. The sociological work of Massey and Denton defined the term "hyper-segregation" as convergence of five dimensions of segregation – "evenness," "exposure," "concentration," "clustering," and "centralization." These factors, they argue, which are present in some degree or another in any segregated space, produce "hyper-segregation" when they are simultaneously elevated in places like Baltimore. Further, they developed simulation models that attempted to demonstrate how this hyper-segregation uniquely disadvantaged low-income black residents. See, Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1993).

order to maintain racially isolated black residential communities.[426]

It is worth considering both the legal context out of which *Thompson v. HUD* emerged, as well as how that context had been reconfigured in the years leading up to the Baltimore case. As early as the 1866 Civil Rights Act, "all citizens...shall have the same right...as is enjoyed by white citizens ... to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property."[427] These notions were reinforced a century later by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the fair housing provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Further, as these rights were tested and adjudicated, the courts have helped shape a precedent that informs policy, with the post-Civil Rights court asserting the need for a fair housing approach that would take on the legacy of segregation "root and branch."[428]

The Fifth Amendment establishes an obligation on the part of the state to housing free from discrimination. Further, *Boiling v. Sharpe* established that racial segregation in state-sponsored public schools – schools within DC, and therefore a federal jurisdiction – was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as well as the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.[429] Housing reformers in the 1970s and 80s worked to generalize this legal precedent, making the

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[426] *Thompson v. United States Dept. of Housing Urban Development*, Civil Action No. MJG-95-309, https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/Thompson-v-HUD-decision.pdf.

[427] The 1866 statute was understood from its enactment to apply to state action. The full text of the US Congress 1866 Civil Rights Act is archived here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1866. In the 1968 *Jones v. Mayer* case, the Supreme Court held that the 1866 act should be extended to private actors as well.

[428] In 1968 the Court held that the Constitution requires disestablishment of existing segregation and elimination of the vestiges of past segregation "root and branch." These mandates were reinforced in 1964, 1968, and 1994. The 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act required HUD to act affirmatively "to end segregation in federally assisted housing."; Robert G. Schwemm, *The Fair Housing Act After Twenty Years* (New Haven: Yale Law School, 1989).

[429] "U.S. Reports: Bolling v. Sharpe, 347 U.S. 497," (Washington, D.C: Library of Congress, 1954). https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep347497/.

case that these same constitutional protections cover all public institutions, housing included. All residents, they argued, should be protected from discrimination, either by public housing authorities or private landlords and property owners.

In spite of a stated commitment to the desegregation of public schools (thanks, in part to a court order), *de facto* segregation has persisted, both in schools as well as other public institutions like federally assisted housing. While Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that "no person in the United States...on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program...receiving Federal financial assistance," a range of loopholes remained. For example, housing secured through the FHA or VA was not covered by the Civil Rights Act.[430] Further, the Civil Rights Act failed to put into practice any mechanism to affirmatively undo the existing legacy of segregation.

Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act ("The Fair Housing Act") addresses this earlier shortcoming, making explicit the role of the government to affirmatively establish fair housing. This represented a significant legal development and did much to condition the *Thompson v. HUD* case. As a series of lawsuits throughout the 70s and 80s brought the examples of segregative practice before the court, court decisions in response helped refashion the definition of fair housing and the government's role in addressing it. Take for example, *Town of Huntington v. Huntington Branch, NAACP.*[431] In 1981 the NAACP charged that zoning laws in the town of Huntington,

[430] "Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964," https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/regulatory/statutes/title-vi-civil-rights-act-of-1964.
[431] *Town of Huntington v. Huntington Branch*, NAACP, 488 U.S. 15 (1988), https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep488015/.

LI, which prevented the construction of multi-unit housing in residential space adjacent to single family homes, and therefore had the effect of concentrating low-income housing in an area of town isolated from the predominantly white and middle class single family residences, produced the effect of segregation irrespective of intent.[432] While city planners would argue that the zoning regulations were in place to safeguard against threats to property value, and were not motivated by racist animus, the court "ruled that even without any finding of intentional racial discrimination, this simple zoning rule was proof of racial discrimination."[433] While the Supreme Court has historically established that proof of discriminatory intent is a requirement in cases attempting to establish Civil Rights Act violations, here we see the orientation shifting. Impact irrespective of intent served here as evidence of unconstitutional discrimination. The Fair Housing Act, this case argued, maintains an *affirmative duty* to prevent and undo already existing segregation. And that duty requires policy makers to take active measures to desegregate residential spaces.[434]

Subsequent cases followed this logic further, asserting that HUD not only had a duty to refrain from segregating residents, but also should maintain an affirmative obligation to integrate residents. Though, when these mandates do not address the underlying resource asymmetries that produce segregation and poverty concentrations, yet follow the logic that these concentrations need to be dispersed,

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[432] "The NAACP Charges Bias in Zoning Laws," *New York Times,* (February 24, 1981), B2.
[433] "Yonkers -- Any Town USA," *Wall Street Journal,* (September 15, 1988), 1.
[434] The notion of an "affirmative duty" is spelled out in Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, specifically Section 3608(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act, which requires that HUD "administer the programs and activities relating to housing and urban development in a manner affirmatively to further the policies" of fair housing. Text of the Fair Housing Act can be found on the United States Department of Justice website, https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-2.

they hold the potential to produce outcomes that violate the spirit of housing fairness, even if they follow the letter of the law. Take for example, *Otero v. New York City Housing Authority.* In the name of "urban renewal," and invoking the language of "desegregation" NYCHA oversaw the demolition of some 1,850 houses that were home primarily to low income people of color.[435] The intended replacement development contained only 360 homes.[436] The larger neighborhood that these housing developments were located in was largely white, resulting from a history of working class struggle that produced a number of cooperative housing developments for the working poor.[437] To further complicate things, many of the Jewish residents maintained a spiritual and cultural claim to residential space, drawn to the neighborhood by its proximity to the United Hebrew Community of New York, Adath Israel.[438] While NYCHA had an obligation to house those it had displaced, it was also forced to manage pressure from a larger set of community interests, many of whom viewed the presence of low-income people of color as a threat. Heated community meetings ensued, with the local media often reducing these over-determined conflicts to "Jewish-Hispanic tensions."[439] White resident groups protested that additional "low income units…would tip the remaining" white population.[440] Careful not to provoke further white backlash, while attempting to

[435] St John's Law Review, "Affirmative Duty to Integrate Applied to Exclude Non-Whites (Otero v. New York City Housing Authority)," *ST. JOHN'S LAW REVIEW* 48 (December 1973).
[436] St. John's Law Review, 295.
[437] Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes / Amalgamated Dwellings; Built in 1931 by Idealism, Threatened Now by Reality," *New York Times* (July 3, 1994).
[438] Saul Austerlitz, "Synagogues Tell the Story of Lower East Side's Past," *Boston Globe* (October 28, 2007).
[439] Andy Edelstein, "Lower East Side Jews Defeat New Low-Income Housing Plan," *New York Jewish Week*, (May 4, 1980), 8.
[440] Edelstein, "Lower East Side Jews Defeat New Low-Income Housing Plan."

appear accountable to larger fair housing mandates, NYCHA innovated a shrewd (if cynical) rationale in order to justify its next move. Maintaining two different waiting lists of prospective residents -- one made up of those displaced by the demolition, predominantly people of color, while the other made of non-displacees who were predominantly white – NYCHA eschewed its obligation to prioritize those it displaced and instead drew selectively from each list.[441] Sixty percent of the new development would be made up of non-displaced residents, the vast majority of those being white. When residents brought a suit against the housing authority for violating its commitment, NYCHA justified its choice to include so many new white residents in desegregationist terms, asserting that the presence of white residents in the new development would avoid the construction of new "pocket ghettos" within this already predominantly white community. [442] In spite of its desegregationist language, this policy decision pushed hundreds of non-white and low income residents out of this community, forcing them to find housing among the city's market-rate rentals, a process that was fraught for most, especially lower income people of color relying on housing vouchers. As Goetz notes, the ruling in favor of NYCHA's approach endorsed the notion that policy makers can impose onto communities of color a mandate to integrate, irrespective of their own internal desires and irrespective of the fact that there are not "widespread housing options for blacks."[443] "While *Otero*

[441] Edward Goetz, *The One-Way Street of Integration: Fair Housing and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in American Cities* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 111.
[442] Otero v. New York City Housing Authority, (US District Court, S.D. New York, 1973), https://casetext.com/case/otero-v-new-york-city-housing-authority-2.
[443] Goetz, *The One-Way Street of Integration*, 112. Here Goetz is quoting Robert Lake and Jessica Winslow, "Integration Management: Municipal Constraints on Residential Mobility," *Urban Geography* Volume 2, Number 4 (1981).

proclaims the cause of racial justice, it operates through the mechanisms that accept and perpetuate racial oppression," he notes.[444] Its aggressiveness and commitment to integration nevertheless conditioned an "unreflective acceptance of white domination through both the concept of integration offered by the court…and the willingness to impose dictates on people of color related to the legitimacy of the housing choices they can make."[445]

Because the court increasingly defined the problem in terms of "concentration," remediation prioritized population dispersal over other forms of redress. Further, by centering concentrations of poverty over the processes that produce poverty, the remediation rendered invisible some of the more profound forces structuring housing choices for low income black residents of the city. The market relations that have limited housing options for blacks, as Goetz notes above, are obscured by this mode of "fair housing" rhetoric.

Expert Testimony

Baltimore's fair housing case contained over 600 exhibits.[446] These included historical maps, primary sources, and correspondence between the housing authority and federal housing officials. These were all tied together by expert testimony, which narrated a process by which the federal government presided over the local housing authority's decades-long project of residential segregation, steered by public housing

[444] Goetz, *The One-Way Street of Integration*, 113.
[445] Goetz, *The One-Way Street of Integration*, 113.
[446] The *Thompson v. HUD* collection is part of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, hosted in the University of Baltimore's Baltimore Regional Studies Archive. Each of the digitized files are retrievable at https://archivespace.ubalt.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/97.

siting. At the center of the expert exhibits were commissioned studies by four prominent scholars within the urban studies field; Arnold Hirsch, Rolph Pendall, john a. powell, and Karl Taeuber. Together, the over 450 pages of scholarship they produced for this case introduced the postwar urban studies consensus positions regarding state influence over residential segregation into the court record, serving as the foundation of the ACLU's civil rights claims. In assembling this group of urban scholars, the ACLU made the conscious decision to bring a very specific reading of urban relations (in particular, Hirsch's "second ghetto" thesis) to the court, and to allow the work of urban scholars to set the intellectual foundation for its fair housing case.

Plaintiff's Exhibit 3 was Hirsch's commissioned study, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore, 1900-1968." It is a 120-page treatise on Baltimore's segregative housing history framed by his over-arching "second ghetto" thesis.[447] Hirsch's work is an important and arguably foundational contribution to the study of postwar metropolitan formations. His close reading of twentieth century housing policy in Baltimore follows his seminal study of Chicago's postwar housing in arguing that the key to understanding urban apartheid is understanding federal choices with respect to public housing policy. That white supremacy was crystalized and writ within the built landscape by way of policy choices, rather than, for example,

[447]Hirsch's most thorough treatment of the "second ghetto" comes in his book *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). He argues that federal intervention, primarily through the racialized siting of public housing developments, produced a "second ghetto" that emerged coterminously with the post-New Deal housing transformation that re-defined metropolitan space in the mid-twentieth century. What differentiated this from the "first ghetto" was the outsized role the federal government played in producing the racialized dynamics.

the choices of private actors, animates much of his work and the work of scholars who have followed in the traditions he helped generate.[448] This is an important contribution to those who argue that a city's racial geography is structural rather than the effect of individual choices.

For Hirsch, the "second ghetto" thesis is in part an expansion and elaboration of his mentor Gilbert Osofsky's work on black residential enclaves formed in the urban north during the period of Migration. Osofsky's work focused on spatial relations shaped in part by real estate dealers and white property owners. These were

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[448] A full accounting of the city's racialized planning history would situate Hirsch's scholarship within a robust genealogy which includes the work of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, such as June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), Raymond A. Mohl and Kenneth Goings, *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1997), Joe William Trotter, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in the Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), as well as those who followed directly from the tradition that he established, including Robert Self, *Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Other scholars of the postwar city, whose work centers the intellectual traditions of black communities managing life within segregation, include Mindy Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It* (New York: One World/Ballantine, 2004), Preston Smith II, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012), Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: WW Norton, 2019), and Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, The Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Those whose work pays particular attention to how the private forces of capital accumulation have shaped the postwar black urban experience include Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Picador, 2009), Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2010* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014), Nathan Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019). When read together, this body of scholarship moves beyond a narrow understanding of "planning history" to connect policy choices with accumulation processes, linking each to the constructions of race, and such normalizing institutions as the home and the family. The ACLU of Maryland, by foregoing this broader, richer, and more complicated discussion of the field, in favor of limiting its scholarly exhibits to questions of government decisions, invites the kind of reductive reading that is captured below by Rothstein.

the “first ghettos” documented by Osofsky (Harlem), Kenneth Kusmer (Cleveland), and Thomas Philpott (Chicago), among others.[449] These studies typically looked at the private choices as well as policies that produced these spaces. Hirsch's “second ghetto” thesis was intended to name an historical break with that process. In part due to “slum clearance,” Hirsch's study of Chicago revealed that much of the residential space of that first ghetto was bulldozed. In its place, public housing developments, including massive family high-rises such as the Robert Taylor Homes and Cabrini Green in Chicago, and the George Murphy Homes in Baltimore, were built with Federal investment and as the effect of an outsized federal influence over siting and demographics. Hirsch asserts that this massive buildup of federal housing in cities was an expression of a “growing federal presence in urban affairs,” and as such demonstrates a racialized conspiracy on the part of the state to reproduce segregation.[450] These public building projects were regularly sited in close proximity or often on the grounds themselves of older underdeveloped black housing cleared by urban renewal projects. The second ghetto as Hirsch imagined it was very literally built on top of what his scholarly predecessors defined as the first.

Hirsch's influence can be seen in the work of many scholars who have more recently turned their attention to Baltimore, similarly focused on the role that the government played in establishing segregative residential space. Take for example

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[449]See, for example, Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York 1890-1930* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1966); Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland 1870-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Thomas Lee Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[450]Arnold R. Hirsch, “With or Without Jim Crow: Black Residential Segregation in the United States,” in Arnold Hirsch and Raymond Mohl, eds. *Urban Policy in Twentieth-century America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1993) 65-66.

Richard Rothstein, whose much discussed 2017 book *The Color of Law* follows in the tradition of Hirsch, albeit in a less nuanced manner.[451] In a recent interview for the book, and using Baltimore as his example, he directly insists on the primacy of the state in producing segregation:

> When the Kerner Commission blamed "white society" and "white institutions" it employed euphemisms to avoid naming the culprits everyone knew at the time. It was not a vague white society that created ghettos but government – federal, state, and local – that employed explicitly racial laws, policies, and regulations to ensure that black Americans would live impoverished, and separately from whites. Baltimore's ghetto was not created by private discrimination, income differences, personal preferences, or demographic trends, but by purposeful action of government in violation of the Fifth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments. These constitutional violations have never been remedied, and we are paying the price in the violence we saw [during the Baltimore Uprising] this week.[452]

In the wake of the 2015 Baltimore Uprising, a number of popular articles were circulated that sought to further translate this scholarship in order to contextualize Baltimore's visible poverty and unrest. Arguably, this further diluted Hirsch's scholarship and further reduced the forces responsible for racial segregation and poverty to a flat and uncomplicated notion of "government." NPR ran a story entitled "Historian Says Don't 'Sanitize' How Our Government Created Ghettos."[453] *The Atlantic*'s "The Racist Housing Policy that Made Your Neighborhood," offered an extended discussion of a New Deal agency's residential security maps as an example

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[451]Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

[452]Rothstein, "From Ferguson to Baltimore: The Fruits of Government-Sponsored Segregation," *Economic Policy Institute* (April 29, 2015) https://www.epi.org/blog/from-ferguson-to-baltimore-the-fruits-of-government-sponsored-segregation/.

[453]Terry Gross, "A 'Forgotten History' of How the US Government Segregated America," *NPR* (May 3, 2017), https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america.; "Historian Says Don't Sanitize How Our Government Created Ghettos," *NPR* (May 14, 2015), https://www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos

of "government racism."[454] *Smithsonian* pushed back against what it framed as a false narrative that "independent actors," such as "racially discriminatory landlords and bankers," which the author claimed has long served "as an explanation for the isolation of African Americans in certain neighborhoods in large cities."[455] In each instance, racism is imagined as issuing from a monolithic and uncomplicated "government."

In addressing this argument, I want to raise a couple of points. First, within the context of racial capitalism, attributing the complex effects of segregation and residential poverty to "the government" may occlude more than it clarifies. To the extent that "the government" in these texts names the formal organization, expression, and administration of policies, it represents the public expression of some collection of private interests. And it is those private interests that are important to understand if the objective is to remediate the damage they have to this point produced. Take for example the Home Owners Loan Corporation's (HOLC) residential security maps (aka, "redlining maps"). Since being unearthed by historian Kenneth Jackson, these artifacts of New Deal housing policy regularly sit at the center of the "government-as-responsible-for-segregation" narratives.[456]

However, there is debate about the actual function of the HOLC maps (most

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[454] Alexis Madrigal, "The Racist Housing Policy That Made Your Neighborhood," *Atlantic* (May 22, 2014). https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/05/the-racist-housing-policy-that-made-your-neighborhood/371439/.

[455] Katie Nodjimbadem, "The Racial Segregation of American Cities Was Anything But Accidental," *Smithsonian.com* (May 30, 2017), https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-federal-government-intentionally-racially-segregated-american-cities-180963494/.

[456] The first scholarly exploration of the HOLC maps and the question of "redlining" can be found in Kenneth T. Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 6, No. 4 (August 1980): 419–452.

of which falls outside the scope of this project). What is clear is that they were produced by a fairly obscure New Deal agency that maintained as its primary charge debt relief to homeowners facing foreclosure. The HOLC's mapping work began in 1935 when it was tasked by the agency it served under, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB), to appraise real estate risk in the neighborhoods of 239 US cities.[457] Employing its staff as well as local realtors and lenders, it mapped and partitioned residential space based on risk, assigning each residential area one of four demarcations. Each risk category had a color designation, with red representing those spaces deemed to contain the greatest risk while green represented those spaces deemed least risky. As the HOLC noted at the time of the publication of its Baltimore map, its purpose was to "graphically reflect the trend of desirability in neighborhoods from a residential view-point."[458] The idea that the HOLC maps were "redlining" maps can, in part, be attributed to Jackson, as he drew on them in his work to support his larger argument that federal policy institutionalized and accelerated racist land use practice.[459] Of course, at the same time, referring to the HOLC security maps as "redlining maps" confuses their literal use and conflates them with a later set of private real estate practices. As Jean Pogge notes, "the practice of redlining was first identified and named in the Chicago neighborhood of Austin in the late 1960s."[460] Savings and loan associations, at the time the primary source of residential mortgages, "drew red lines around neighborhoods" that they thought would be a

[457]Henry Hoagland and Leo D. Stone, *Real Estate Finance* (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1961), 474.
[458]Baltimore HOLC Map, National Archives, Records Group 195, Box 106.
[459]See Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*, particularly chapter 11.
[460]Pogge, "Reinvestment in Chicago Neighborhoods," in Gregory Squires, ed. *From Redlining to Reinvestment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 134.

threat to property value, because of the perception that they were "susceptible to racial change" and as a consequence refused to lend in those neighborhoods.[461]

Like in most cities, Baltimore's HOLC map was not the product of a unitary or monolithic body, but rather the result of numerous individuals' work over the course of two years of preparation. Published in 1937, those involved in producing the HOLC map included private consultants, bankers, local real estate interests, and representatives of local finance capital. Local housing experts collected data and did the work of drawing the actual boundaries. Likewise, local real-estate interests assigned each area their mortgage risk grades. Among the number of local private Baltimore actors who "collaborated with the [HOLC] field agent in preparation" of the map were over a dozen real estate brokers, at least three bankers, a professor of sociology at Goucher College, and one "cashier."[462] At the national level, as the director of HOLC's mapping campaign Corwin Fergus asserted, "at least 5,000 private real estate agents and bankers were involved in developing these maps."[463] In the end, what gets flattened as "government policy" was just as much a reflection of the private interests of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) as it was a reflection of the federal state. As David Freund notes, the HOLC "gave state sanction to a vision of property markets that had been articulated by members of the public-private planning alliance for over two decades."[464]

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[461]Pogge, "Reinvestment in Chicago Neighborhoods," 134.
[462]Baltimore HOLC Map, National Archives, Records Group 195, Box 106; Digital abstract of the Residential Security Map of Baltimore MD. accessed via the Johns Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries, http://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu.
[463]James Greer, "The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Development of the Residential Security Maps," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 39, No. 2 (March 2013): 275–296.
[464]Freund, David, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 115.

Further, to the extent that these texts assert that public housing siting determined racial geography, they are overstating the role that that process played in establishing the larger demographic picture. At its height, the 1.2 million public housing units in the US – defined here as housing "built or subsidized by a more or less constant stream of federal funding" – made up little more than one percent of the country's 112.3 million total housing units.[465] While the presence of public housing remains proportionally larger within urban centers than the suburbs, it has always been a small percentage of the housing stock. As such, while federal siting of housing is important, and the racialized character of that process instrumental in shaping the racial geography, the private market has always played a much larger role in producing segregation.

A big part of Hirsch's work has focused on linking the discussions of whiteness, as a social construct, with the building of urban life. While left scholarship – informed by the work of Du Bois – had been arguing for an understanding of whiteness as an historical formation for many decades, Hirsch situated whiteness within space, as "an evolving identity forged in the crucible of the mid-twentieth century city."[466] While it is necessary to understand racialization in spatial terms, by

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[465]Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 41, note 1.

[466]Quote is from Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, preface to the 1998 edition, p.x; Early attempts by the radical left to analyze whiteness was informed by the work of WEB DuBois, particularly his "White Worker" chapter of *Black Reconstruction in the United States* (New York: Free Press, 1935, 1992), as well as CLR James's *American Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1997). One particular strand of left analysis of whiteness grew out of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); as an offshoot group, the Sojourner Truth Organization (STO), took up the project of theorizing whiteness as an historical formation. Key members, including Noel Ignatiev (then, Ignatin) and Theodore Allen, published their early thoughts in the STO pamphlet "White Blindspot" (https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/whiteblindspot.pdf) in which they argue that race is a class project, with whiteness being "the greatest barrier to class consciousness." Allen went on to historicize this thinking in his two volume *The Invention of the White Race Volume One:*

limiting his discussion of whiteness – and therefore segregation – to a discussion of "identity," rather than property relations, Hirsch naturalized space as a commodity, even as he complicated the analysis of whiteness. That is to say, unlike the work of Cheryl Harris, Hirsh imagines whiteness as a way of linking individual identity to the identity of space (i.e., "this is a white neighborhood") organized by the power of a racist state.[467] While there's no doubt that this is an important part of the story, it ignores the fact that the state exists to secure property claims (i.e., "my access to value is contingent upon this being racialized a white neighborhood").[468] In this second formulation, before anything else, whiteness is a political category, and its claims to space are racialized property relations. The antiblack violence that the state reproduces – banal and spectacular – are reproduced in the service of securing and reproducing racialized property rights.

Hirsch's reading of Baltimore's history, possibly because of its shorter form

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Racial Oppression and Social Control (New York: Verso, 2002) and *The Invention of the White Race Volume Two: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (New York: Verso, 2002), while Ignatiev went on to do similar work in *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Similar studies of whiteness, such as Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991) have followed in this tradition.

[467]By contrast, Cheryl Harris, in her "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review,* Vol. 106, No. 8 (June, 1993), pp. 1707-1791, argues that whiteness is, before anything else, a set of property claims, and therefore, a central process linking an emerging state with an emerging capitalist political economy.

[468]A key text for thinking through the function of the state, not as an impartial or disinterested arbiter of law, but rather, as a space within which class-interested actors negotiate competing prerogatives and as a mode through which these actors organize, consolidate, and express their consensus positions, is Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Theory of the State* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971). For discussion of the role the state plays in commodifying and securing space, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992) or Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010). For discussion of how the state operates to secure the specific interests of the real estate industry, see Freund, *Colored Property*, Gothan, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*, or more recently, Nathan Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), and Taylor, *Race for Profit*. See Harris, "Whiteness as Property," for discussion of the role whiteness plays in organizing these material relations within a racial ideology.

and more narrow objectives, goes further to foreground the role of identity and the state in forming segregated black residential space, giving discussion of market forces even shorter shrift. At the center of Hirsch's argument for this commissioned study is the claim that "the private market and private choices...did not produce the degree of residential segregation evident in Baltimore by the second half of the twentieth-century."[469] Instead, what facilitated Baltimore's hyper-segregation "involved the expansion of the American state, the increased activity of government on all levels, and the powerful implementation of public policy."[470] For Hirsch, the segregative policy that shaped urban spaces throughout much of the twentieth-century, was the result of "authorities...act[ing] on their segregative impulses." The question remains, from where do these "impulses" emerge if not the material reality produced by racial capital? Further, are these impulses limited to a "second ghetto" or do they transcend the history of urbanization? Are they a function of some moment in public policy or do they find expression differently in different moments in the city's history because they are features of racial capitalism?

While Hirsch's study of Chicago is detailed enough to think about the role that private interests play in shaping that city's segregation, what seems missing from Hirsch's study of Baltimore, and the other commissioned studies the case relies on to support its argument, is any consideration of the role that private property interests have played in building those policy prerogatives.[471] While there is a focus on the

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[469] Arnold Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore, 1900-1968," (May 3, 2003), 3, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 3: Expert Report of Arnold Hirsch, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[470] Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore," 1.

[471] For an example of Hirsch's detailed consideration of private interests shaping segregation policy, see

"perceptions of white needs and desires," there is no distinction between white property owners and those racialized whites who had no hold on private property.[472] This is not to claim that non-propertied whites did not reap the material and psychic benefits of white supremacy. They did, and do. Rather, I point this out in order to assert that a whiteness imagined as monolithic and undifferentiated by competing claims to property runs the risk of ignoring the limitations of the market as a site for antiracist correctives.

What was conspicuously missing from the ranks of expert representation in *Thompson v. HUD* were the histories of austerity, much of which centers the historical experiences of black women navigating the slow dismantling of the welfare state.[473] While it may be unfair to expect this particular class action suit to engage those

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his discussion of the University of Chicago and its influence over the "blight" designation process, which effectively enabled the university to clear swaths of black population from the campus edges in *Making the Second Ghetto*, 102, 213.

[472] Hirsch, "Public Policy and Residential Segregation in Baltimore, 1900-1968, 2.

[473] A small body of literature, developed within the humanist tradition, and centering the lived experiences of primarily black women navigating the fraught terrain of a contracting welfare state, shapes how this project understands the demolition of public housing, the increased emphasis on vouchers and mobility campaigns, and the privatization of once public land. This literature includes, Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movement: How They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage, 1978); Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage, 1993); Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Annelise Orkeck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (New York: Beacon Press, 2006); Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing*; Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Annelise Orleck and Lisa Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1960-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). This material, when read together, provides a picture of how black women within spaces of racialized poverty reflected on their circumstances and fashioned social, cultural, and political approaches in their struggle to claim contested public assets. Further, I argue, that this body of literature, in its focus on the relationship between austerity conditions and racist policy, highlights the limitations of scholarship that narrowly focusses on government alone in its attempt to capture the forces authoring racist urban policy.

specific scholars, the point is that while the state-focused scholars that subscribe to Hirsch's "second ghetto" thesis have made essential contributions to the field, they remain singularly focused on the role of the state. In so doing, they contribute to a mystification. Just as within racial capitalism capital cannot exist without the state, so too the state does not exist independent of or in discrete relation to the market. These scholars wittingly or not, perpetuate a false dichotomy between state and market, and in so doing, naturalize capitalism and allow it to facilitate the remediation process here.

There is no doubt value in this way of thinking. Rothstein's work adds to the wealth of histories that have helped move the discussion of metropolitan demographic shifts and wealth transfers out of immaterial and formless discussions of "white flight" and toward a more substantive and concrete understanding of structural forces that reproduce racialized governance. That said, it is worth thinking about what gets displaced through the kind of totalizing approach Rothstein is invoking here. There is no question that the analysis of Rothstein, like that of the ACLU's go to experts Hirsch, Powell, Tauber, et. al., have thoroughly documented the state's role in inscribing racial meanings onto the residential landscape. But to bracket out the state from the market and to situate the entirety of this process within "the government" – here an imagined space siloed off from the private forces of capital ("Baltimore's ghetto was not created by...income differences," etc.) – and to begin and end the story of segregation with "the government," does at least two significant things: 1) it leaves the market un-critiqued, naturalizing its presence and invites subsequent interventions

to turn there in order to address these problems, and 2) it encourages reductive understandings of "the government" as an inherently white supremacist space, at best inhibiting approaches directed at material concession, at worst encouraging its abandonment as a site of struggle over resources and as a site for prescriptive solutions.

The idea that "the government," to the extent that this names direct federal influence, determined urban policy independent of local or market actors has little historical support. The city within liberal capitalism has always been populated by private actors whose self-interest is necessarily shaped by (and shapes) the market forces they negotiate. Private interests inform individual political expression, and are no doubt captured within local (as well as federal) policy.

Baltimore's West Ordinance, its "seven-year experiment with residential apartheid," is arguably the most important early example of segregative policy in Baltimore, and given that it became a model for other cities in the US attempting to institute apartheid forms of local governance, one of the most consequential early twentieth-century expressions of residential segregation.[474] The historiography that has documented this policy has demonstrated clearly how segregation policy should be understood as developing in concert with private, market-shaped, interests. Further, the shape it took reflects not just the prerogatives of white capital, but also of an emergent set of class tensions among a range of social groups racialized white but with differing investments in land use politics. Among these groups are the white

[474] Gretchen Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City: Baltimore's Residential Segregation Ordinances, 1910-1913," *Journal of Urban History.* Vol. 35, No. 2, (2009), 237.

poor, precariously situated white property owners, and wealthy white estate owners whose mobility informed a very different relationship to racialized residential space.

The West Ordinance established in the fall of 1910 a process of assigning a racial designation to every residential block in the city. Majority white residential spaces would be designated white, while majority black residential spaces would be designated black. As the *Baltimore Sun* reported, "no negro can move into a block in which more than half of the residents are whites...no white person can move into a block in which more than half of the residents are colored."[475] Punishment for violating the ordinance was a fine or jail time. While the city did not impose on developers race-specific demands, it was understood that all new development would be racially homogenous. As developers recognized white homebuyers as the more viable market, almost all new development was exclusively white housing, leading to significant shortages of black housing options.

Neighborhood groups have, since at least the late nineteenth century in Baltimore, been a mechanism through which white property owners influenced housing policy.[476] Petitions fixated on black behavior routinely circulated through the residential associations of Baltimore's middle-class whites at the turn of the century.[477] As "streetcar suburbs" built up on the city's not yet annexed margins in the

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[475] *Baltimore Sun*, (December 20, 1910), 7.

[476] Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City," 236; Garrett Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style: The Residential Segregation Ordinances of 1910-1913," *Maryland Law Review* 42 (Winter 1983); Bettye Thomas Collier, "The Baltimore Black Community, 1865-1910" (PhD diss., George Washington University, 1974); Joseph Arnold, "The Neighborhood and City Hall: The Origin of Neighborhood Associations in Baltimore, 1880-1911," *Journal of Urban History* 6 (November 1979): 6, 11-13.

[477] Carl Nightingale, "The Transnational Contexts of Early Twentieth-Century American Urban Segregation," *Journal of Social History* 39 (Spring 2006): 670-71.

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, white elites initiated an out-migration to places like Roland Park. Middle-class and lower middle-class white property owners utilized the neighborhood as a way of racially defining and politically protecting their property interests. And they utilized access to governing bodies like the city council to protect their property interests. It was primarily these groups who had the greatest need for and access to the city council and as such had the greatest say in shaping residential policy. This was particularly true of middle-class actors who had the capacity to shape and leverage discursive power. Attorney Milton Dashiell, a resident of the 1100 block of McCulloh Street and a charter member of the new improvement association, had assumed responsibility for drafting the bill. Early twentieth century middle-class actors living in contested spaces of the inner city, with access to institutional or discursive power, were often the most instrumental actors to move the segregationist agenda. Dashiell, for example, was an author and key revisor of the West Ordinance's language. Charles Grasty championed the segregation campaign in his role as editor of the *Baltimore Sun*. Both held property investments in city neighborhoods that were at the heart of the segregation struggle.

Many of those fighting for segregation were middle class residents who had moved recently into, and worked self-consciously to define as “white,” neighborhoods that were earlier the domain of the upper middle class. With their political work, they sought to guarantee themselves material stability over these properties that once belonged to more affluent whites. Further, their work seems wholly self-interested; as Boger notes, these residents' organizing “did not see segregationists linking their cause to public health agendas or engaging in more

widespread city boosterism." This was a mobilization of white supremacy in an effort to organize their property claims. Their activities concerned the immediate question of black residential property rights, and they "waged their war through narrowly conceived, amateur neighborhood groups and individual appeals."[478] Only a handful of more prominent white citizens actively joined the fight, and they were largely those with something personal to lose. The effort never drew the full-scale participation of white Baltimore. Although the city's white upper classes did not condemn the ordinances, neither did they involve themselves in the campaign. This is not to say that the white elite or the state were not also invested in the reproduction of residential segregation. Rather it is to acknowledge that much of the heavy lifting was often done by precariously situated whites who saw and assessed segregation in terms shaped by their own material investments. White elites positioning themselves "above the fray" sanctioned small groups of less materially secure whites to define urban neighborhood in starkly racialized terms (while elite neighborhoods were free to frame the whiteness of their own neighborhoods as the non-ideological effect of their class status).

The West Ordinance was public policy, but it was also a mechanism through which private property owners organized their power. Through this policy initiative, the neighborhood became the terrain upon which white residents worked to link racialized difference to private property.

Mobility as Court Ordered Remediation – *Thompson* Becomes Policy

[478]Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City," 236.

Like in many US cities, a significant number of the policy choices in the past four decades have been shaped by court-order (again, typically in response to the collective energies of residents and housing reformers). Much of the above discussion was to establish that fair housing suits that bracket the private market – private housing as a racialized commodity – out of the discussion when constructing the residential segregation problematic limits the possible scope of democratic interventions. Nevertheless, this formulation of segregation lies at the center of many of the fair housing lawsuits – *Thompson v. HUD* included – and likewise lies at the center of Baltimore's effort to de-segregate.

Space as Generative: Gautreaux, Move to Opportunity, Regional Approach

Chicago's *Gautreaux et al v. Chicago Housing Authority* early set the stage for the wave of fair housing lawsuits that would shape Baltimore's post-high-rise landscape. The suit charged that by segregating Chicago's black public housing residents into concentrated spaces containing in total over 10,000 housing units, HUD and the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) were in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by accepting federal funding for a racially discriminatory project. The court responded to these claims by effectively halting future construction of public housing. The 1969 ruling prohibited the CHA from constructing any new public housing in residential spaces that were predominantly black, prohibited the building of "dense concentrations" of public housing anywhere, and prohibited the building of any future family high-rise housing developments.[479]

[479] *Gautreaux et al. v. The Chicago Housing Authority.* United State District Court, ND Illinois, Eastern

In 1976 the Gautreaux case went to the Supreme Court, and there the court considered the question of "regional solutions" to urban segregation.[480] While the urban crisis expressed locally within center cities, the causes of residential underdevelopment are far more global. Residents demanded access to the suburbs as compensation for decades of racist inner-city housing siting practices. The court found HUD to have acted unconstitutionally. Where the district court initially denied the plaintiff class's demand for a remediation that opened the suburbs to inner-city residents, the Supreme Court decided that the housing authority should incorporate a regional approach to remedying the history of segregation. Invoking Justice Warren Burger in his written opinion in the *Swann v Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* case – that, "(o)nce a right and a violation have been shown, the scope of a district court's equitable powers to remedy past wrongs is broad, for breadth and flexibility are inherent in equitable remedies" [481] -- the Supreme Court affirmed local jurisdictions' right to expand the space of remediation for public housing residents subject to decades of segregationist policy.

This "regional approach" resonated with reformers. Establishing that HUD was not only culpable for segregative siting and placement, but legally obligated to remedy it, the "regional approach" became an essential ingredient to HUD's remediation plan. This set the table for a "mobility approach" that was authorized to move people out of "concentrated poverty" and potentially (for some, at least) move

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Division. [Civ. A No. 66 C 1459] (July 1, 1969).

[480] *Hills v. Gautreaux,* 425 U.S. 284. United States Supreme Court, Washington DC. (April 20, 1976), https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep425284/..

[481] *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 US 1 (1971), 15, https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep402001/.

them into the suburbs. As it happened, while organized by reformers coming at the problem of substandard housing from a very different place, their work articulated with the already existing desire on the part of conservative policy makers to elevate the importance of housing vouchers at the expense of direct aid for building. By framing this form of remediation in terms of "fair housing," their labor lent a patina of legitimacy and morality to what was at base another upward distribution of public resources. With the court's decision, the housing authority agreed to provide 7,100 Section 8 housing vouchers to be used by members of the plaintiff class with the stipulation that they be used in neighborhoods that were less than thirty percent African-American. This began a process of "de-concentration" that focused primarily on the re-settling of black residents in the suburbs.

The Clinton Administration along with HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros imagined a national reorganization of HUD that would apply the Gautreaux approach to all urban regions. This program – "Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing" (MTO) – began as a demonstration program in five cities: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. In these cities, residents of low-income housing received "Section 8" rental assistance vouchers to be used in designated areas with less than ten percent poverty, as authorized by federal law for ten years.[482]

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[482] For the full scope of HUD's "Moving to Opportunity" planning and study, see, Judith Feins, Mary Joel Holin, Antony Phipps, and Abt. Associates Inc., *MTO: Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration, Program Operations Manual* (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1994) https://www.huduser.gov/portal//publications/pdf/mto_prog_manual.pdf; John Goering, Joan Kraft, Judith Feins, Debra McInnis, Mary Joel Holin, and Huda Elhassan, *Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program: Current Status and Initial Findings*, (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research,, 1999) https://www.huduser.gov/portal//Publications/pdf/mto.pdf; Larry Orr, Judith Feins, Robin Jacob, Erik Beecroft, Abt, Associates Inc., Lisa Sanbonmatsu, Lawrence F. Katz, Jeffery Liebman, and Jeffery R. King, *Moving to Opportunity Fair Housing Demonstration Plan: Interim Impacts Evaluation*

The Gautreaux case introduced the idea that housing vouchers should be issued strategically. That is, the way to fight urban underdevelopment was to move qualified residents out of public housing and into neighborhoods that have historically had greater access to resources. By 1988, the idea that housing vouchers should be used in this manner had taken hold. HUD's John Goering, for example, noted, "the policy message thus seemed clear: moving out of public housing projects into more suburban communities could change lives."[483]

As Goetz notes, bound up in this idea is the notion that the built environment was generative of urban pathology.[484] "Mobility as a solution suggests that environment is the critical factor in creating and maintaining intergenerational poverty."[485] The so-called "neighborhood effects" theory of poverty held that space was generative, productive of poverty. In many ways the objectives of the *Thompson* case aligned with the shifting policy approaches to public housing.

On its own terms, even ideologically aligned scholarly institutions argued that MTO produced at best mixed results. Low income black children did not gain significant benefits from access to suburban schools.[486] Nor had it demonstrated that MTO recipients have attained greater access to jobs or greater economic stability.[487]

(Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 2003). https://www.huduser.gov/portal//Publications/pdf/MTOFullReport.pdf.

[483] John Goering, "Political Origins and Opposition," in *Choosing a Better Life?: Evaluating the Moving to Opportunity Social Experiment*, John Goering and Judith Feins, eds. (Washington DC: Urban Institute, 2003), 40.

[484] Edward Goetz, "The Transformation of Public Housing Policy, 1985-2011," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 78, No.4 (2012).

[485] Goetz, "The Transformation of Public Housing Policy, 456.

[486] Kadija Ferryman, Xavier de Souza Briggs, Susan Popkin, Maria Rendon, "Do Better Neighborhoods for MTO Families Mean Better Schools?" *Urban Institute* (March 20, 2008).

[487] Lisa Sanbonmatsu, Jeffery R. King, Greg Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gun, "Neighborhoods and Academic Achievement: Results from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment," *Journal of Human Resources* Vol. XLI, No. 4 (Fall 2006), 649-691.

While there is some evidence that life in middle class neighborhoods freed people of some of the immediate threats to health that people living within underdeveloped spaces have to endure – over-exposure to violence, lead, stress, etc. – the kinds of scrutiny that low-income black residents are subjected to when relocating to middle-class non-black neighborhoods often produces other forms of stress related negative health effects.[488]

But there are other concerns not captured in this literature. As expected, white suburban homeowners sought to prevent black residents from moving out to the county. Ad hoc community groups like the Eastern Political Association and the Responsible Citizens Against MTO organized misinformation campaigns and made outrageous claims that "more than 18,000 families are coming to Baltimore County."[489] A flyer circulated by an anonymous activist warned, "people living in drug and crime infested Lafayette homes and Murphy's homes could be Moving to Essex."[490] This relocation of public housing residents "could affect our neighborhoods, our schools, and the number of families receiving County Social Services. Police – County police have formed a RIOT SQUAD which will be called the 'Emergency Response Team' and are increasing the number of officers here in Essex." As sociologists Diane Levy and Mark Wooly note, forced relocation out of

[488] Susan Clampet-Lundquist and Douglas S. Massey, "Neighborhood Effects on Economic Self-Sufficiency: A Reconsideration of the Moving to Opportunity Experiment"; Arline T. Geronimus and J. Phillip Thompson, "To Denigrate, Ignore, or Disrupt: Racial Inequality in Health and the Impact of a Policy-induced Breakdown of African American Communities," *DuBois Review: Social Science Research on Race* (September 2004), 247-279.
[489] Quoted in Ed Brandt, "Scare Tactics Bring Down Federal Housing Program," *Baltimore Sun* (October 30, 1994).
[490] Quoted in John F. Goering, "Political Origins and Opposition," in John F. Goering and Judith D. Feins, eds., *Choosing a Better Life: Evaluating the Moving to Opportunity Social Experiment* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 2003), 47.

communities and into "opportunity neighborhoods" renders already vulnerable populations more vulnerable to race- and class-based interpersonal animus, while simultaneously dislocating these same communities from the necessary social supports they had built over time.[491] This is only intensified by the fact that with most mobility programs "displacement and relocation are typically the only intervention experienced by needy families."[492] Something that has been "true of most public housing redevelopment efforts."[493]

The Material Politics of "Opportunity"

Much of the remedial phase of the *Thompson* decision worked from the Gautreaux precedent, as well as that set by the first Move to Opportunity demonstration, and relied on John Powell's conceptualization of "opportunity" to shape and broaden a regional voucher system to enable "mobility."[494] Powell deploys the term "opportunity" liberally in his prescription. In his 72 pages of analysis, data, and citations, there are 126 references to the word "opportunity" or "opportunities." That he chooses "opportunity," rather than say "equity," "freedom," "justice," or "liberation," as his animating term is telling. Like "hope," "opportunity" is evocative without being precise, progressive-seeming without offering concrete prescription.

Powell's work produced a number of criteria that together measured the

[491] Diane Levy and Mark Woolley, *Relocation is Not Enough: Employment Barriers Among HOPE VI Families,* (Washington DC: Urban Institute, 2007).
[492] Kimberly Skobba and Edward Goetz, "Mobility Decisions of Very Low-Income Households," *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2013), 167.
[493] Skobba and Goetz, "Mobility Decisions of Very Low-Income Households," 167.
[494] John Powell, "Expert Report of john a. powell: *Thompson v. HUD,* et al." American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, hosted in the University of Baltimore's Baltimore Regional Studies Archive.

relative “opportunity” of a specific space. These included the clearly political-economic, such as changes in job status, number of children who qualify for free or reduced lunch, health indexes. They also included demographic criteria, such as population concentrations by race, census data, etc. Powell projected seventeen metrics in all onto maps of the metropolitan area in an effort to highlight where “opportunity” accrued and where it was missing. Not surprisingly, the trends of underdevelopment established by earlier decades' segregationist policy remained stubbornly in place. Conversely, those spaces that benefitted materially from black residential underdevelopment continued to display an over-abundance of resources, registered here as “opportunity.”[495]

In order to address these questions, Powell argues for the affirmative establishment of “communities of opportunity.” These communities will represent a “race-conscious, voluntary remedy that combines vouchers with housing production and other supply-side strategies.”[496] Powell notes that the value of an opportunity index is to provide “multi-factor analysis,” which attempts to “move past the binary divides of 'urban' suburban,' 'black' and 'white,' and 'rich' and ‘poor'.”[497]

The limitation in Powell's assessment lies in his unwillingness to politicize private ownership. Instead, it exists within his discussion as an un-questioned good: one that white people in general have had access to (an uneven and historically contingent access, but access nonetheless), while black people in the main have not. For Powell, it is this lack of access alone that produces wealth gaps as a matter of

[495] Powell, “Remedial Phase Expert Report of John Powell.”
[496] Powell, “Remedial Phase Expert Report of John Powell,” 11.
[497] John Powell, “Structural Racism: Building Upon the Insights of John Calmore,” *North Carolina Law Review*, Vol. 86, Rev. 791 (2007-2008).

course. The question of exploitation that sits at the center of racial capitalism remains absent. Ignoring exploitation, the problem then becomes the production of "gaps" in access to the spoils that exploitation produces, and the fact that black actors, in the main, have been unevenly kept from these spoils. Powell's approach, like that of his fellow experts on display in this trial, tacitly endorses the idea that racism can be de-linked from exploitation. Further, he assumes that once freed from the racism of government, the capitalist housing market can function as a race-neutral generator of equity. This approach naturalizes capitalism and eschews deeper consideration of its historical reliance on difference as a way of producing property value and the laws that organize that value.[498] What escapes question within the case the ACLU was building was to what extent did giving public wealth over to the market intensify already existing anti-black practice?

Powell's thesis assumes that relative "opportunity" functions as an intrinsic function of space —it lives in some environments and not others—and suggests that low-income black residents should be moved from their low opportunity spaces to high opportunity spaces, namely the suburbs. In defining communities by their proximity to opportunity, Powell erases the systems that have created disparate

[498] On questions about how capitalism instrumentalizes difference, see Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), and in particular her discussion of how the gendered and racialized histories of globalization have produced differently situated work forces, shaped in part by differing relationships to rights regimes, and how capital leverages that unevenness to drive down the cost of labor power. Miranda Joseph's discussion of "supplementarity" in *Against the Romance of Community,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), in particular, Chapter 1, "The Supplementarity of Community Capital," theorizes this process and locates early discussions of the centrality of difference to the production of value within Marx. See in particular her discussion of the *Grundrisse,* 50-53. While these texts do not center discussions of housing markets per se, when read together, they help establish the use-value of difference (i.e., race) – its utility within the capitalist accumulation process – and produce a framework for understanding how the market utilizes difference that can be extended to the process of capitalist housing.

opportunities for black residents, making the built environment a repository for centuries of discrimination.

Further, claims that proximity to opportunity translate to access to opportunity seem to be shaky. Powell's testimony is engaged in a kind of question begging that has become familiar to these approaches to reform. A concentration of low-income residents is definitionally a "low opportunity" area according to Powell. Conversely, moving these residents into "high-opportunity" areas – defined by the lack of low-income residents – initiates a process that produces greater "opportunity," leading to better lives. The testimony never moves from discussions of consequence to discussions of cause. Further, and this remains a key oversight of this approach beyond its immaterial understanding of the poverty-opportunity nexus, this focus provides no examination of what the impact is on the people left behind in those low-opportunity areas. Taking this approach at its word, in focusing policy on one sub-section of those living in spaces of concentrated poverty and designing policy to facilitate their move out, movement to opportunity is in practice a movement to opportunity for some, while it is an intensifier of disadvantage for the impoverished who are left behind.

The initial phase of the partial consent decree saw much of this thinking take shape in policy. It set aside 2000 special housing vouchers for members of the *Thompson* plaintiff class, with the express intent to create access for those residents to neighborhoods noted for their increased access to opportunity. These were almost exclusively white neighborhoods, either in the city or in bordering counties. Vouchers restricted residents to census tracts that were less than 30% African American, less

than 10% poor, with fewer than 5% of the residents receiving housing vouchers. According to Stefanie Leduca, as of "April 2007, 962 families have moved with these targeted vouchers."[499]

Stanton and The Other Side of Mobility:

"That's what I remember about that row house," she said, "surrounded by boarded up houses – half of them owned by the city...We couldn't get the landlord to do anything about the rats. No one was gonna do anything about the crime. And we couldn't call the city, because we didn't want to lose that house – landlords can be vindictive...they *are* vindictive."[500]

Stanton was reflecting on her family's West Baltimore rental, which they moved into after moving from the Lafayette Courts high-rise housing towers, in 1990, five years before the housing towers that made up that development were ultimately demolished. Stanton was a teenager when she moved into "the projects," having moved in with her grandmother, who had taken in her and her two sisters, one younger and one older, when her mother relapsed into alcohol and heroin addiction. " I thought the high-rises were terrible," she recalls, "we had grown up in the county – nothing especially nice, but more together than the projects – and we were anxious to get out of there once we started to see what life was like there." As HABC began to expand access to housing vouchers, particularly for those with families looking to

[499] Stefanie DeLuca and Peter Rosenblatt, "Can Poor Black Families Escape Segregated Neighborhoods? Residential Mobility and Opportunity in Three Housing Voucher Programs." Paper given at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, April 17-19, 2008, https://paa2008.princeton.edu/papers/80640.

[500] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

move out of high-rise developments, her grandmother was in a position to take advantage. “We were ecstatic,” she remembers. “I remember [the high-rises being] 'terrible,' because they're overrun with addicts and dealers. I know the older folks would say that they weren't always that way. But as a 13 year old, and my younger sister at the time was 10...you feel a kind of parental responsibility toward your younger sibling when your mother...isn't around...it wasn't a place I wanted us to be...So when we were given the chance to move out, I remember my grandmother jumping at it...Escape, I said, escape...”[501]

Dislocations, migrations, mobility, these have been a feature of Black residential life throughout the twentieth century. These were not new to Stanton or her grandmother. Like many who settled in West Baltimore, Stanton's family made the gradual, multi-generational migration up the eastern seaboard, in this case, from southern Virginia. Her grandmother, Adelaide Chessen, was born in Port Smith, VA. In the early 1950s, she moved with her family of six to Washington DC. “They moved in when everyone else was moving out,” says Stanton. In her late teens, Chessen met Aaron Fontaine. They would eventually marry. He had moved into the area as a child from rural Indiana. Her grandparents lived in southeastern DC when her mother was young. Her grandfather worked various driving and delivery jobs, while her grandmother alternately was employed doing clerical work and running an informal childcare service with a home owning friend in DC's Brookland neighborhood. They eventually made their way to Baltimore, her grandfather

[501] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

following a job and a better place to live. They first moved into Baltimore City. Then found a “nicer” neighborhood that was “close to affordable” in Lochearn, a majority black Baltimore County suburb, just over the county line from West Baltimore. “This was the late 1970s. They had two daughters – my mom and my aunt – and the Southeast DC was bad.” “[They] had dreams of 'county living’.” The county offered a respite from the pressures of the rapidly deindustrializing city, they believed. Whether or not that was true, Stanton would not find out, as her family's life in the county was cut short when her grandfather passed unexpectedly, and her mother fell into addictive patterns that led, eventually, to her grandmother taking on sole custody of Annette and her younger sister. By then, they began a different kind of trajectory, one not unfamiliar to economically precarious black families. With their gradual climb up into lower middle-class suburban status derailed, Stanton's family moved gradually back toward low-income status, which as it happened, brought them back into “inner-city” residential life. “My grandmother would say, 'we took one step forward, then two steps back'...More like ten steps back. But you know...” From here, they found housing assistance in the form of Lafayette Courts, the family high-rise projects immediately west of the George Murphy Homes.[502]

But where the high-rises were “terrible,” the row house they moved to was both “dirty” and “lonely.” “It's like...I tried to mind my business in the projects – there were too many negative people, you know? … But then when we moved into the neighborhood [the row house] I had a hard time finding people. I minded my business *by choice* in the projects. I minded my business because I *had to* in the

[502] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

neighborhood. All of us did, I feel like. Maybe it was I was at a different age and school and all that, but I remember...In the projects, we had people, friends, other teenagers – a lot of them. But we weren't settled. We had friends. But we all struggled."[503]

In the family high-rise towers of Lafayette Courts, "there were 'lifers,' [those who had spent their entire lives in public housing, or in Lafayette specifically], but there were also transplants like us. There were some immigrants – some of my friends had African families, others were from the (Caribbean) islands, West Indian, and so forth...They had people in there from all over...Of course you also had the people in there who didn't really belong there, technically – people doubling up, some living with family but not on the lease." These were densely populated communities. In their diversity, as Stanton observes it, to think of them only as static warehouses of multigenerational poverty would be to misapprehend the conditions that created those communities.

In talking to residents about their neighbors and those they shared residential space with, a different picture emerges. Stanton's residential life began far from Baltimore City, decades before her own birth. The "home lives" of Lafayette as well as that of what she calls, in jest, "our Section 8 rat house," her series of housing situations once she moved out on her own, including her current residence, renting a private newly rehabilitated row house in southeast Baltimore, existed within a constellation of residential spaces, produced and enabled by a "mobility" that has been a defining feature of black residential life throughout black American history.

[503] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

Planning literature often assumes that poverty and racism have produced a fixedness, particularly when discussing public housing and its residents. This "poverty concentration" thesis assumes low income black residents to be relatively immobile actors. It follows, then, that housing reformers increasingly imagine mobility, typically bound up with ideas about increased agency and proximity (rather than direct access) to middle class resources (often couched euphemistically in language like "opportunity," "access," and "amenities"), as poverty's antidote. Stanton's biography offers a glimpse at an alternative genealogy of mobility, one shaped not by ill-defined freedoms linked tenuously to agency, but the brutalities of poverty and its forceful effect over people's attempts to establish roots.

Stanton narrates a set of experiences that unfold at the intersection of racialized poverty, dislocation, and what I have been calling here "mobility policy" – that ensemble of political and discursive interventions that has since the 1970s 1) facilitated the move away from state-built and controlled housing for the impoverished, 2) facilitated the move toward various forms of "demand-side" assistance in the place of state-built fixed capital, 3) turned over an increasing amount of power to the market to provide housing for the impoverished, and 4) framed this movement as not just historically unique, but as the moral and just course of action, epitomized by recent framings of "de-concentration" campaigns in "fair housing" and "housing justice" terms. Further, these mobility-centered policy interventions were framed by claims made by policy makers about black women's agency and voices.

The archive of critical thought that has been produced by those living through these policy interventions reveals that the cultural politics that often frame and drive

this mobility policy mystify the material project at its center. The realities of mobility as a steady presence within the lives of public housing residents, as well as the brutalities that persist in shaping the lives of people through the dislocations and whims of the private market, suggest that the mobility liberal urbanists offer does not represent anything new to the lives of black public housing residents. Nor does this approach, in spite of the hegemonic role it seems to play within the housing reform discussion currently, seem to offer any real respite from the brutalities of the housing problems within racial capitalism. As Stanton notes, "when my family moved to the county, they thought it would be a place to settle...They didn't get that chance." Poverty has a way of pushing people around in space, in spite of their own intentions, never mind the intentions of liberal planners.[504]

Stanton currently lives in a neighborhood north of Patterson Park, in Baltimore's southeast neighborhood. For many of the surrounding neighborhoods, the kinds of economic struggles she's endured would seem less familiar. Her neighborhood is flanked to the south by many of the city's recent "success stories," those neighborhoods whose growth and redevelopment have attracted and maintained a class of gainfully employed middle income professionals. These neighborhoods include Canton, Fells Point, and Butcher's Hill. In each case, those neighborhoods have very little available housing for tenants with section 8 vouchers.

"Like, where are they actually trying to send people?" she asks, rhetorically.

> Are there some neighborhoods where I can use my section 8 where there's jobs and good schools and all of that?...Who do you know that has section 8

[504] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

> that actually can find a place in one of those areas?...Even now, I know this landlord will take my vouchers as long as this neighborhood has got those abandoned buildings and as everyone [north of Baltimore St.] is black...But look at Canton and Fells, they're really close. I've lived in this city long enough to know what's coming.[505]

Stanton articulates the reality that vouchers have not facilitated any greater access to jobs or resources more generally. That even if proximity to people with resources did in and of itself generate resources for their neighbors, the reality of a city like Baltimore is that the vast majority of resources are concentrated in the hands of a very few, and that their residential lives are very clearly separated from the possible options of most voucher holders. Further, in drawing our attention to the fact that her current housing arrangements are also unstable – "as long as this neighborhood has got those abandoned buildings" – she has keyed into an emergent reality within the contemporary city: Voucher programs provide short term stability to property owners rather than low-income renters, and they very often can function as a subsidy enabling plenty of non-affordable market activity, such as gentrification processes.

As Rolph Pendall's expert testimony notes, proximity to jobs is unevenly distributed throughout the residential landscape. An analysis of the 150 ZIP code areas in the city of Baltimore found that nearly 95 percent of the region's new jobs between 1994 and 1999 were limited to just one-third of the city's neighborhoods.[506]

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[505] Stanton interview, 10/19/12

[506] Rolph Pendall, "The Ghettoization of HABC-Assisted Tenants in Baltimore City: Executive Summary," 6, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 5: Expert Report of Rolph Pendall, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

Unsurprisingly, these same neighborhoods were less accessible to renters than property owners. The neighborhoods containing the vast majority of Baltimore's jobs contained only about 27 percent of the region's rental housing stock.[507] For low-income residents relying on the $710 standard voucher payment, fewer than 20 percent of the housing that would be affordable to them was located within this area by 2010.[508] This is to say, it was not simply public housing developments that dislocated residents from resources such as jobs. The rental market available to voucher users does similar work partitioning out the poor from resources on offer for non-impoverished residents. Pendall's research on the demolition and Hollander Ridge, a 1000-unit housing development in East Baltimore – one of the few remaining non-majority black public housing sites in Baltimore – further supports this point.[509] In July of 2000 the development was imploded.[510] The large majority of families who were relocated from Hollander Ridge were relocated to other impoverished residential spaces. HABC records have documented the relocation addresses for 248 Hollander Ridge families.[511] One hundred and fourteen of those relocated were moved to assisted-housing.[512] One hundred and thirty four households were provided Section 8 vouchers.[513] None of those voucher recipients were able to

[507] Pendall, "The Ghettoization of HABC-Assisted Tenants in Baltimore City," 6.
[508] Pendall, "The Ghettoization of HABC-Assisted Tenants in Baltimore City," 6.
[509] Rolph Pendall, "The Ghettoization of Hollander Ridge's Family Housing Relocatees," *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 5: Expert Report of Rolph Pendall, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[510] Pendall, "The Ghettoization of Hollander Ridge's Family Housing Relocatees," 1.
[511] Rolph Pendall, "Racial Segregation, Poverty, and Distress: The Neighborhood Conditions of Metropolitan Baltimore's Section 8 Voucher Users," Table 1, *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 5: Expert Report of Rolph Pendall, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[512] Pendall, "Racial Segregation, Poverty, and Distress," Table 1.
[513] Pendall, "Racial Segregation, Poverty, and Distress," Table 1.

attain residence in low-poverty areas. Among the tenants who moved to other assisted units, usually family public housing projects, 90 percent were relocated to what would be considered majority black neighborhoods (i.e., census tracts in which at least 60 percent of the households were black), and almost everyone was relocated to high-poverty neighborhoods.[514] This is true of both those being relocated to federal housing and those given housing vouchers. In short, even those families that had the "freedom" conferred by Section 8 vouchers were not free to relocate away from high poverty or racialized segregation. More about this below, but suffice to say this demonstrates the limits of agency. “Are there some neighborhoods where I can use my section 8 where there’s jobs and good schools and all of that?”[515] If so, the market in Baltimore has yet to make those accessible to low income residents like Stanton relying on housing vouchers.

Housing Vouchers in an Era of “Community Development Corporations”

Stanton's experience with subsidized housing and the “mobility” it has encouraged has taken her in her three decades of living in Baltimore from high rise public housing tower, to “rat house,” to “decent” single family home on a “transitional” block close to one of the more stable swaths of middle class housing in the city. Yet, even in this most recent arrangement, there is a precarity shaped by newly coalescing market forces.

When Stanton asserts that she has no faith that her landlord will continue to rent to her and that she “know(s) what's coming,” she's again offering a perspective,

[514] Pendall, “The Ghettoization of Hollander Ridge’s Family Housing Relocatees,” 2.
[515] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

narrating the instability she has been subjected to at the hands of private market forces and a housing policy that looks to the market as a means of providing quality housing to low-income residents. In noting the highly contingent nature of her relationship to her landlord, she highlights the pernicious (yet common) use on the part of landlords (and rentiers, in general) to employ public subsidies as a means of stabilizing their private investments, while contributing to the housing instability of their tenants. She notes that her current quality housing comes on the front end of a larger process: one that intends to shift the economic and cultural valence of her current neighborhood. "They're rehabbing this whole block."[516] Rental vouchers in this instance serve as a subsidy to the early investors. They allow property owners to collect rent on rehabilitated housing stock while the larger neighborhood rehabilitation happens. Typically, once "those abandoned buildings" are rehabbed, tenants utilizing vouchers become expendable. Or, as another resident familiar with Section 8 vouchers observed, investors view moving them out as a necessary precondition to elevating property value. "They want to move us out...they won't get the new people to move in if they think it's all Section 8."[517]

A disproportionate number of what is considered low-income housing in Baltimore has been built by private developers. Many welcome Section 8 tenants for a limited period of time before shifting this housing into the market.[518] Stanton lives

[516] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.
[517] Resident testimony from a public hearing on the East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI) project, which would ultimately displace hundreds of East Baltimore residents and rebuild the residential areas around the Johns Hopkins Hospital campus. Comment recorded by the author, March 30, 2011. Hearing reported on in Shernay Williams, "Residents, Council Members Question the 'New East Baltimore,' *Afro-American* (April 9, 2011), A4.
[518] For a more thorough discussion of this dynamic, see Rolf Pendall, "The Ghettoization of HABC-Assisted Tenants in Baltimore City."

currently in what is marketed as a "single family home" in Baltimore's Patterson Park neighborhood. This was "the house that was available, that would take Section 8...in a neighborhood that was the least of a mess."[519] That neighborhood is a mix of vacant shells, scattered tenants, often doubling and tripling up in similarly sized single family homes, and a smattering of rehabbed row houses, most of which are owned by a local real estate company called Dominion Properties. This company specializes in rehabilitating row houses in Baltimore neighborhoods bordering on its more stable neighborhoods and generating value from rentals until that time when it makes most economic sense to sell these units. On Stanton's block, by her estimation, the five or so rehabbed rentals are each populated by tenants receiving Section 8 vouchers.[520]

The Patterson Park neighborhood is named for the 137-acre park six blocks to the south of her house. Over the past three decades, Patterson Park has been an anchor of neighborhood transformation in southeast Baltimore. Her neighborhood borders the gentrified Fells Point, Butcher's Hill, and Canton neighborhoods to the south, and a radically transforming "middle east" neighborhood to the east – where Johns Hopkins Hospital and local developers have enacted a redevelopment project that has pushed hundreds of low-income, primarily black residents out of the neighborhood and has erected in the places their homes once stood, a wall of high end condos seemingly cutting the hospital off from surrounding low-income black residential spaces of East Baltimore.

Stanton herself understands these various investments as handwriting on the

[519] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.
[520] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

wall. “I'm sure we won't be here much longer,” she says, reflecting on the rapid transformation surrounding her. As Dominion has done many times in the city, as potential owners begin to look on Stanton's block for housing deals, the Section 8 tenants will be cut loose and Dominion will sell. In acknowledging that she “won’t be here much longer,” she identifies a clear tension between voucher programs and the vulnerable populations they are meant to serve, and the private actors within the city who have learned to leverage that vulnerability to their advantage: The relationship between Section 8 tenants and property owner is not mediated by a sense of mutual investment in low income housing goals, but a cold calculation of what property is worth. Stanton has seen more than once what happens to low-income black women when market forces re-assess a property's value. “Our next move will hopefully be out of the city.” She has had experience with these kinds of material transformations before and her adult life has been deeply shaped by the condition of displacement that has become the defining effect of urban transformation for low income black residents in cities like Baltimore.[521]

For all of the progressive pretense, mobility campaign efforts to move low-income black residents out of densely populated public housing developments has its roots in Nixon administration policy choices. It was the Nixon administration which declared a moratorium on the federal construction of new public housing in 1973. In its place, the Nixon administration put forward three proposals that would work to displace direct federal aid to the poor. Alongside the expansion of community block grants through the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) in 1974,

[521] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

and the growth of financial intermediaries to organize and manage development funding beginning in 1979 (both of which will be discussed in the dissertation's conclusion), the Nixon Administration facilitated a massive expanse of the housing voucher idea, through the new Section 8 program.

Housing vouchers represent a shift on the part of the federal government away from direct production of new housing to subsidizing access to affordable housing – a shift from "supply side" access through the direct building of housing to "demand side" opportunity. This is accomplished through the issuing of rental vouchers that would cover a percentage of market rate rent for residents in need of housing assistance while conceivably allowing for greater resident mobility and agency in choosing housing arrangements. This has also had the effect of channeling large federal subsidies to a strata of petite-bourgeois urban capital in the form of smaller landlords. Vouchers (like block grants and financial intermediaries) represent a growing influence and authority of private, market-based actors. This new reality is in fact pushing people into new concentrations, as well as out of the city in general, clearing the ways for new forms of property accumulation and dispossession.

Housing Dislocations and "Black Flight"

From the mid-twentieth century through to the century's end, Baltimore's most defining demographic trend has been white mobility, principally white movement out of the city and into the surrounding counties. This facilitated an ever-decreasing white population, while impediments to black mobility and other factors led to a coinciding increase in the black population, both in terms of actual population size and

proportion relative to the rest of the population.

Between 1950 and 1990, the city of Baltimore's population fell from about 950,000 people to about 620,000. During that span, the white population dropped by 450,000. This was a massive out-migration; 70% of the entire white population left. And as the Civil Rights Movement began a process of dismantling barriers to the suburban housing market for black residents, so too did a significant percentage of the black middle class begin their own out-migration from the city. As the *Baltimore Sun* notes, "part of Baltimore's demographic story of the 1990s, when it lost more people than any city in America, was that large numbers of middle class blacks joined middle class whites in leaving the city."[522] In spite of that, and mercifully for a city that was hemorrhaging population and with them the necessary resources to keep a city afloat, the black population grew in Baltimore by 210,000 during that time.

While white out-migration is often characterized as "white flight," that term seems to place significant emphasis on the agency (and individuated racial animus) of white actors. Suburban historians have long made convincing arguments that real drivers of this migration were structural.[523] Federal lending policy helped build racially stratified housing markets, expanding infrastructure at public cost, "shrinking" metropolitan areas, facilitating suburban growth, while newly empowered

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[522] Eric Sigel, "White Flight Shows Signs of Declining," *Baltimore Sun* (October 16, 2003).

[523] The notion that the radical demographic shifts of cities like Baltimore in the mid-twentieth century were animated not by inter-personal racial animus but by structural forces, in particular post-war federal housing policy and municipal planning, runs through much of the work of the "new suburban history" which coalesced in the early 2000s, as well as some earlier works. Jackson's, *Crabgrass Frontier* is a precursor; Some key contributions to the "new suburban history" include, Freund, *Colored Property*; Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2005).

suburban actors drew new political boundaries around these emerging communities ensuring an uneven access to resources.

The year 2000 marked a significant change for Baltimore. It began a slowing of the white exodus. Likewise, it also began a potentially more significant demographic trend, a potential "black exodus." For the first time since WWII, the decade between 2000 and 2010 saw a greater number of black residents leave the city than white residents. Where the number of white residents has decreased by 7,000, the number of black residents, on the other hand, fell by 17,000. "For the first time since the city's population decline began some 60 years ago," *The Baltimore Sun* reported in 2003, "white flight is not the leading cause of the decrease in the number of residents – black flight is."[524]

This trend has continued into the present. Between July 2015 and July 2016, the city lost another 6,700 people, a near 100-year population low, while the black population in the surrounding counties and throughout the state has increased. Baltimore's black population continues to decrease. Baltimore was the only jurisdiction in the state to record a loss in black population in the last decade. This, in spite of an increase in black birth rates. "Black flight, not white, has been the engine of Baltimore's population loss over the past 15 years."[525]

And just as the term "white flight" seems to misapprehend the structural forces that animate urban/suburban demographic shifts, "black flight," too, seems to

[524]Eric Siegel, "A New Exodus: In a Worrying Trend, Blacks Are Now Leaving Baltimore in Greater Numbers Than Whites," *Baltimore Sun* (January 4, 2003).
[525]Natalie Sherman, "Baltimore Population Falls, Nearing a 100-Year Low, US Census Says," *Baltimore Sun* (March 23, 2017).

over-emphasize the agency of individual actors. As discussed above, there are larger structural forces invested in uprooting and moving around in space – including space outside of city boundaries – bodies racialized black.

Where white flight corresponded to a growing value in spaces, land, and housing outside of the city, black flight seems to correspond with two new material dynamics, corresponding with a cultural politics of black deviance. First, new concentrations of wealth and value within the city have changed relationships to the land. Where the Murphy Homes once stood, there are now large investments by the University of Maryland's Biotech center and the state's State Center attempting to buoy greater wealth-generating labor. Likewise, newly built housing schemes like HOPE VI neighborhoods have privatized large swaths of one time publicly-held land and housing. Second is the massive transformation of direct federal aid into the "alphabet soup" of private non-profit institutions, local property conglomerates, and, increasingly, hedge funds and other expressions of Wall Street finance, which have staked what is now billions of dollars on the "single family rental" market, which needs, as its generative agents, displaced low-income residents.[526]

A *Baltimore Sun* article from the beginning of this decade notes that the "new black exodus" may conflict with the city's comprehensive plan, which envisions 175,000 new residents. "It's difficult to imagine the realization of that vision," the author notes, "unless leaders address the decline in black population and come up with ways to counter it."[527] Likewise, an article from last decade lamented, "it would

[526]See, for example, Peter Drier & Aditi Sen, "Hedge Funds: The Ultimate Absentee Landlords," *The American Prospect* (29 September 2015).
[527] Siegel, "A New Exodus."

be more than a shame if the city, after a half-century, finally succeeded in stemming white flight, only to see black flight persist."[528] Former residents of the city's high-rises may not be so quick to ignore these coinciding facts. "'You kidding?!" Charles Dennings exclaimed when asked why he thought the Flag Houses were torn down, "they were getting us out of this city...Who's 'us'? Who do you think? The people who look like me."[529]

The combined "hopelessness" of the high-rises and the "hopefulness" of housing within the private market (even if subsidized), pushed many people out of the places like the Lexington Terrace and the George Murphy Homes in Baltimore well before a HOPE VI program would demolish them. "There was a stigma," associated with life in public housing, one resident noted; "people didn't want to be a part of it." And while life as a Section 8 tenant could be equally stigmatizing, as well as isolating, many still pursued the possibility. At the time of HUD's transformation, as it endeavored to push increasingly more people into market rental housing arrangements and as it ultimately fixed its sights on commodifying vast public residential spaces, many residents were already leaving the high-rises. Significant numbers of former high-rise residents had moved out of housing and had subjected themselves and their families to market conditions, in so doing, producing a significant amount of knowledge about these processes. And while HUD exhausted significant resources studying the viability of privatizing public housing, little to none of that went into considering the experiences of former public housing residents

[528] Eric Siegel, "White Flight Shows a Sign of Declining," *Baltimore Sun* (October 16, 2003).
[529] Charles Dennings and Cordelia Dennings. (Argyle Rd.) Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

navigating private market conditions.

Oral histories with those who pushed themselves into the private rental market complicate the idealized vision of housing planners of resident agency, efficient markets, and the freedom that may accrue to those unencumbered by housing bureaucracy. Their stories suggest that the processes that marginalize and dispossess families in public housing inhere in market housing as well. In fact, removing the nominally accountable public actor – such as a housing authority – in many cases exacerbates conditions of isolation and powerlessness. The Housing Authority has framed voucher programs and the demolition of "highly distressed" housing developments in terms of "mobility" and "agency." But have these programs in fact increased residents like Stanton's ability to "escape"?

These oral histories speak to the limitations of "agency" and "mobility" as a force equipped to counter the power of urban capitalism.

> I guess I want to say we hated the row house as much as we hated the project. For different reasons. It never seemed like there was someone to call when things got bad (like the rats). And it became hard to leave...Not to mention, there weren't that many places we could go. We already had to move further from school, the grocery store, our friends, work and stuff, by moving to the row house. Now all we could do was move again.[530]

Like many of the research participants in this study, Stanton's reflections elucidate much about how people lived the changes dreamed up in policy meetings and the offices of tenured faculty. Vouchers may have increased Stanton's agency, but that increased agency – their increased mobility – did not translate to better housing

[530] Stanton interview, 10/19/12.

conditions. David Harvey observes that capital never solves crises, it simply "moves them around in space."[531] Stanton and her family embody that unreconciled crisis. Increased mobility did not produce increased leverage relative to those who collect the rent. More to the point, her experience makes clear that there is a sharp distinction between increased mobility and increased *power.* The increase in emphasis on mobility does not necessarily address the way uneven power relations dictated housing options for the poor. This would be the key failure of the reform of HUD, if we were to believe that HUD had as its principal objective providing quality housing for impoverished residents of places like West Baltimore.

Conclusion

While the transformation of HUD was nominally designed to emphasize "local agency," the actually existing effects of this federal regulatory withdrawal was (and remains) complicated by the fact that increased agency is not tantamount to increased power. As this archive of oral histories suggests, with each abdication, the state actually contributed to the increased vulnerability of low-income housing residents at the hands of racial capital. No doubt federal planning has historically been both overtly and covertly racist and punitive toward public housing residents, in general, and is evident in the conditions that West Baltimore residents have to navigate. And no doubt, among the many extrinsic forces acting on vulnerable

[531] This is an aphorism is common to many of Harvey's public discussions. It is a simplified encapsulation of what he has termed the "spatial fix," which asserts that the "interior dilemmas of capitalism can be resolved through geographical expansion or restructuring." For this, see p. 141 of "The Geopolitics of Capitalism," in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, Derek Gregory and John Urry, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 1985), 128-163.

populations receiving housing aid in Baltimore, the federal government and its regulatory apparatus remains part of the story. In that light, moving “cumbersome” federal influence “out of the way” of local residents certainly may look as if it has liberatory potential. However, campaigns designed to limit “government” to the exclusion of other factors ignores the ways that private forces shape the housing process. Stanton's experience suggests that as the state withdraws resources, individual vulnerability at the hands of racial capitalism increases.

An “affirmative obligation” that invisibilizes the market, and focuses primarily on mobility, while trading away public resources like federally built and maintained housing, mistakes (or ignores) cause for consequence. In doing so, it perpetuates the “upward” distribution of resources once held in common. Explicating these details helps to develop an understanding of how well-meaning housing reform can be instrumentalized by those forces committed to privatization and those processes committed to the upward redistribution of resources. “Affirmative” intervention in practice has meant a reduction rather than an increase in the number of public housing units available to low income black residents.

The more pernicious consequence of this decades-long legal refashioning of fair housing has been the work it has done to narrow the field of possible correctives. To shift focus from segregative cause or intent to the fact of racial segregation's existence, irrespective of cause or intent, allows for engagement with the effects of racial capitalism to stand in for engagement with the structure itself. This furthers the project (however inadvertent it may be) of eliding residents' material critique and articulates with a cultural politics that is happy to ignore such things as poverty and

racial capitalism. This elevation of consequence to cause conditions a set of proposed / imagined / pursued correctives that evade discussions of poverty as a structure. *Thompson v HUD* and the raft of legal decisions it was a part of nationwide successfully affirmed that "fair housing" was reducible to "integrated" housing. And that the fight to realize housing justice – and further, justice more broadly for the residents of public housing in all aspects of their lives – could be pursued through a campaign that began with the demolition of their existing housing arrangements. Mobility and the assumptions it put into practice signal a discursive and practical evasion of the structural in favor of a fixation on effect. It is within this context that it became moral to simply move people around in space, and in particular, moving select people from "poverty concentrations" and into those defined by "opportunity," rather than to address the underlying cause of housing residents' suffering. Mobility as a corrective imagines the problem as the presence of impoverished people in proximity to other impoverished people, rather than the system that produces poverty.

In the name of mobility, liberal reformers joined a growing tendency within urban governance that has increasingly worked to naturalize the market-centered approaches to housing production and to push government transfers for that housing through a network of private intermediate actors. Like their contemporaries who advocated for public housing demolition, these reformers, wittingly or not, laundered a materialist goal of privatization through a nominally progressive discourse – in this case the historical struggle for fair housing. Mobility as the antidote to concentration ignores the long history of market induced dislocations that have come to define

much of the housing experiences of low-income black residents being pushed into and out of cities.

Chapter 6: Heritage Crossing and Blackness as Property

> Dominant geographic patterns can often undermine complex interhuman geographies by normalizing spatial hierarchies and enacting strict spatial rules and regulations. More than this, 'normal' places and spaces – of comfort, wealth, peace, safety – are hopefully seductive: they allude to the idea that finding and living the 'normal' within existing spatial hierarchies is a geographic achievement, a fulfilling geographic story. 'Normal' and seductive geographies contribute to the ways in which geography appears to be fixed and draw us to this fixity as though it is natural – therefore 'naturally' excluding difference from the normal.[532]

> The fundamental problem...is that of the family structure. The evidence – not final, but powerfully persuasive – is that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling. *A middle-class group has managed to save itself*, but for the vast numbers of the unskilled, poorly educated working class the fabric of social relationships has all but disintegrated.[533]

Introduction: The Constructions and Seductions of Normal

In the previous chapter, I discussed how social understandings of what is "functional" and "stable," particularly as those concepts are applied to residential space, are often grounded in a sexual politics that links these notions with the larger national project of defining and preserving institutions like home and family. In the case of public housing, the narrative that emerged around the Murphy Homes – issuing from planners, the media, and the political class, as well as some corners of resident life itself – asserted that the development's internal culture was

[532]Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women And The Cartographies Of Struggle* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2006), 145.
[533] United States Department of Labor Office of Policy Planning and Research, *The Negro Family*, prefatory note, np, emphasis mine.

dysfunctional. The narrative of dysfunction worked to disestablish any semblance of "fit(ness) for family life" both popularly and among policy makers. This coupled with their status as public housing residents, rather than property owners, conditioned the state's intervention. As discussed, the specific form that intervention took was the demolition of the buildings, dispossession of the vast majority of its residents, and the large-scale privatization of much of the land controlled by HUD. Here, then, this dispossession was made coherent through the cultural politics that allowed claims of dysfunction to occlude decades of material underdevelopment, often, in spite of the calls of many who lived in those spaces to address precisely that uneven material development.

Argument

In this chapter, I focus on how that system then re-built the space that once housed the Murphy Homes, and how similar dynamics unfold in the reconstituted residential community(/ies). This chapter is interested in how the state, in concert with private "community development" firms, built and organized this new space. An ensemble of private actors was brought together by the housing authority with the intention of cultivating a new "culture of homeownership" within a space historically associated with state aid. They did this by linking federal building grants with a financing scheme that would enable low-income residents to qualify for home loans, focusing on first-time home buyers. All of this was framed by a discourse that linked access to these resources with idealized notions of home, family, and stability. This was expressed by a building agenda that prioritized design, projected a suburban

aesthetic, and established a set of social and governing institutions that encouraged residential involvement and interaction among homeowners and between homeowners and their public housing neighbors.

The precarious access to home value that these new homeowners experienced, of course, came to engender a need among them to "protect" their investment. This chapter is interested in how the notions of "home" and "stable neighborhoods" are understood as linked to decades of uneven development and the promise of redress that was not met by the failing and racialized welfare state. Most importantly, this chapter is interested in how these dynamics, unfolding from shifting access to property value, condition new forms of sociality within this historically low-income, majority black residential space. How do the cultural and sexual politics that informed the demolition of the high-rises build the neighborhoods that emerge in their place? Where earlier chapters focused on how the state and capital mobilized these ideas in order to push an agenda of demolition, here I want to look at how these ideas shape new development, buildings, and social relations alike.

These processes, I argue, demonstrate how the state and the market's varied investments in sexuality – by which I mean, investments in the normative reproduction of the citizen and the resident, expressed both at the structural level, as well as the interpersonal level, among neighbors – abet a history of accumulation and anti-blackness, and contribute to these regimes' reproduction through history, in this case on the same plot of west Baltimore land, twenty years apart.

This chapter is organized as follows: First, a discussion of how the HOPE VI project works to link aesthetic presentation of suburban normativity to the ideas of

stability and home. Next, an effort to place the specific site studied here – the Heritage Crossing neighborhood – into its larger policy context. Finally, the second half of this chapter is centered on interviews with Heritage Crossing residents.

"It's Nice Here, Huh?"

Late in the series' run, the acclaimed HBO drama *The Wire* featured a scene staged in what looked to be a typical Baltimore County suburb. Tidy, tree-lined, winding roads, porch lights, and – rare for this particular series – a seeming quiet, converged on screen to signal to the viewer a spatial and psychic distance from inner-city Baltimore. This was a residential space far removed from the trenches of the West Baltimore drug trade that the show dramatized.

By way of introducing this chapter, I want to describe this scene in some detail. Three of the show's principal younger characters sit in a parked car, their faces and bodies registering the disconnect they feel from the manufactured tranquility of this neighborhood. Two teenagers Michael and Duquan (known as "Dukie" through much of the show) sit in the front seat, attention fixed to their surroundings. "I always thought you were bullshittin' about having an aunt out here," Dukie says. "It's nice here...huh?" Michael responds, his flat tone registering ambivalence more than pride. As they stare out the window, the audience is meant to receive this "niceness" as alien to the three figures. They sit, some distance removed from their usual surroundings, a distance that is supposed to be both geographic and cultural.[534]

[534] *The Wire*, "Late Editions," Episode 9, Season 5. Written by David Simon and George Pelecanos. HBO, March 2, 2008.

By placing the characters within this particular cultural landscape, the scene functions, in part, as commentary on the notions of safety and disorder that so pervade discussions of urban/suburban life in and around Baltimore. The two older characters have become ensnared by the violent and legal consequences of the West Baltimore drug trade. The youngest character, known in the series only as "Bug," Michael's younger, half-brother, still in the early years of elementary school, has not. Through his proximity to drug-related crime and violence, and his status as the child of a drug addicted and sexually promiscuous mother, he is presented within the narrative of the show as a vulnerable figure, on whose behalf Michael, Dukie, and the audience feel compelled to intervene. In that spirit, they sit in the car, preparing to move him "out here," to what is passing as the suburbs, to join what is presented as the stable home life of his middle class suburban aunt. Without getting too far into a commentary on the limitations of *The Wire* as a cultural text, it is clear that what is designed to be the pay-off of this scene – the rescuing of Bug from imminent violence and delivering him to safety – plays on popular assumptions about the excesses of racial and sexual non-normativity of West Baltimore life, and the notions of stability and safety that attach themselves to economically and sexually normative suburban space. As Bug leaves the car to meet his waiting aunt, Dukie tries to offset his sadness with the promise that his new family will provide for him a life he could never realize within his current circumstances, a life that will likely come with his "own room," "plasma TVs," and the like, further linking the idea of middle class stability to familial normativity.

Crucially, what serves as the setting for this scene of suburban life is in fact

not a neighborhood “out” in Baltimore County, but rather the space where the Murphy Homes once stood, home to the current day Heritage Crossing development. As this choice by the show's producers demonstrates, the built landscape of Heritage Crossing, in spite of its placement along a corridor that divides downtown Baltimore from the city's west side, nevertheless invites those interacting with it to imagine themselves far outside the city. *The Wire* in its choice of staging, recognizes within the HOPE VI program one of its primary aspirations, that it looks to the outside observer like a well bounded, “safe,” suburban neighborhood. The show, like the HOPE VI program itself, posits a cultural understanding of urban poverty. In their own ways, they each suggest that the antidote to the violability issuing from urban under-development is an aestheticized presentation of stability, which is necessary in order to produce the normative space that is “home,” and the normative relation that is “family.”

I recall this scene from HBO's *The Wire* here because it is illustrative of what McKittrick called the “seduction of normal,” a promise that I argue animates much of the HOPE VI project. What was seductive about these spaces -- alien and unsettling as they may have been – was not simply the space's “nice”-ness, nor was it simply the access to normativity it promised; what is seductive I will argue is what that normativity linked to materially. Which is to say, the seduction of normal, for both the fictionalized characters described above, as well as actual resident participants discussed below, represents a promise to transcend poverty.

Of course, as interviews with HOPE VI homeowners will make clear, these material rewards have been historically elusive to black homeowners. A recent

Brookings study, for example, estimates that neighborhoods where black residents exceed 50% of the population are subject to deep property "devaluations" that push housing prices on average twenty-three percent lower than those neighborhoods that are majority white.[535] The social safety net has historically been (and continues to be) only tenuously available to black residents living in poverty. The demolition of public housing high-rises and the dispossession of those who relied on them for housing remains an example of this tenuous availability. And Heritage Crossing, built in its stead, on land it once occupied, markets its private homes with an urgency that connects homeownership with the promise to redress what the welfare state did not provide. Within a spatial context that mimics a suburban ideal, which has been justified, planned, and marketed as an antidote to failed (or more accurately, politically abandoned) state-mediated redistribution efforts, private home-owning residents work to set themselves apart from public housing residents because, in part, they fear that the specter of public housing threatens their already tenuous hold on property value.

If, rather than the west-facing camera fixed on the newly built facades of Edmonson Avenue, the viewer were introduced to this neighborhood by a camera that panned east, it would reveal the immediately adjacent swaths of abandoned and underdeveloped, century-old row houses. The show's staging conceals what is a material fact about this space, that it is encircled by the built markers of a "geography of containment and domination" that has historically structured the residential life of

[535] Andre Perry, Jonathan Rothwell, and David Harshbarger, "The Devaluation of Assets in Black Neighborhoods: The Case of Residential Property," (Washington DC: Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, November, 2018), 10-18.

impoverished black residents in West Baltimore.

It speaks to the mimetic capacities of New Urbanist design that this working- and lower-middle class space, dotted with public housing units, so easily passes for a firmly middle-class suburban neighborhood within the narrative described above. In many ways, this intersection typifies the changes urban policy has made to the built and cultural landscape of the contemporary city. As the city withdraws from the project of building housing for the poor, and enacts new policies that take what has been referred to as an "assets-based" approach to managing urban poverty, marked by the liberalization of access to a range of new forms of debt, including the subsidized mortgages of the HOPE VI program, new pressures that shape urban subjectivity are emerging.[536] The promise of low-income home-ownership that HOPE VI has brought to places like West Baltimore purports to offer the poor access to value through home equity. Simultaneously, HOPE VI homeownership enlists these new homeowners in the project of reshaping residential spaces, both economically and socially.

Increased access to homeownership by way of the HOPE VI program in Baltimore signals that the bounds of "market citizenship" are broadening in a space that had historically been situated outside the formal market. On the one hand, this is creating more space for difference to fold into capitalist practices in new and

[536]As noted in Chapter 1, there is reason to be skeptical of asset-based approaches to poverty alleviation. In general, these approaches attempt to address the negative effects of racial capitalism by relying on the same market forces that have historically created the spaces of racialized poverty that these policies hope to transform. Managing this contradiction has brought about a highly technocratic form of urban governance that has eschewed federal building projects in favor of means-testing, "empowerment zones," Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), and liberalized access to private debt for the poor. Michael B. Katz, in *Why Don't American Cities Burn?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), offers a representative survey of this policy landscape, especially 131-150. HOPE VI should be understood as of a piece with the larger asset-based reorientation of aid allocation. See also Chapter 1, note 17 of this dissertation.

historically unique ways, at the precise historical moment when the meanings of blackness are shifting. If building "stable neighborhoods" is, as promised by HOPE VI marketing materials, a viable strategy to combat resource asymmetries, oral histories with residents living within this space consider how open this process is within an historically racist context of West Baltimore housing politics.

How available is the strategy of building "nice" space, and specifically "stable neighborhoods," to those ascriptively positioned as "black," once we consider the kinds of disruptive capacities blackness has in relation to the kinds of normative categories around which notions of nice and neighborhood cohere? As ill-defined and fraught as it may be as a palliative against urban poverty, "building stable neighborhoods" is nevertheless the principal charge that animates the discourse and practice of federal interventions such as HOPE VI or the emergent Choice Neighborhoods program.[537] The collective social action of African Americans living at Baltimore's spatial and economic margins – action that has historically animated oppositional political practice and counter-hegemonic struggle during periods of economic crisis – is increasingly being called upon to take these measures. Yet, at the same time, the state persists in the maintenance of firm and quite material black/non-black markers of difference that constitute blackness in real, bodily, material ways.

Therefore, this study understands the intersection of Brune and Edmonson streets – the intersection that stood in for Michael, Dukie, and Bug's suburban escape, but is in fact a space in Baltimore where its newly built, privately owned low- and

[537] "HOPE VI: Building Communities Transforming Lives," (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999), https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/hope.pdf.

moderate-income housing butts up against one part of the city's vast and extensive vacant home supply – to be representative of something historically unique, if increasingly familiar, within contemporary cities. Shifting and disarticulating relations to public space, growing emphasis on privately held real value (i.e. material value deriving from private control of real estate) as a palliative to urban poverty – and at once something else quite different. The practice of folding marginalized black populations of West Baltimore into the broader civil society is profoundly troubled by the ideological commitment of the state and the socius to maintain what McKittrick calls "geographies of domination," and a broader social commitment to regimes of racialized disparity that cohere around ideas and practices of black containment, accumulation, and subjection.[538] These ideas and practices have historically kept those racialized black from settling comfortably into such ideal constructs as "neighborhood." The competing tendencies that emerge then at this intersection – between the pursuit of "stable neighborhood" and antiblack racism – produce profound tensions that are pregnant with a range of social possibilities.

Conditioning Heritage Crossing: Public Housing Reform and HOPE VI in Baltimore

As discussed in the previous chapter, Baltimore's push to "reform" public housing began independently of the National Commission on Severely Distressed

[538] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xii.

Public Housing, with the ACLU's *Thompson v. HUD* case. The suit's intent was to discontinue policies that it argued were segregationist in form. As it turned out, this effort articulated well with the changing priorities among policy makers. By the early 1990s, HUD was already shifting funding obligations away from building or even maintaining its existing permanent structures.[539] These shifting priorities were responsible for bringing tens of millions of dollars into the city earmarked for housing reform,[540] while the ACLU's vision of reform – demolition that would "deconcentrate" residents, and vouchers that would offset the loss of housing units in the re-built spaces – was adopted by those planning the HOPE VI redevelopment.[541]

This funding facilitated the Housing Authority of Baltimore City's (HABC) redevelopment of five key public housing sites in Baltimore. While each was redeveloped differently, the general approach remained similar: existing public housing was to be demolished and physical spaces were to be redesigned.[542] New ideas about social spaces and how to use them were introduced, and an effort was made to attract "families" with financial incentives for new homeowners.[543] As HUD asserted, because the older high-rise model isolated public housing residents, what was needed was a new approach that "demanded including housing for moderate-income families and homebuyers."[544] Again, the objective was to build housing

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[539] Tom Redburn, "A Second Chance Seen Likely on Lost Aid: Grant for Housing Worth $50 Million," *New York Times*, (December 11, 1993), 27.
[540] Peter Kilborn, "Baltimore's Poor Brace for Round 2," *New York Times*, (May 17, 1997), 8.
[541] James Bock, Larry Carson, and Scott Wilson, "City to Get $300 Million for Housing; Federal Funds Set to Replace High-rises, Relocate Poor Families," *Baltimore Sun*, (April 8, 1996), 1A.
[542] Roger Lewis, "Changes Improve HUD Program to Spruce up Public Housing," *Washington Post*, (May 15, 1999), G14.
[543] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HOPE VI: Building Community Transforming Lives," (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).
[544] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HOPE VI: Building Community Transforming Lives," 5.

developments that mixed public housing units into larger neighborhoods of market rate rental and privately owned homes. This imagined a resident population that reflected a wider range of incomes than either traditional public housing or that of lower middle class market rate homes.[545] The five Baltimore sites demolished (and rebuilt) via the HOPE VI program were Lafayette Courts (rebuilt as Pleasant View Gardens), Lexington Terrace (rebuilt as The Townes at the Terraces), the Broadway Homes (rebuilt as Broadway Overlook), Flag House Courts (rebuilt as Albemarle Square), and the George Murphy Homes (rebuilt as Heritage Crossing).

Lafayette Courts was the first to be targeted. In 1994, HABC received $31 million in federal HOPE VI funds.[546] The objective was to transform the public housing site into a mixed-income community. Pleasant View Gardens, completed in 1994, is located east of downtown, bordered by Fayette Street to the south. The development has 311 public rental units and 27 market rate homes, as well as a day care center, a recreation center, and outdoor recreational spaces. Hopkins researchers studying quantitative metrics that purport to measure "opportunity" found that unemployment rates were lower among Pleasant View Gardens residents than they were among those they replaced from Lafayette Courts.[547] Likewise, the "level of education" for residents increased since the completion of the HOPE VI development.[548]

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[545] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HOPE VI: Building Community Transforming Lives."
[546] Estella Alexander, "How Lafayette Courts Began and Ended," *Afro-American Red Star*, (August 19, 1995), A1.
[547] "Neighborhood Effects of HOPE VI: Evidence from Baltimore," (2003), https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/885.
[548] "Neighborhood Effects of HOPE VI: Evidence from Baltimore."

Lexington Terrace was the next development to be demolished.[549] In 1995 Baltimore was awarded $22.7 million "in federal funds for the second phase of their plan to solve the problems of crime-plagued public housing developments by demolishing the structures."[550] Completed in 2001, the Townes at the Terraces mixed 250 public rental units with 41 market- rate rentals and 100 privately owned homes.[551] While HUD continued to cite greater access to employment as a prevailing rationale for housing demolition, it is interesting to note how little that seems to have changed in this West Baltimore neighborhood.[552] In spite of the significant material transformation the unemployment rate among residents of Townes at the Terraces was 8% in 2010.[553] A socioeconomic profile of Lexington Terrace, conducted in the 1970s as part of an environmental impact study of the area during the expansion of Interstate 395, noted that unemployment in the development was 8.1% among men and 8.5% among women in 1970.[554]

East Baltimore's Broadway Homes was demolished in 1997. Once a "good, clean, respectful," block of public housing units built around a 22-story high-rise, the development contained 429 public housing units.[555] While there was some political

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[549] Marilyn McCraven, "Lexington Terrace will Fall Today: Controlled Explosions Will Destroy City's High-rise Project," *Baltimore Sun*, (July 27, 1996), 1A.
[550] "Baltimore to Demolish More Public Housing," *Washington Post*, (September 30, 1995), F3.
[551] Nina Castells, "HOPE VI Neighborhood Spillover Effects in Baltimore," *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, Vol.12, No. 1, (2010), 70.
[552] In "HOPE VI: Building Community Transforming Lives," for example, HUD argues that HOPE VI developments are preferable to public housing, "because they can offer the attributes that most households seek – quality housing, safe streets, good schools, and proximity to shopping and employment," 5.
[553] Castells, "HOPE VI Neighborhood Spillover Effects in Baltimore," 75, Exhibit 6.
[554] US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration Interstate Division for Baltimore City, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for City Boulevard Ring in Baltimore City," (1976), I-39. Digital copy: https://books.google.com/books?id=w6E1AQAAMAAJ&pg=PP9#v=onepage&q&f=false
[555] 28 year Broadway Homes resident Willie Ayers, quoted in Kurt Streeter, "Finale on Broadway Implosion," *Baltimore Sun*, (August 17, 2000), 1B.

will to renovate the buildings, principally among Republican candidate for Mayor and developer, David F. Tufaro, the more established political actors within the city, in concert with the Broadway Resident Council, aligned to successfully to resist the attempt.[556] Longtime Baltimore housing and AIDS activist and Broadway Resident Council president, Harry Karas, argued that rehabilitation of the development was both less cost effective and less preferable for residents.[557] Because this argument aligned with then Housing Commissioner Daniel P. Henson's own argument, Tufaro accused the housing authority of, effectively, using resident voices to launder the positions of policy makers and their preferred developers. The residents council, Tufaro asserted, "have, in a sense, been bought [by] the system."[558] Karas, in turn, asserted that the Republican candidate had only cynical intentions in focusing on public housing, accusing him of "using my community as a political football,"[559] To be clear, Tufaro was not an advocate of expanding public housing or for greater control over public resources. Rather this exchange demonstrates just how thoroughly the prerogatives of the market had pervaded the discourse. Where the Resident Council and the Housing Commissioner advanced the position that public-private partnerships can most efficiently rebuild the underdeveloped spaces of racialized poverty in Baltimore, Tufaro's counter position was simply that the inefficiency of these demolition and rebuilding campaigns should serve as grounds for greater privatization. "If the housing authority is not up to the management responsibility,"

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[556] Gerard Shields, "Tufaro Heckled Over Housing Views: Ex-residents Critical as he Unveils Plan at Broadway Homes," *Baltimore Sun*, (October 1, 1999), 1A.
[557] M. Dion Thompson, "A Voice for the Poor of Public Housing," *Baltimore Sun*, (August 15, 2002), 1A.
[558] Quoted in Gerard Shields, "Tufaro Heckled Over Housing Views," 1A.
[559] Quoted in Gerard Shields, "Tufaro Heckled Over Housing Views," 1A.

Tufaro said, "then private managers should be hired to do the job."[560] The Karas and Henson position won out, and with $50 million, much of it from federal HOPE VI funds, HABC built the Broadway Overlook development.[561] Completed in 2005, the site is located in the East Baltimore Washington Hill neighborhood. The development includes 89 public housing units, 77 market-rate rental and privately owned units, and a community center.

Unlike virtually all of the other public housing developments targeted for demolition through the HOPE VI program in Baltimore, the Flag House Courts development was surrounded by white residential spaces that were marked by their Euro-ethnic identities. Demolition of the primarily black public housing development, and the re-routing of streets through that space in order to connect Jewish neighborhoods with those of Little Italy, heralded a "rebirth of Corn Beef Row" according to a jubilant local media.[562]

> I started getting optimistic…when I saw that street cut through. It tied us to Little Italy, making it a continuum, a world you could walk around…the city woke up and saw how people were living here. It was bad, not how it's supposed to be. Now, it's a different ballgame, all good stuff. The people down here now are very nice. They want to live down here.[563]

The public housing looked, "bombed-out. Empty streets, rubble."[564] Public housing demolition produced something "nice, clean, delightful."[565] "It was terrible before," one local realtor stated, noting that he has "lived long enough to see the transition."[566]

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[560] Quoted in Gerard Shields, "Tufaro Heckled Over Housing Views," 1A.
[561] Joe Nawrozki, "Firm Draws Tenant Anger," *Baltimore Sun* (October 12, 2003), 1B.
[562] Alan H. Feiler and Deborah R. Weiner, "A Time to Relish," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Vol. 292, Iss. 8, (October 20, 2006), 50-55.
[563] Quoted in Feiler and Weiner, "A Time to Relish," 54.
[564] Feiler and Weiner, "A Time to Relish," 53.
[565] Feiler and Weiner, "A Time to Relish," 53.
[566] Feiler and Weiner, "A Time to Relish," 52.

The area's whiteness may explain how the post re-development narrative focused so strongly on the re-integration of this space. Certainly, the white residents' investment in the area's Euro-ethnic identity explains why this re-development was met with such excitement. HABC was awarded $21.5 million in HOPE VI grants to demolish the Flag House Courts and to construct Albemarle Square.[567] Located in southeast Baltimore, along a corridor of over-developed communities that includes the Inner Harbor, Harbor East, Little Italy, Butchers Hill, Upper Fells Point and Fells Point, the development situates 182 public housing units alongside 144 market-rate homes, with an additional 10 rent-to-own homes available to the public housing residents. Given the highly valued real estate along this corridor, it is no surprise that the market-rate housing units were on offer for "the high $300,000s," well exceeding the area's average home value and median sale price.[568]

In each instance, private contractors facilitated the demolition of these spaces and the rebuilding of their replacements. As the *Baltimore Sun* noted, demolition work in the 1990s became so lucrative for some contractors that "these firms now do little work in Baltimore that is not billed to taxpayers."[569]

Financing Heritage Crossing

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[567] "Flag House Courts to be Razed," *Afro-American Red Star* (September 11, 1998), A1.
[568] Lorraine Mirabella, "Major Builder Offers Garage Townhouses Near Little Italy," *Baltimore Sun* (April 3, 2005), 1L. The median home value in Maryland in 2000 was $146,000, according to the United States Census Bureau's Census of Housing, https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/values.html. As recently as 2016 the median home sale price in Baltimore city was $140,100, according to HUD's "Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis: Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, Maryland," (April 1, 2016), 10, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/BaltimoreMD-comp-16.pdf.
[569] John B. O'Donnell and Jim Haner, "For Contractors, Riches from Ruin," *Baltimore Sun* (April 7, 1997), 1A.

In June of 2002, among "mountains of dirt" and skeletal wood townhome frames where the Murphy Homes high-rises once stood, the marketers for Heritage Crossing opened the doors to their first model home, inviting prospective homeowners to take a tour.[570] Scheduled to coincide with "National Homeownership Month," the tours, and the larger marketing of the space, worked to link HOPE VI redevelopment with an idea of newly expanding black access to private home ownership.[571] Its opening drew many high profile residents out, with many local politicians who were present for the Murphy Homes demolition greeting the first model home as a fulfillment of their previous promises. With its suburban aesthetics – single family homes with front porches along winding streets – Representative Elijah Cummings, for example, celebrated the new housing for "bringing a little county life to the city."[572]

The total cost of demolishing the Murphy Homes and building this new neighborhood in its place was something on the order of $60 million.[573] Among the public funds allocated to this project, $31 million came from the federal government through HOPE VI, alongside a $4 million federal grant through the HOME Investment Partnership Program, a $6 million state grant through the Partnership Rental Home Program, and $32,000 of HABC capital funds.[574] The City of Baltimore

[570] M. Dion Thompson, "New Homes Bloom in Old Neighborhood," *Baltimore Sun* (June 18, 2002), 3B.
[571] Nusgart, "Building on Opportunities," *Baltimore Sun* (June 16, 2002), 1L.
[572] Thompson, "New Homes Bloom in Old Neighborhood," *Baltimore Sun* (June 18, 2002), 3B.
[573] Gady Epstein, "City OKs Funds for Housing Proposal," *Baltimore Sun* (January 11, 2001), 3B; Robert Nusgart, "Building on Opportunities," *Baltimore Sun* (June 16, 2002), 1L.
[574] Christian L. Pulley, *Heritage Crossing: A New Look for Public Housing* (M.A. Thesis, Morgan State University, 2006), Figure 4.12, "Heritage Crossing Development Chart," 77.

also made its own $7 million commitment to the project.[575] These were bundled together with money from Fannie Mae, Legg Mason, and other private investors.[576]

The lion's share of the money allocated for development went to three firms. The first was Enterprise Homes Inc., the for-profit arm of the Enterprise Foundation, a builder of low- and moderate-income homes and a self-styled "social investment" firm.[577] Functioning as an "intermediary" in this arrangement, Enterprise worked to acquire resources from investors and distribute the funds to local development projects.[578] By the time HOPE VI was remaking Baltimore's public housing, Enterprise had already developed or financed over 120,000 units of housing throughout the US.[579] This approach to privatized coordination of resources is framed by the foundation's marketing as necessary given the profound poverty in places like Baltimore made worse by a failing welfare state.[580]

The second recipient of public funds was A&R Development Corp. of Baltimore. They won the bid to do the actual development work needed to build Heritage Crossing.[581] Like Enterprise, they work to present an aesthetic of social responsibility that is linked to their work redeveloping once public housing spaces.[582]

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[575] Epstein, "City OKs Funds for Housing Proposal," *Baltimore Sun* (January 11, 2001), 3B.
[576] Christian L. Pulley, *Heritage Crossing: A New Look for Public Housing*, (M.A. Thesis, Morgan State University, 2006), Appendix A.13 "Heritage Crossing HOPE VI Development Matrix," 110-111.
[577] Thompson, "New Homes Bloom in Old Neighborhood," *Baltimore Sun* (June 18, 2002), 3B.
[578] Thomas Y. Loh & Robert Stroh, "Community Development Intermediary Systems in the United States: Origins, Evolution, and Functions," *Housing Policy Debate,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (1998).
[579] Michael J. Curran, "Beyond Tax Credits: The Enterprise Social Investment Corporation, a Profile of Investment in Community Development," *Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development Law,* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall 2001), 38-44.
[580] Harvey F. Barton III, "The Enterprise Foundation to Financing Housing for Poverty-Level Families," *Real Estate Finance* Vol. 2, No. 3, (1987).
[581] Thompson, "New Homes Bloom in Old Neighborhood," *Baltimore Sun* (June 18, 2002), 3B.
[582] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 205: Excerpts from Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive,

For example, at Lafayette Courts they coached residents on starting their own businesses. Likewise, at Heritage crossing, they worked to secure at least "100 job commitments from ten local employers for public housing residents."[583]

The third was Harkins Builders Inc. of Silver Spring, which functioned as the general contractor.[584] On the 15.5-acre parcel of once public land, these firms built 75 public housing units alongside 140 market-rate townhomes.[585] The 75 public housing units replaced the 781 units that were once housed in the Murphy Homes.[586] While the market rate homes were to sell for between $80,000 to $130,000, they cost the public closer to $232,000 per unit.[587] This pushed the housing authority and the city to make up "a lot of money," as Comptroller Joan M. Pratt put it.[588]

More Than Bricks and Mortar

Each HOPE VI community developed in Baltimore differs in physical design, mix of residents, and housing options. In early grant proposals, the housing authority's vision for the space began to take shape.[589] Submitted to HUD by the Housing Authority, the "Revitalization Grant Proposal" for the neighborhood

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University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.
[583] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 7.
[584] Thompson, "New Homes Bloom in Old Neighborhood," *Baltimore Sun* (June 18, 2002), 3B.
[585] Robert Nusgart, "Building on Opportunities," *Baltimore Sun* (June 16, 2002), 1L.
[586] Nina Castells, "HOPE VI Spillover Neighborhood Effects in Baltimore," *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development), 71.
[587] Gerard Shields, "Vote on Murphy Homes Project Delayed, Comptroller Questions Redevelopment Costs," *Baltimore Sun* (January 4, 2001), 4B.
[588] Quoted in Shields, "Vote on Murphy Homes Project Delayed," 4B.
[589] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997); *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 205: Excerpts from Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

highlighted the area's proximity to the Central Business District, and argued that a town-home style design, with a concentration of private homes, would bring an "income mix" into the area.[590] This shaped the decision to disproportionately favor private home building over public unit building. By design, public housing units are not clustered in one section of the development, nor are they outwardly marked as differing from the privately owned homes (though, there is no secret among residents which houses are privately owned and which are public housing).[591] Instead the planning process stressed an intermingling of the two types of homes throughout the development.

The neighborhood's location as an intermediate space between both highly underdeveloped spaces of West Baltimore and the more over-resourced areas of the city was also cited as a strength of the area in HABC's funding proposals. Located "within two miles of Baltimore's downtown business district," the space also derived currency because it abuts spaces of vigorous public-private investment activity, including the Sandtown-Winchester Homeownership Zone and the West Baltimore

[590]Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 45. Regarding Heritage Crossing's centrality to the local business district: It is located close to the commercial centers of Baltimore's downtown, near the intersection of US 40 and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, two miles west of Baltimore's central business district (CBD) at the southeastern edge of West Baltimore. This space is accessible to some of the city's larger employers, such as the University of Maryland Medical Center, Baltimore, VA Medical Center, University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), State Center, Bon Secours Hospital, Maryland General Hospital, University of Baltimore, and Lexington Market, and is linked to the larger city by way of six bus lines—routes 7, 15, 21, 23, 40, and 150—as well as both a light rail and subway station that are each under a mile from the neighborhood.

[591] Discussions with residents make clear that there are a number of subtle indicators that signal to any resident paying attention which units are privately owned and which are public. These "tells" include the state of the window dressings – cracked and broken blinds, for example, clearly communicated that the unit was public. Likewise, painted doors signaled that the home was private, where white doors, whose matte paint retained the discoloration of use indicated public unit.

Empowerment Zone.[592] Linking these spaces both in "aesthetic and socioeconomic" terms was central to HABC's vision for "West Baltimore's overall revival."[593]

The densely populated public housing that defined the Murphy Homes, they argued, would dissuade or slow this public-private investment in the area. HABC's vision for a townhome style neighborhood sought to accelerate redevelopment in the adjacent neighborhoods of Upton and Harlem Park.[594] These neighborhoods, situated to the west of Heritage Crossing, like much of West Baltimore, had suffered substantial population declines over the previous two decades, in part in response to a weakening economy for the working poor and a broader disinvestment in West Baltimore.[595] Where the presence of the Murphy Homes became pretext for disinvestment, the Revitalization Plan promised that Heritage Crossing – again, by virtue of its "nicer" facade, its lower population density, and its capacity to attract a resident base with a broader range of incomes, and most importantly, its privatizing functions – would go some way toward undoing these dynamics.[596] In this way, Heritage Crossing was treated not just as a housing intervention, but was also intended to function as an example, provoking other private investment. By demonstrating to other developers that it is feasible to privatize and redevelop public housing, HABC argued that it would spur further area development.

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[592] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 7.
[593] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 10.
[594] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 16.
[595] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 97.
[596] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), 97-102.

Toward that end, a lot of attention was paid to the idea of family and the imagined transformative powers of low-income people living in close proximity to middle-income people. "As the towers and ruined buildings fall," one journalist observed, planners imagined that socio-economic opportunities will rise.[597] This transformation, they argued, was more than just the privatization of homes. Likewise, for public housing residents, this transformation was framed as more than just access to nicer looking housing units located next-door to or near private housing -- "more than bricks and mortar" was the common assertion.[598] These transformations were "about using the building materials of education, employment, and supportive services to help people discover their options and make the most of them."[599]

The new homebuyers who moved into Heritage Crossing, like the public housing tenants they displaced, were predominantly black, predominantly women.[600] The homes were sold to first time homebuyers earning anywhere from 60-115% of the city's median household income (many making under $30,000).[601] In exchange for a commitment on the part of the homeowners to stay in their home for at least 10 years (until 2012), homebuyers received significant subsidies from the state to buy

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[597] Ben Austen, "The Towers Came Down, and With Them the Promise of Public Housing," *New York Times Magazine* (February 6, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/06/magazine/the-towers-came-down-and-with-them-the-promise-of-public-housing.html.

[598] Laura Tach, "More Than Bricks and Mortar: Neighborhood Frames, Social Processes, and the Mixed-Income Redevelopment of a Public Housing Project," *City and Community*, Vol. 8, Iss. 3 (September 2009), 269-299.

[599] Quoted in, Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development," (University of Maryland School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Spring 2008), https://www.arch.umd.edu/sites/arch.umd.edu/files/attachments/projects/Master%20Final%20Report.pdf, 7.

[600] Akchin, Choflet, Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development."

[601] Lorraine Mirabella, "Homes for a Better Life: Baltimore's Enterprise Homes Has Grown into the Fourth-Largest Builder of Affordable Houses in the Mid-Atlantic," *Baltimore Sun* (February 13, 2005).

these homes.[602] Most of the Heritage Crossing residents are lower-middle class black homeowners who view this subsidized housing – and the access to property value that homeownership promises -- as their ticket out of more blighted parts of West Baltimore.[603]

While the actual built environment of the Murphy Homes was demolished, planners would insist that some of the social infrastructure should be carried over to Heritage Crossing. The development of resident participation in the social management of public housing developments had been a priority of HUD's since the 1970s.[604] By the 1990s public housing authorities were required to "develop, implement, monitor and amend annually" consultation with residents.[605] Housing authorities "in partnership with residents" were expected to "develop and implement a process for resident participation that ensure[d] meaningful resident involvement."[606]

For HUD, this was what their "more than bricks and mortar" approach to low-

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[602] As one housing authority described, these HOPE VI mortgage subsidies are "a partnership—not a charity." The subsidy operated as a "silent" second mortgage. Home buyers secured their primary mortgage from private lenders and HOPE VI provided funds to cover the difference between the mortgage and the purchase price. The silent second mortgage plus a portion of capital gains would be paid upon sale of the house, after a 10-year period. No payments were made on mortgage until a sale of the property was made. See, Housing Authority of the City of Frederick, "HOPE VI Homeownership," http://hacfrederick.org/hope6/.

[603] This is summed up by resident Eduardo Wilkins, who characterized their home purchase in Heritage Crossing as "finally getting something back, after years of losing." This idea of subsidized mortgage access as a form of redistributive politics (in spite of it coming at the expense of the most vulnerable in the neighborhood) is a theme that runs its way through many discussions with homeowners explored below. Quote comes from Wilkins Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/14/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

[604] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," (Washington DC: HUD, 1992), 3-16.

[605] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing, 3-14.

[606] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing, 3-14.

income housing looked like in practice.[607] The dominant frame through HUD officials critiqued high-rises – that they suffered "severe distress" – was meant to emphasize more than the material limitations of those spaces. "The Commission" they noted, "recognizes that 'severely distressed' refers not only to the physical condition of public housing developments but also to the social environment within which its residents live.[608] In turn, HOPE VI projects stressed not just material transformations, but also resident-centered forms of social management that it would inherit from their high-rise predecessors. HUD's initial turn toward resident-centered management happened some decades earlier, as increased tensions between residents and housing authorities increased during the 60s and early 70s due to disinvestment.[609] HOPE VI simply adopted this existing mandate. Heritage Crossing then needed a community produced mode of self-governance. This need was met with the establishment of the Heritage Crossing Residents Association.[610] The planners and nonprofit developers of

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[607] This notion was captured in Laura M. Tach's case study of a Boston public housing project undergoing both material and social transformations, "More than Bricks and Mortar: Neighborhood Frames, Social Processes, and the Mixed-Income Redevelopment of a Public Housing Project," *City & Community*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2009), 269-299.

[608] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Working Papers on Identifying and Addressing Severely Distressed Public Housing," 4-1.

[609] The resident-centered approach to public housing management grew out of public housing residents' struggles to hold housing authorities accountable and to build alternative institutions to address those housing authorities' failures. An early example was the Tenant Advisory Board (TAB) in St. Louis. After establishing their own management group, TAB successfully secured funding from the Ford Foundation to offset the management expenses that the housing authority would not provide. Their organizing succeeded in turning the regular duties and larger commitments of building management over to residents, while financing this work through private philanthropy. While this model provides a greater amount of autonomy to residents over the day-to-day management of their residential spaces, one can also see how this approach would grow to be embraced by HUD and local housing authorities in an era of austerity, as it successfully offloaded the responsibility and expense of housing management to a pool of primarily low-income residents uncompensated for their labor whose work would be financed by private foundations. The approach to resident-centered management would carry over from high-rise housing to the new HOPE VI developments in Baltimore. For a detailed discussion of the St. Louis TAB, arguably the first of these tenant management corporations, see Daniel J. Monti, *Race, Development, and the New Company Town* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 46-47.

[610] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Murphy Homes/Emmerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI

various HOPE VI projects marketed the new neighborhoods as the product of "participatory planning and design process(es)."[611] The Executive Director of DC's housing authority echoed this sentiment, stating "(t)here is one common thread that runs throughout each of our sites, and it is the fundamental reason for our success in the District in HOPE VI, and that is the participatory approach to redevelopment. From the first days of our planning process, the housing authority places a premium on the input and real-time feedback of our residents and the community."[612] In this way, HOPE VI positioned itself as an institutional site through which to fight dispossession, moving this message, ironically, through a social infrastructure carried over from public housing communities that it had displaced.

Below I will explore how in spite of their involvement in decision-making bodies there remains an over-arching sense that residents had little in the way of decision-making power. When earlier studies asked if they believed they have influence over what happens in their community, a minority (43 percent) affirmed that they believed they did.[613] This figure was slightly higher among homeowners interviewed (44 percent) than among renters (40 percent).[614] Clearly, a large segment of those interviewed did not feel the ability to effect change. More interestingly, a

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Revitalization Grant Proposal," (July 18, 1997), *Thompson v. HUD* Plaintiffs Exhibit, Exhibit 205 Excerpts from Murphy Homes/Emerson Julian Gardens HOPE VI Revitalization Grant Proposal, American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Records, 3A, Baltimore Regional Studies Archive, University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library.

[611] Jonathan Rose Companies, "HOPE VI Redevelopment Plan: A Transit Village," http://www.rosecompanies.com/projects/hope-vi-redevelopment-plan-transit-village/.

[612] US House of Representatives, "Reauthorization of the HOPE VI Program: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity of the Committee on Financial Services US House of Representatives," One Hundred tenth Congress, First Session (July 21, 2007), 26.

[613] Akchin, Choflet, Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development," 26.

[614] Akchin, Choflet, Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development," 26.

majority of both public housing residents and homeowners believed that homeowners have more influence over what happens in the community than public housing residents.[615]

HUD and the housing authority marketed HOPE VI as an economic opportunity arising out of the ashes of a failed public housing project. HOPE VI represented "a big repudiation of modernist planning," as one Silver Spring, MD developer put it, while building HOPE VI townhomes.[616] Both nationally and in Baltimore planners have stressed that an improved living environment, decreased poverty concentrations, and stable, sustainable neighborhoods will produce opportunity for low income residents, stimulating economic "revitalization," albeit often times in residential spaces that have little history of vitality to draw from.[617]

At its five year anniversary, University of Maryland researchers interviewed residents and found that a large majority of them believed that Heritage Crossing was a "good place live."[618] Questions that assessed the community's mutual affinity for one another – whether or not they "got along;" whether or not they agreed that they and their neighbors "want the same things" – also revealed that the majority of those surveyed agreed with one another.[619]

Yet, many also pointed to significant gaps that remained between the vision for the community put forward by planners and their own lived reality. For example, the

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[615] Akchin, Choflet, Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development," 41.
[616] John Torti of Torti, Gallas & Partners, Silver Spring, MD, quoted in Charles Belfoure, "In Baltimore, Public Housing Comes Full Circle," *New York Times* (March 19, 2000), Section 11, p. 7.
[617] Arthur Naparstek, Susan Fries, G. Thomas Kingsley, et. al., "HOPE VI: Community Building Makes a Difference," (Washington DC: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000).
[618] Akchin, Choflet, Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5: Successes and Challenges in a HOPE VI Development."
[619] Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5."

positive spillover effects envisioned for the surrounding area – which marketed to residents that surrounding vacancy and divestment would be met with public and private investment – had not yet (and still has not) materialized.[620] Residents expressed frustration with the slow pace and/or lack of redevelopment in adjoining blocks dominated by vacant, boarded-up houses.[621] Most residents identified safety as a significant concern, and viewed the surrounding underdevelopment as a staging ground for unsafe conditions. Residents were particularly concerned with the extra-legal markets that are often situated within these underdeveloped spaces, particularly drug dealing and the violence attendant to it.[622] This was often expressed through close attention paid to people who congregated at the edge of the community, as well as perceived unwelcome pedestrian traffic passing through the community and sometimes through residents' back yards.[623] Further, while the neighborhood design has centered a small open space park, which is aesthetically in keeping with a suburban ideal, the space remains contentious within the community. For many it is viewed as a potential draw for people from "outside the neighborhood," and as such has become the object of some minor political struggles within the community.[624]

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[620] On the concept of "spillover" and housing policy that pursues its effects, see Edward Goetz, *New Deal in Ruins: Race, Economics, and Public Housing*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 157-164. For resident reflections on "spillover effects" see, Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5," 15-16.

[621] Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5," 16.

[622] Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5," 16-19.

[623] One of the conditions of the neighborhood covenant, drawn up by developers prior to the sale of any of the private homes, forbade the construction of fences. The opening of otherwise privately held spaces remains in keeping with the New Urbanist design approach employed by Enterprise Community Developers and HABC, while also articulating nicely with the state's own surveillance prerogatives. For residents, and, in particular, homeowners, this felt like an unjust expression of power and an invitation for people to cut through what they understood to be their private property, violating their privacy and threatening their safety.

[624] Tensions around the park were discussed with multiple residents throughout my research (see a further elaboration of the social antagonisms that involve differing orientations toward the park below). The concern that its presence would attract people from "outside the neighborhood" was voiced by

Lines of demarcation have formed within HCRA meetings, with some residents arguing to leave the park underused and spare, and others arguing to increase its utility for recreation, particularly for the neighborhood's children. Playground equipment has been suggested, as one possible way of opening up the space to younger residents. Much of this tension unfolds along generational lines, but also along the classed lines that separate the homeowners from the public housing renters.

Much of the internal decisions within the neighborhood are negotiated within the Heritage Crossing Residents Association (more about this later), and as of the five-year mark, many residents felt that the decision-making structure felt complex and ineffective in resolving concerns, particularly those expressed by the public housing residents. Further, they felt dissatisfied with housing authority's management of the development as well as a perceived lack of communication with the community. Participation in the Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA) in these early years was low, limiting the neighborhood's ability to cohere around a common set of projects.

Marketing Heritage Crossing, Integration as Redistribution

In assessing the literature through which the Heritage Crossing was marketed, it is important to recognize at least three imagined audiences that the project conjured. First, Heritage Crossing was marketed to the larger city, as a specific expression of the larger HOPE VI program that promised to radically re-shape the city's built and

Warren Hudson, (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 11/11/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD

cultural landscape. Second, Heritage Crossing was marketed to prospective home-buyers, as at once a private neighborhood of newly constructed homes and an opportunity to access all that private home-ownership has promised over the last half-century, in a newly constructed development, while also representing itself as a social program geared toward lower-income first time home buyers. Third, Heritage Crossing was marketed to public housing advocates and prospective public housing residents as a new approach to housing that, by virtue of each unit's integration into private neighborhoods and their proximity to private homes, offered new opportunities to public housing residents – an antidote to the perceived deforming effects of "concentrated poverty," a notion that has now taken tight hold within planning circles, who have elevated the notion to gospel status as the primary source of immiseration identified with earlier public housing arrangements. This new approach represented an "orderly retreat" from failed large-scale housing development, noted one former housing authority director.[625] In its new form, housing policy would "tackle some of those problems" produced by earlier policy approaches, and link housing transformation with social and economic ascendance.[626]

HOPE VI emerged in concert with the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, created in 1989 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).[627] Established in 1992, HOPE VI provides federal grants through HUD to local public housing authorities. HUD's stated objectives for the

[625] Melody Simmons, "High-Rises: 'Real Life' Public Housing," *The Baltimore Sun* (February 7, 1993).
[626] Simmons, "High-Rises: 'Real Life' Public Housing."
[627] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing (HOPE VI)," n.d., https://www.hud.gov/hudprograms/hopevi.

program are: 1) Improve the living environment for residents of severely distressed public housing through "the demolition, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, or replacement of obsolete projects";[628] 2) Provide housing that will avoid or decrease the "concentration" of very low-income residents; 3) "Revitalize" sites on which such public housing projects have been historically located and contribute to the improvement of the surrounding neighborhood; and, 4) Build sustainable communities.[629] Informed by the principles of New Urbanist design, HOPE VI aims to change the physical and social dynamics of public housing by reshaping its physical form, integrating public housing residents into mixed-income communities including market-rate rental and privately owned homes, and connecting these communities into the larger neighborhoods that surround them in an effort to revitalize distressed areas of a city. The program also purported to establish what it called "social supports" within the new developments, often promising training programs, health services, and childcare for public housing residents.[630] As residents note, this very often did not materialize.

The overarching idea that planners maintained was that transforming these spaces from public housing reserved exclusively for the impoverished into mixed income residential spaces would 1) decrease the social isolation of poor residents, and 2) by virtue of the first, begin a process that moves people out of poverty. Toward this

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[628] Xavier de Souza Briggs, *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America* (Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 177.
[629] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "About HOPE VI - Public and Indian Housing - HUD," n.d., https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/about.
[630] Carolina Katz Reid, Edward Liebow, and Gabrielle O'Malley, "Building Community during HOPE VI Redevelopment: Lessons from a Seattle Case Study," *Human Organization* Vol. 65, no. 2 (2006): 195.

second objective, planners emphasized the aesthetic improvements and a sense that proximity to those who could afford market rate rent or privately-owned homes held out some transformative power for the impoverished. In this way, the program reflects the influence that such social scientists as William Julius Wilson had on mid-1990s liberalism, arguing in places like his book *The Truly Disadvantaged* that the exodus of middle- and working-class families from inner city neighborhoods left the poor without aspirational figures and the social networks and links necessary to produce legitimate economic opportunities.[631]

On Social Isolation

In spite of the effort to engineer a form of social governance, many of the public housing residents in Heritage Crossing share a sense of social isolation when discussing their role within the larger community that has taken shape in this space. While, as noted above, the local decision-making mechanism, the Heritage Crossing Residents Association (HCRA), was imagined as a structure that included both homeowners and public housing residents, there is a kind of common sense perception among public housing residents that it serves the interests of the homeowners. In this we see that one of the consequences of this kind of cross-class housing arrangement is that there are competing interests unfolding among neighbors. As Regina Carl, a public housing resident in her twenties, who was placed in Heritage Crossing after leaving the Cherry Hills housing development states, "the

[631] William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). See a more detailed discussion of the link between Wilson's discussion of cross-class role modeling and post-high-rise housing policy in Chapter 3 of this project.

homeowners, they have their own group...Even though [the housing authority] is supposed to look out for us, a lot of times it feels like they side with homeowners against us." She identifies that this mixed income development will often intensify scrutiny directed at those most economically vulnerable and replicate at the micro-level a range of larger structural antagonisms. "Like a lot of time we feel like we have to look out for the homeowners. Like this isn't one community...or, it is, it doesn't include public housing, the rentals." Another resident put in more simply: "The rules are very different."[632]

This isolation often plays out and is reinforced through proxy contests over local amenities. Primary among these is the neighborhood park. Francine Simmons, whose townhouse unit borders the park at the center of the community, has three children, ages three, six, and eight. She has described in some detail how her oldest along with a group of other neighborhood kids her age have been driven out of the park on more than one occasion by "one of the homeowners," who has taken it upon himself to, as she puts it, "bully the poor kids looking for a place to play." "Our kids can't play in the park" she notes. "I mean, look at that park. Have you ever seen a park that was so unwelcoming? It's not meant to be played in. It's not meant to be used! It's a prop for the people who want to pretend this is the suburbs."[633]

"I didn't live in the Murphy Homes. I grew up in the east side. But coming up, I knew people in the Murphy Homes," Simmons says. "It was a mess (laughter). I wouldn't want to bring my kids up there, so I get it. I get why they would want those

[632] Regina Carl, (Argyle St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/15/12.
[633] Francine Simmons, (Edmonson), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/8/12, Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD

buildings torn down. But here I live next door to and across the street from people who do not want "project people" around. We are constantly – my kids are constantly – being accused of messing with their nice yards or just messing up their nice neighborhoods."[634]

"You said before, how we tell stories to ourselves about ourselves. It got me thinking about the stories this one across the street (gesturing to privately owned house across the street) really thinks she lives out in the county or something." [635]

"I'm someone who has always gotten along with my neighbors – I go out of my way to be friendly to people I live near. I'm not one of these people who doesn't say hi, or who minds their business (laughs). If you're gonna live next to me and my kids, I'm gonna be in your business. So I know my neighbors. And I can tell when they don't want to get to know me. And for me, it seems like being a "renter" here, you have a mark on you, and the home-owners don't want you to be their neighbors. Instead, they want you to leave."[636]

On Property Value

One of the most pressing concerns, it seems, when discussing neighborhood stability with residents is the pervasive concern over property value. Homeowners, who in many ways were marketed to on the basis that buying property in Heritage Crossing was a way of building personal wealth, freely discuss the ways this concern shapes how they interact with their community. Ronald Tibbs, who was born in

[634] Simmons, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/8/12.
[635] Simmons, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/8/12.
[636]Simmons, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/8/12.

Baltimore and spent much of his adult life in Prince Georges County before returning to Baltimore to purchase a home in Heritage Crossing, notes, “we bought here because we could afford it. And because we believed at the time that owning was a step up from renting and a way to build equity.”[637]

Eduardo Wilkins noted, “the city did not do us right. At least, so far they haven't. We were told that they would be building up the surrounding area. And that there wouldn't be rentals. That this was a neighborhood of first time home-buyers, upwardly mobile families...[me: “isn't it”] It's a neighborhood with upwardly mobile types. But other types as well. And the problems of the surrounding area constantly becoming our problems. Sometimes because people who live in here, invite them in, if you know what I mean.” [This dynamic of external threats and the internal column, conspiring with and inviting that threat in, was a theme within other homeowner reflections as well.] “You've got people coming and going from these corner stores. Sometimes they cut through this area. Sometimes they are coming from this area. I've seen people that we have identified as dealers talking friendly and sitting on the steps of that unit right there (gesturing at one of the public rental units). I warned her that that would get her evicted. We've talked about this at the last meeting – we can't let this place become what the Murphy Homes was, and if that means being vigilant with renters, so be it.”[638]

While “building equity” was and remains a major consideration of homeowners, they were also subject to and currently have to negotiate the

[637] Ronald and Joanne Tibbs, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/14/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD.
[638] Eduardo Wilkins, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/14/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

consequences of being lower-income homeowners in a post housing-bubble economy. And while they had to endure the housing crash, which certainly erased a significant amount of that equity, it is also true that HOPE VI homeowners in general were more insulated from the most damaging effects of the housing crash, as the government held much of their debt. “It changed what we hoped to earn by buying, but it didn't sink us financially the way it did some. Not here, but some people.” “I'll sell eventually. It won't be enough to retire on or anything, but it will be something. And I think I will be in better shape than if I rented. Or if I bought in a different situation.”[639]

Of course, like the park and a range of other areas, etiquette and comportment too have become a contested site through which homeowners attempt to maintain their property value through the disciplining of public housing residents. For example, Olivia Tenor, a homeowner who is prominent within the Residents Association, shared during one meeting how things like garbage can maintenance can become grounds for severe disciplinary action. “We had a problem a while back with the garbage cans – they were not keeping any of it orderly. We had to call the housing authority.” It is important to note that these types of complaints, when lodged by a homeowner with the housing authority, can shape how the housing authority interacts with the resident, and can have a severe impact on that resident's future access to housing. In at least one example from Heritage Crossing, and many examples throughout the larger context of HOPE VI nationally, small complaints such as this are drawn out in eviction hearings and can function to buttress eviction cases. There is

[639] Wilkins, Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 10/14/12.

no commensurate disciplinary force that shapes future outcomes for private homeowners. And while it is not openly acknowledged as such, the fact that complaints against public housing residents with the housing authority can end in someone's loss of access to a home confers a significant amount of power on homeowners, and a powerful tool with which to impose and police norms.[640]

That norms carry disciplinary power is not news to anyone who lives in Heritage Crossing – public housing resident and homeowner alike. As discussed above, virtually all of the population of Heritage Crossing, no matter where they fall on the property owner / non owner divide, are lower-income black residents of Baltimore. As such, it can be safely assumed that virtually every member of this community has had their own encounters with the disciplinary power of racial, socio-economic, and sexualized norms. Recognizing that power, some within the community have adopted practices wielding that same power within the context of these highly localized contests. “They act like they weren't brought up in a neighborhood,” one resident proclaimed in a meeting where she was addressing an issue of her neighbor's children climbing a tree in her front yard. Here again we see a homeowner mobilize the language of bourgeois normativity in order to organize social sentiment against a perceived transgression. These children haven't learned the proper respect for the private property of others, is the message. As such these kids and any others who haven't internalized the values of a property-owning society then present a threat to the property of those who have it. This resonates with the larger

[640] Olivia Tenor, (Myrtle Ave.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 11/5/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD.

anxiety on the part of property-owning residents (and some public housing residents as well) that the place is constantly teetering on the brink of sliding back into the kind of underdevelopment that marked the site's previous housing arrangements. That is, residents openly link normative behaviors and normative family structures to their effort to keep Heritage Crossing from "turning into Murphy." This hyper policing of behaviors tragically echoes the history of antiblack housing practices that have defined Baltimore's housing politics for much of its history.[641] As resident Dawn Reynolds notes,

> The sad truth is, between the people who have rented out their houses, and the Section 8 or whatever apartments, you have people here who aren't bought in, so to speak, as the rest of us. So we have a situation where they – whether they think about it or not – are working against what we're trying to build...I do what I can to get them on the same page, but it's difficult. And, look, they have their own struggles. I'm not trying to blame them for everything. And not all the homeowners are perfect or look out for...take care of their property and such...But there's a real difference. You can tell. Just look at the blinds. If you ever want to know who's a renter and who's a homeowner – and they say that we shouldn't be able to tell, but everybody can tell – look at the blinds, okay. In the rentals, every last one of them, you have broken blinds. If my blinds break, I replace them. In the apartments, no one fixes them. The tenants don't. The housing authority don't...[642]

On the Family, Sexuality, and "Neighborhood Stability"

Again, this commitment to policing social (or semi-social, or even private) behaviors as a means of maintaining neighborhood stability (which, again, I am arguing, is understood to be shoring up access to property value) is pervasive. On a public housing resident that lives next door, one research participant commented,

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[641] Anonymous Heritage Crossing homeowner. Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 1/28/13. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD. (See note 19 in this chapter).

[642] Dawn Reynolds, (Brune St.), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 11/18/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

"she's got a girlfriend sleeping on her couch, and she's got two kids in there. They say that she's really a girlfriend, if you understand. This is for families. I'll leave it at that." While this observation can clearly be read as containing an explicitly homophobic sentiment, which by virtue of this explicit homophobia renders it exceptional relative to most of the comments by research participants concerning the intimate lives of their neighbors, it nevertheless contains within it a more common sentiment, which I would contend links this explicit anti-queerness with the more banal forms that are far more common within these discussions. Homeowners frequently notice the domestic arrangements of their neighbors, particularly their public housing neighbors. One homeowner observed, "the three [public housing residents] that I know, all of them live on this block, all of them are single mothers. And that's hard." Another commented, "their [public housing residents, in general] kids can get a little wild. There's some elders in the area who can have a hard time with that." Another stated, "I think it's a different thing to have kids when you don't have the means to take care of them."[643]

By way of this practice of constantly observing and assessing the domestic behaviors of public housing residents, property owners in the neighborhood frequently read these behaviors against their own cultivated sense of what is and is not proper behavior. Again, while not as explicitly anti-queer as the comment above, this observation and categorization does disciplining work, and perpetuates the kinds

[643] I am intentionally not naming these particular property owners, even pseudonymously. The homeowners in this community have complex motives informing their local practice. While I want to bring attention to the ways that their commitment to "property value" engenders and links them historically to certain antiblack tendencies, I want to do so without vilifying them, recognizing that these choices are the consequence of a range of structural failures that these particular homeowners are attempting to navigate.

of alienation that stratify this community. At the center of these assessments is a set of assumptions about how some behaviors articulate with and some behaviors disrupt the practice of maintaining and protecting private property value. The sense that normative "family life" and a commitment to it is a mechanism that can provide access to such material resources as equity bolsters a commitment on the part of property owners to perceived normative domestic arrangements, even if those perceived norms themselves vary from resident to resident based on their own values concerning sexuality, etc.

Some months before I began conducting interviews with residents of Heritage Crossing, I was informed of a woman who had been evicted from her public housing unit. Discussion among residents at the time suggested that the fact that she allowed a friend and her friends' children to stay with her was used during her hearing to support the eviction case. It was understood among residents that the woman shared her apartment in part in order allow her friend's children to stay in the school they were attending. The fact that this was reported to the housing authority via the Residents Association – an issue they chose to pick up after a complaint from a homeowner – says a lot about the kind of scrutiny public housing tenants face. Further, it testifies to the power that normative domestic arrangements have and the eagerness with which residents attempted to enforce these norms. By no accounts were these non-legally recognized tenants doing anything outwardly within the common spaces of the residential area to garner any negative attention. They seemed to be unremarkable outside of the fact that they doubled the population of this one public housing unit and made a neighbor "uncomfortable."

On "Building Stable Neighborhoods"

This notion carries over to the work of "building stable neighborhoods." Particularly because it has been taken on by community members understanding that it is only through their own social labor that "stability" can be achieved. Building stable neighborhoods has been a keystone claim of the HOPE VI program. It is presented to homeowners as a responsibility that they are expected to take on. "The city's a mess. We do what we can to maintain. We buy a house. We build a family. We try to make the neighborhood a good one. This is the opportunity that this place has given us. But the work is a lot. And some of it we can't really do with just our small homeowners association."[644]

Again, there is the familiar practice of identifying common spaces as spaces of potential blight or attractors of unwelcome people:

> If you want to keep the park appealing, you know, you need to do what you can...There's a lot of craziness out on MLK and on the blocks outside of this neighborhood. You know what I mean?...They talked about this park being a showpiece for the neighborhood… I've seen a lot of parks here and in Philly become the victim of drug dealing, prostitutes, people sleeping or passed out or hiding or living in there. All of that...This is a neighborhood where you have homeowners, and that would really destroy this place if that happened there...So yeah, take the benches out. No picnic tables, nothing that invites people who don't belong there in. That's all fine with me. Keep the headaches to a minimum.[645]

An email from a member of the Resident's Association further makes the point: "We removed the benches from the park to keep people from hanging around in there...It

[644]Tibbs interview, 10/14/12.
[645] Warren Hudson, (Edmonson), Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 11/11/12. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

wouldn't be the people who lived and worked here."[646]

The planning archive suggests a desire on the part of HOPE VI planners to create mixed- income spaces that effectively integrate the various residents into a unified whole. (This stated desire to integrate is not dissimilar to much of the public housing archive, particularly mid-century public housing). Unlike the earlier iterations of public housing, projects like Heritage Crossing are complicated by the varied and arguably occasionally competing interests maintained by the multiple stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation process. These stakeholders include Heritage Crossing residents, both renters and property owners, HABC, which owns the common areas, and Enterprise, the private non-profit developer of the project, which following the development maintains ownership over the public housing properties as well as management rights via contract with HABC and HUD.

This entanglement of private institutional interests with the interests of residents, themselves stratified by access to property ownership, is not novel to Heritage Crossing. Private institutions often shape and influence local neighborhood politics. The Heritage Crossing Resident Association (HCRA) was created to formally link property owners, the private management interest, the public housing authority, and public housing residents.[647]

Further, because homeowners outnumber the public housing residents within the community, it follows that their influence in the HCRA is greater. The residents

[646] Bertha Wick, (HCRA). Email exchange with Robert Thomas Choflet. 2/24/12.
[647] Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., "Heritage Crossing at 5."

association is governed by a board that includes five homeowners, representatives of Enterprise, HABC, and is limited to two public housing residents. While there is a separate Tenants Council expressly for public housing residents, this group has little material power within the larger neighborhood and primarily works as part of the network of public housing residents' associations that make decisions limited to public housing within the Housing Authority's established community participation process. The president of Heritage Crossing Tenants Council is one of the two public housing resident HCRA board members.[648]

The HCRA oversees the leasehold ownership and responsibility for management of the common areas of the development. The Board of Directors is governed by the Association's bylaws and is responsible for enforcing covenants that regulate and maintain the built and social space. Initially, Enterprise/A&R contracted with a single private management agent (a subsidiary of co-developer A&R) to perform both site management and property management services for Heritage Crossing. This arrangement lasted for less than two years. Today, those duties are divided between a site management company and a rental property management company. [649]These management companies, themselves often tied to the non-profit developers, through contract or under a single umbrella management firm, are themselves often for-profit entities. This means at a place like Heritage Crossing, the site management company American Community Management, hired by the HCRA Board in early 2007, generates profit from its contracted work doing things like

[648] As outlined in Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., “Heritage Crossing at 5.”
[649] As outlined in Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., “Heritage Crossing at 5.”

collecting residents' association fees, sending out notices and newsletters to all Heritage Crossing residents, and paying the invoices of the service providers who maintain Heritage Crossing's common areas.[650]

Likewise, Edgewood Management, the private for-profit management firm selected by Enterprise in the fall of 2007 as the property manager for the public housing units, also generates profit for its work managing and operating the public housing units.[651] Their duties include rent collection, site staffing, resident selection, and maintenance of the rental properties, including lawn maintenance and snow removal. It is also Edgewood, in agreement with HABC, that is charged with enforcement of various public housing regulations concerning renters.

These two private entities, tied as they are to the property-owners, are charged with mediating any community tensions. Complaints about homeowners are channeled to American Community Management. Complaints about public housing residents are channeled through Edgewood Management. According to Edgewood, they estimate that they receive approximately 15 complaints of covenant violations per month, most of which concern improper trash disposal.[652]

This fragmented management structure has engendered uneven access to community authority and differential stakes when it comes to transgressions. On the one hand, it has overly empowered homeowners, particularly as they make common cause with the other private interests in the decision-making bodies, both in terms of their influence over the board and in terms of the disciplinary mechanisms that they

[650] As outlined in Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., “Heritage Crossing at 5.”
[651] As outlined in Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., “Heritage Crossing at 5.”
[652] As outlined in Lisa Akchin, Robert Choflet, James Elliot, et. al., “Heritage Crossing at 5.”

have to navigate. On the other hand, it projects some uncertainty among public housing renters about how to address problems they perceive in the community, as well as doubts about management's effectiveness or interest in addressing them. In discussing these management structures with public housing residents, it seems that many residents eschew these protocols altogether and instead take their issues to their neighbors directly.

On Solidarity and Material Antagonisms

I want to conclude this discussion of research participant interviews with a discussion about a neighborhood incident that I think challenges some of the underlying assumptions that property owners have maintained about local behaviors, neighborhood stability, and prospects of transcending decades of antiblack racism linked to black residential spaces. A strict materialist reading of the conditions at Heritage Crossing might suggest that there is little basis for solidarity among the homeowners and public housing tenants. A significant amount of homeowner energy, as demonstrated above, is dedicated to producing and elaborating management techniques, which often conflate the maintenance of property value with a fixation on and scrutiny of public housing resident behavior. Likewise, this intense scrutiny felt by public housing tenants perpetuates community division and ensures that socio-economic difference translates to social / community tension.

However, the realities of racial capitalism, buttressed by what Cheryl Harris calls “whiteness as property” – and the raft of antiblack material practices that notion organizes – suggest a set of conditions that can never fully be absorbed by black

property owners, in spite of their status as property owners.[653] As such, the realities of anti-black state practices – irrespective of relationship to property – has at times in the history of Heritage Crossing, occasioned modes of affiliation that challenge the emerging hegemonic modes discussed above. (And as such, suggest the possibility of different forms of solidarity, which do not hew to standard Marxist imaginings of class solidarity).

For example, in spite of all of what was perceived to be a threat among homeowners issuing from the surrounding neighborhood, as well as public housing units, the community association has always had trouble maintaining a neighborhood watch. "We had some regular gatherings. But it would fizzle out."[654] There are competing ideas as to the reason for this among residents. There is, of course, the fact of a deeply complicated relationship that black residents in general have had historically with West Baltimore policing. This is true, even among those who count themselves property owners, who identify as, or aspire toward, middle class status.

An incident in Heritage Crossing in its earliest days is illustrative of this point. One May evening, two years into the neighborhood's existence, three residents walking the neighborhood under the auspices of the neighborhood watch noticed what they thought to be an assault associated with an illicit drug deal in front of the corner store across the street from the Heritage Crossing's northwestern boundary. They had been walking in that direction in response to another neighbor's call, reporting police activity and a young man who they did not recognize sprinting

[653] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* Vol. 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707–91.
[654]Wick email exchange, 2/24/12.

through their yard. “From what I remember, the police cuffed a teenager who lived at the time in the unit on George Street [a street that intersects with Fremont Ave, where the corner store is located.],” according to longtime resident of George Street, Andi Roslyn. Neighbors had convened on the sidewalk, asserting that the young person in handcuffs was not the person who had sprinted through the neighborhood some minutes earlier. “When Albert [Sharpe] from [across the street] came out to explain that they grabbed the wrong kid – this kid was probably 4 years younger and fifty pounds skinnier – they started getting loud with him too, and next thing you know, he was being pushed onto the grass and then they cuffed him too.”[655]

For Roslyn, this was a clarifying moment.

> It didn't matter to those police who Albert was. He's done a lot for this place and that's not something that they see when he came out to talk to them...It didn't matter to them that he is a homeowner. Or that he's a leader around here... He'd be the last person to let one of these kids skate if he thought they'd be bringing this shameful stuff in here.

As Roslyn's description implies, the incident saw a set of violent state actors indifferent to the internal class divisions that organized the neighborhood's social dynamics and its power imbalances. Each of the community actors involved, from those doing the work of police surrogates on neighborhood patrol, to neighbors congregating on the sidewalk, to the young man who made a getaway through the neighborhood, to the 16 year old public housing resident who had the misfortune of being noticed by the Baltimore Police, to the homeowner who attempted to leverage what in a different context may have been the material privilege of property

[655] Andi Roslyn, (George St.) Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 2/12/13. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore MD.

ownership in order to set the state right, each was folded into the category of black threat in that moment. While there were certainly intra-community hierarchies, in this moment they did not extend outside of the community in any meaningful way and were therefore not enough to blunt the punitive force of the state.

Property Value, "Neighborhood" Building, and the Disarticulation of "the Otherwise"

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) frames HOPE VI as a program that gives the working poor "the power to see a better future." The argument that only greater access to the market can remedy what the welfare state has failed to do wends its way through much of the HUD and HOPE VI planning literature. The "HOPE VI: Building Communities" report celebrates the "determination of...former public housing tenants" who "when no longer weighed down by isolation and despair," of older housing arrangements, are finally able to "realize the American Dream for themselves and their families."[656]

There is aggressive, normalizing labor that is enacted in order to produce the categories of "public housing tenant" and the "private homeowner" as discrete and divergent. In constructing this dichotomy, the HOPE VI planning literature works to intensify what Roderick Ferguson calls the "polarization of heteronormative and nonheteronormative African American social formations," or what Cathy Cohen called, "cross-cutting issues" that – in this case – utilize sexualized categories to

[656]US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HOPE VI: Building Communities; Transforming Lives."

exploit "differences or cleavages" among dispossessed groups.[657]

Interviews with members of the Heritage Crossing Residents Association suggest that the residents have "gotten the message" – the group's primary concern seems to be in recasting this West Baltimore space as a "normal" and "functional" residential area, rhetorically set against an ensemble of behaviors and social arrangements that the residents regularly associate with "public housing" and what the space "used to" look like. The rich and layered history of the Murphy Homes is mobilized to support a normative liberal temporality, that relegates violence and underdevelopment to the past, and refashions the present and future as the terrain of individual struggle to increase property value as a means of undoing the effects of uneven development.

In order to ensure that those few public housing tenants who do live there do not "treat this place like they used to treat the Murphy Homes," strict community practices are enforced both through formal and informal channels of surveillance. Inability on the part of public housing tenants to comport to community norms regularly leads to formal complaints lodged by the Residents Association to the Housing Authority. And these complaints are regularly used as grounds for eviction, or to buttress other complaints during eviction hearings.

A Heritage Crossing "visioning exercise" published in the neighborhood

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[657] Cohen's discussion of "cross-cutting issues" that disarticulate otherwise cohesive social groups can be found in Cathy J. Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 13-16, 78; Ferguson's similar discussion can be found in Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations In Black: Toward A Queer Of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2003), 131. Both discussions turn on the fact that differing investments in normative sexuality can occasion these "differences or cleavages."

newsletter demonstrates the community's larger concern with "normalcy" and its perceived relationship to property value. In 2006 the community leadership asked various homeowners to describe what they imagined their neighborhood might look like by 2012 – the ten-year mark for the community. "Heritage Crossing is an attractive middle-class neighborhood," wrote one resident. Another foresees a space that is "vibrant, flourishing, socially and economically...building as a community." One imagines that, "what is truly amazing is how the property values have doubled and are steadily climbing."[658]

The resident association's weekly meetings, monthly pot-lucks, public events, its work beautifying and transforming the open space, its block watches, and its production and enforcement of a community covenant are all designed to produce what Michael Hardt calls the "feeling(s) of ease, well-being...connectedness" (normative "community") – affective labor that is central to the production of value within 21st century capitalism.[659] All of which, of course, comes at the expense of the public housing tenants, against whom this normative community is set.

As I conclude, I want to stress that my reading of Heritage Crossing residents' effort to recast themselves as normative, possessive subjects within a society that has systematically denied them that capacity, is not meant as an indictment of those engaged in this labor. Residents of Heritage Crossing, and other like housing arrangements, are immersed in a kind of on-the-ground contest for social and economic redress, one I argue seems to hinge on low-income residents recasting

[658] Heritage Crossing Residents Association, "Exercise: Imagining Our Neighborhood, 2012." HCRA Neighborhood Newsletter (Fall 2006).
[659] Michael Hardt, "Affective Labor," *Boundary 2.*Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), p. 96.

themselves as property owning and sexually normative.[660] The history of West Baltimore has demonstrated that these normative categories are fraught, rarely open to the low-income black women who inhabit both the public and private homes of Heritage Crossing. As Hong notes, "access (or lack thereof) to gendered and sexual respectability becomes the dividing line between those who are rendered deviant, immoral, and thus precarious in opposition to those whose value to capital has become secured through a variety of norms."[661] As the epigraph that begins this chapter makes clear, the normalizing labor that the Moynihan Report was doing measured black poverty not just against a white norm but also an imagined black norm. The implicit argument it made was that the structural impediments that low-income black urban residents faced could be transcended through a commitment to normative family and that there already was a black American tendency that demonstrated the validity of this approach among that middle class group that had elected to "save itself." The demolition of Murphy and the marketing for its HOPE VI replacement, Heritage Crossing, represent what Hong calls an "invitation to respectability," a policy initiative which is couched in and shaped by the history of racial stratification, informed by the failure of the welfare state to address itself to black housing needs, and holds out a promise of material uplift, in exchange for further integration into private forces.[662] While it may be too early yet to assess just how effective HOPE VI has been in terms of resource redistribution – not very, it

[660]See, for example, John Garvey, "Can the White Left Organize Against Racism in White Communities," (Paper presented at the Left Forum, New York City, 20 March 2010).
[661] "Neoliberalism," Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Journal of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association,* Vol 1, Issue 1 (Spring 2015).
[662] Grace Kyungwon Hong, "Neoliberalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies* Vol.1, no. 1 (2015): 57.

would seem – it is still worth heeding the cautionary words of Katherine McKittrick: "'(N)ormal' places and spaces, are hopefully seductive: they allude to the idea that finding and living the 'normal' within existing spatial hierarchies is a geographic achievement, a fulfilling geographic story."[663]

[663]Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 145.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In January of 2007, Heritage Crossing resident Jefferey Long found himself facing foreclosure. Unable to continue to make payments on his mortgage, Long was approached by a real estate services company who offered to take on his debt, helping to avoid the hit to his credit that foreclosure surely would have cost him. In June of 2007, he sold his home to the private firm, Investar. It was one of two dozen properties that they had purchased in Baltimore that year. They hired a contractor, who employed "three workers over, maybe two days," tore out old carpet, spackled the drywall, "painted everything white," and then listed the house on the market. By February they had sold the house at a markup of 40% from their purchase price.[664]

Between 2007 and 2013, twenty separate Heritage Crossing households faced foreclosure hearings.[665] Put another way, some 20% of the privately owned homes in this Baltimore neighborhood were in danger of being turned back over to the bank, the city, or in some cases, speculators, without yielding any of the value that HOPE VI had promised residents when it marketed itself. This is not isolated to this neighborhood or Baltimore alone. Throughout the US, HOPE VI homes, insulated as they were through subsidy and federal guarantee, nevertheless made their way back

[664] Home sale data accessed through the State of Maryland's Department of Assessment and Taxation website, https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov. Baltimore City foreclosure data available through the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, https://bniajfi.org; Specific foreclosure filings are accessible through the Maryland Judiciary's case search tool, http://casesearch.courts.state.md.us/casesearch/inquirySearchParam.jis; Information about Investar Inc. is available via their website, http://investarinc.com/; Observations about the nature of the rehab work done to the house came from discussion with resident, Aaron Hollins, part of this project's oral histories collection.

[665] Baltimore City Foreclosure Data, "Interactive Map of Foreclosure Filings," n.d., https://foreclosures.bniajfi.org/map.php.

into the hands of the banks at rates that kept pace with and sometimes surpassed their non-subsidized neighbors.[666]

Concurrently, while once-subsidized private housing left the hands of lower-income residents and circulated through the ensemble of speculators, investors, and predatory firms, what remains of the public housing that HOPE VI boosters claimed to be invigorating is increasingly finding itself in danger of privatization, as local housing authorities continue to fall back on austerity claims. Less than a decade after HOPE VI was sold to Baltimore residents with a promise of preserving public housing (if only a fraction of its previous numbers), an Obama-era initiated program known as the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) has begun a new process of privatization that will further shift housing units off of public rolls.

Each of the above unfold within a space surrounded by underdeveloped vacant housing, which has recently become the focus on "community development" programs, which themselves work to transfer publicly controlled resources – in this case, land banked vacant housing – with private actors who will leverage the city's lack of resources to access subsidies and below market rate property.

By way of conclusion I want to survey the new modes through which these spaces of black residential life continue to produce occasions for the forces of privatization to absorb once public resources, further destabilizing the lived spaces of black Baltimoreans. I will discuss the rehabilitation of Upton, the neighborhood bordering Heritage Crossing, and then explore the further dissolution of the public

[666] This phenomenon has been captured by local area-reporting. See for example, "Lenders Start Foreclosure Action at Cincinnati's City West," *Cincinnati Business Courier* (December 1, 2010); "KDC Buying Back 8 Mechanicsville HOPE VI Houses," *Knoxville News Sentinel* (September 9, 2009).

housing stock in the area that once housed the Murphy Homes. Finally, I will end with a provocation offered by some remaining public housing residents of Heritage Crossing as they presented their own "visioning exercise," imagining a different residential future for West Baltimore.

"Investing in Upton"

In spite of the promise that commodified housing makes as a form of resource redistribution, residential spaces racialized black have historically failed to produce the same kinds of value as those racialized white.[667] For Heritage Crossing residents, this phenomena finds both a cause and consequence in form of vacant and abandoned buildings in the adjacent Upton neighborhood. As one Residents Association member put it, "Upton's vacants problem is our problem."[668]

There have been five mayors of Baltimore in the time between Mayor Schmoke initiated the Family High-rise Modernization task force and the present. On her first day in office, now former Mayor Katherine Pugh, who campaigned for the job on the issue of low-income housing, and specifically named vacant housing in Upton as a "drag" on housing values in the area, including Heritage Crossing, made two significant housing announcements.[669] First, in response to the numerous charges

[667] Andre M. Perry, Jonathan Rothwell, and David Harshbarger, "The Devaluation of Assets in Black Neighborhoods: The Case of Residential Property" (Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, November 27, 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/research/devaluation-of-assets-in-black-neighborhoods/.
[668] Tibbs interview, 10/14/12.
[669] Quoted in, Ian Duncan and Christine Zhang, "Baltimore Is Furiously Knocking down Vacant Houses — but Barely Keeps Up as New Ones Go Empty," *Washington Post* (October 29, 2019).

of impropriety within his department, and in particular among housing maintenance workers, Pugh announced that she would be firing then-director of Baltimore Housing, Paul Graziano.[670] Austerity produced desperate conditions among residents, and under-resourced housing created dynamics in which maintenance workers "exercise[d] significant control over the community."[671] This control was exploited by a group of public housing maintenance workers, who leveraged their relative power to coerce public housing residents into performing unwanted sexual acts.[672] On one occasion, when a Gilmor Homes resident refused two maintenance workers' demands for sex in exchange for addressing an insect infestation and broken pipes, she was left without heat for two years.[673] The suit they brought against the Housing Authority in September of 2015 claimed that employees routinely harassed and abused "the vulnerable women in public housing...subjecting the tenants to life-threatening living conditions."[674]

The second thing Pugh did during her first day as Mayor was to officially "split" Baltimore Housing, removing out from under the oversight of the Housing Authority the "community development" work they once oversaw.[675] In removing

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[670] Yvonne Wenger Broadwater Luke, "Pugh Reveals Early Plans for Mayor's Office," *Baltimore Sun* (April 28, 2016).
[671] Quoted in, Corky Siemaszko, "Baltimore Public Housing Workers Demanded Sex For Repairs, Lawsuit Alleges," NBC News (January 7, 2016), https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/baltimore-public-housing-workers-demanded-sex-repairs-lawsuit-alleges-n492161.
[672] Corky Siemaszko, "Baltimore Public Housing Workers Demanded Sex For Repairs, Lawsuit Alleges."
[673] Corky Siemaszko, "Baltimore Public Housing Workers Demanded Sex For Repairs, Lawsuit Alleges."
[674]Quoted in, Corky Siemaszko, "Baltimore Sex-For-Repairs Victims Win $8 Million Settlement," NBC News (January 8, 2016), https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/baltimore-sex-repairs-victims-win-8-million-settlement-n493046.
[675] Yvonne Wenger, "Pugh Pledges to Restructure Baltimore Housing, Economic Development Agencies." *Baltimore Sun* (December 7, 2016).

"community development" responsibilities from HABC and creating a new institution with a $55 million budget, the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, Pugh signaled the ascending prominence of the public-private partnership within policy planning circles.[676] By "dividing the housing department from the management of the city's stock of subsidized housing," Pugh "put an emphasis on community development."[677]

As this dissertation project has worked to demonstrate, the last thirty years of housing policy drew on a cultural politics in order to facilitate a gradual shift away from direct federal subsidy of the city and toward privatization. Where HABC has been a symbol of direct aid and failed public housing, Pugh's move to separate out the community development wing of HABC into its own independent body announced the willingness of local government to further elevate private intermediaries. It is worth quickly placing this body within a longer historical context. While community development corporations (CDCs) have, since their emergence from New Deal era urban policy, continually coordinated development work with private actors – primarily through the reliance on private builders and coordinating such things as housing siting with the agendas of private real estate interests – by the late 1960s and early 1970s they were increasingly instrumentalized to redevelop black urban spaces, often under the auspices of black "community self-determination."[678] In fact, the centerpiece of the Community Self-Determination Act (CSDA) of 1968, an "act that

[676] Yvonne Wegner, "Baltimore's Housing Department Lays Out New Vision for Community Development, Identifying Four Target Zones." *Baltimore Sun* (February 27, 2019).
[677] Yvonne Wegner, "Baltimore's Housing Department Lays Out New Vision for Community Development."
[678] Robert Schwartz and Raymond Sanchez, "The Community Development Corporation," *Boston College Law Review* 10, no. 2 (January 1, 1969): 217–64.

contains the hope of enormous benefit for the poor of this nation," which emerged out of civil rights organizing and was spearheaded by, among others, Roy Innis and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), was an expansion of CDCs as a tool of urban reinvestment and redevelopment.[679] It was an early signal that frustrations with the racism that impeded redistributive state policy would push some to pursue market responses to racialized inequity. The journal *New Generation*, for example, in its special issue dedicated to the CSDA in the Fall of 1968, featured contributions from Frances Fox Piven, Gar Alperovitz, and other race and poverty scholars deliberating the merits of private dollars to make up for the shrinking pools of federal money.[680]

A less grassroots oriented approach to addressing the same set of conditions was being fashioned by Robert Kennedy and Jacob Javits, whose amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act in 1967 created the Special Impact Program, an early formal mechanism that would channel public resources intended for community development through private intermediaries.[681] These Special Impact Programs (SIPs), as Kennedy noted at the time, would "combine the best of community action

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[679] See, United States Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the ... Congress* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 22288-22289, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1968-pt17/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1968-pt17-3-1.pdf.

[680] "Community Self Determination: The Bill and the Debate," Special Issue, *New Generation*, no. 50 (Fall 1968). For a reading that considers the emerging trend in CDCs and its relationship to black self-determination, see Frederick D. Sturdivant, "Community Development Corporations: The Problem of Mixed Objectives," *Law and Contemporary Problems* Vol 36, no. 1 (1971): 35–50; The Council of Planning Librarians produced a thorough annotated bibliography in 1974 that captures the unfolding contemporaneous discussion. See, Florence Contant, *Community Development Corporations: An Annotated Bibliography* (Monticello, Illinois, Council of Planning Librarians, 1974), http://archive.org/details/communitydevelop530cont. The discussion of community self-determination can be found between pp.9-12.

[681] Michael Woodsworth, *Battle for Bed-Stuy: The Long War on Poverty in New York City* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 232.

with the best of the private enterprise system," linking anti-poverty work to (and therefore circumscribing it by) the prerogatives of the market.[682]

The Office of Economic Opportunity was developed out of this impulse.[683] It set out to link public resources with local, neighborhood-level improvement campaigns, and has had the effect of further linking CDCs and community-level work (and the public resources they attract) with an ensemble of private actors who have taken on an increasing amount of the responsibility, and authority, over community development in recent decades.[684]

This new approach has been bolstered by the push to replace other forms of direct federal aid with federally issued block grants.[685] Block funding is intended for urban development campaigns, and the resources are apportioned to local governments that qualify for and are designated "entitlement communities."[686] The single largest source of funding for community development in Baltimore, as in other cities, remains the Community Development Block Grant Program.[687] Community

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[682] Quoted in, Michael Woodsworth, *Battle for Bed-Stuy: The Long War on Poverty in New York City* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 202.
[683] William F. Haddad, "Mr. Shriver and the Savage Politics of Poverty," *Harper's Magazine* (December 1, 1965).
[684] United States Congress Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty, *Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1971: Hearings, Ninety-Second Congress, First Session ...* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971).
[685] David Reich, Isaa Shapiro, Chloe Cho, and Richard Kogan, "Block-Granting Low-Income Programs Leads to Large Funding Declines Over Time, History Shows" (Washington DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 22, 2017).
[686] For an overview of the block grant system, see, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, "Block Grants: A Comparative Analysis" (Washington DC, October 1977), https://library.unt.edu/gpo/acir/Reports/policy/A-60.pdf. The language of "entitlement communities" comes from HUD, and can be found here, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)," HUD.gov, accessed May 11, 2020, https://www.hud.gov/hudprograms/entitlement.
[687] Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development, "Community Development Block Grants," (Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development, December 12, 2018), https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/nd/community-development-block-grants.

organizations, neighborhood groups, and community development financial institutions access these funds through competitive application processes.[688] This also has had the effect of intensifying the practice of competition – pitting various municipalities against one another over what are constantly marketed as diminishing resources.[689] Proponents argue that this approach gives local governments and organizations more decision-making power over how federal resources are allocated.[690] But it should also be noted that this process greatly increases the influence of local government and private actors over the direction and form federal aid takes.[691] In this way, block funding, like community development corporations, has worked to hasten the condition of "devolution," the shifting of decision-making authority from federal to local government, including cities.[692] While celebrated by

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[688] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, "Block Grants: A Comparative Analysis," 6.
[689] Donald F. Kettl, "Can the Cities Be Trusted? The Community Development Experience," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 94, no. 3 (1979): 437–51. As one study from the Upjohn Institute for Employment Studies notes, through community development block grants, "the federal government has been subsidizing and encouraging locational competition in the US." Peter S. Fisher and Alan H. Peters, *Industrial Incentives: Competition Among American Cities and States* (Kalamazoo, Mich: W E Upjohn Inst for, 1998), 44. Among other things, this dynamic was an early influence on the now pervasive condition of "entrepreneurialism" discussed by David Harvey as the dominant mode of urban governance during austerity, forcing local governments to act as atomized entities, imagining their interests as individuated and separate from other municipalities or regions, and forced to market their cities in ways that are most accommodating to those (more often than not, private actors) with resources. See, for example, David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* Vol 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17.
[690] Conservative foundations sought to situate block grants within a larger struggle that pits perceptions of local autonomy against those of federal control. See, for example, Thomas R. Ascik, "Block Grants and Federalism: Decentralizing Decisions" (Washington DC: The Heritage Foundation, June 5, 1981), https://www.heritage.org/government-regulation/report/block-grants-and-federalism-decentralizing-decisions.
[691] As some have noted, both Nixon and Reagan were explicit in their ideological aims that block grants would work to decentralize decision making, increasing the influence of local power brokers. See, for example, Timothy J. Conlan, "The Politics of Federal Block Grants: From Nixon to Reagan," *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 99, no. 2 (1984): 247–70; Demetrios Caraley, "Dismantling the Federal Safety Net: Fictions Versus Realities," *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 111, no. 2 (1996): 225–58.
[692] For largely sympathetic discussions of devolution as a tool of decentralized decision-making endorsed by market-friendly liberal urbanists, see Bruce Katz, "Devolution for an Urban Age: City Power and Problem-Solving," *Brookings* (blog) (March 25, 2016),

some self-styled urbanists as a victory against rigid and impersonal bureaucracy in favor of local, flexible, responsive decision-making, as noted in an earlier section of this project, devolution has in practice worked to intensify the influence of private actors over public policy and resource allocation decisions.[693]

The line between federal resource allocation and private interest is further blurred by the emergence and growing hegemony of an ensemble of financial intermediaries. While philanthropy has maintained a relationship to community development for much of the 20th century, the Ford Foundation observed in 1979 that declining federal resources allocated for community development opened up opportunity for private interests to take a larger role.[694] This work detailed how financial intermediaries could provide financial and programmatic support for cities and local groups.[695] By the early 1980s three prominent financial intermediaries emerged: Ford established Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Enterprise Foundation, and Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NRC).[696]

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https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2016/03/25/devolution-for-an-urban-age-city-power-and-problem-solving/; Richard Florida, "The Urbanist Case for Devolution," *CityLab* (April 25, 2017), https://www.citylab.com/politics/2017/04/the-united-cities-of-america/520221/.

[693] For a concise critique of devolution as invitation to increase the power of "private tyrannies" over local governance, see Noam Chomsky, *Understanding Power* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 345-346.

[694]Scott Kohler, "Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC): Ford Foundation, 1979" (Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society: Duke University and Stanford School of Public Policy, 2007), https://cspcs.sanford.duke.edu/learning-resources/case-study-database/local-initiatives-support-corporation-lisc-ford-foundation. See also, The Ford Foundation's "Communities and Neighborhoods: A Possible Private Sector Initiative for the 1980s," 1979. For a more thoroughgoing critique of the Ford Foundation and the role it has historically played in managing dissent, particularly that dissent issuing from black urban spaces and social movements, see, Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); and see, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2017).

[695] Roland Anglin and Susanna Montezemolo, "Supporting the Community Development Movement: The Achievements and Challenges of Intermediary Organizations," (January 1, 2004), https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/BuildOrgComms/SectionI_Paper4.pdf.

[696] Y. Thomas Liou and Robert C. Stroh, "Community Development Intermediary Systems in the

Functioning, at base, as specialized community development banks, these intermediaries attracted resources through grants and low-interest loans from foundations, banks, corporations, and the federal government, and pooled these resources to provide grants, loans, and credit enhancements to CDCs.

It is no surprise that places like Heritage Crossing and the surrounding Upton neighborhood, that is, spaces of racialized poverty, are also the preferred sites of these privately mediated interventions. Where policy has failed to mitigate against and/or undo the damage that racial capitalism has wrought, new opportunities for racial capitalism have emerged. This is a bitter irony that has come to define life within underdeveloped urban space in the twenty-first century. Those forces that have authored the regressive transfers of wealth that hobbled public housing at the expense of the wellbeing and security of low-income black residents have been rewarded with even greater access and opportunity to extract future wealth. The current approach to "revitalizing" the Upton neighborhood, as well as an intensified effort to privatize public housing, including the remaining public units in Heritage Crossing, indicate the privatized future Baltimore is headed toward. Black women's suffering – in this case, sexual predation and life within and alongside blighted, abandoned, and disinvested residential spaces – became the occasion that mobilized these CDCs, as private forces who profit from "revers[ing] decades of disinvestment."[697]

United States: Origins, Evolution, and Functions," *Housing Policy Debate* vol. 9, no. 3 (January 1, 1998): 575–94; Mark McDermott, "National Intermediaries and Local Community Development Corporation Networks: A View from Cleveland," *Journal of Urban Affairs* vol. 26, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 171–76; Scott Kohler, "Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC): Ford Foundation, 1979" (Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society: Duke University and Stanford School of Public Policy, 2007); Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society, "The Ford Foundation and Community Development" (Duke Sanford School of Public Policy, January 12, 2006).

[697] Yvonne Wenger, "Baltimore's Housing Department Lays out New Vision for Community Development, Identifying Four Target Zones," *Baltimore Sun* (February 27, 2019).

On April 30, 2019, it looked to current Heritage Crossing Resident Association president Janet Allen that Baltimore is about to make good on a decade long promise to "clean up" Upton. "While I realize this is the first step, it is a very important step," Allen said. "I want to encourage everyone to keep on stepping."[698] Baltimore's newest mayor, Bernard C. "Jack" Young stood alongside state of Maryland's housing secretary Kenneth Holt while Secretary of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Michael Braverman, announced rehabilitation of 38 vacant city-owned properties in the 800 blocks of Harlem and Edmondson.[699] This involved, among other things, committing $9.7 million from the city to the private development firm of Upton Renaissance LLC.[700] Their press conference was just outside the Heritage Crossing neighborhood, and was gestured toward as Braverman noted, "we owe a debt to Heritage Crossing."[701]

RAD and the "End of Public Housing"

The underdevelopment that called HOPE VI into existence – the decades of denying necessary public resources to spaces of racialized poverty which have

[698] Yvonne Wenger, "City Announces $10 Million Redevelopment of Vacant Rowhouses in West Baltimore Neighborhood of Upton," *Baltimoresun.cmo* (April 30, 2019), sec. Maryland, Baltimore City.
[699] Bryna Zumer, "Multimillion-Dollar Project Will Redevelop 38 Vacant Homes in Upton," WBFF (May 1, 2019), https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/multimillion-dollar-project-will-redevelop-38-vacant-homes-in-upton.
[700] "Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development Names Developer for Revitalization of 38 Vacant City-Owned Properties," (Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development, April 30, 2019), https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/news/news/2019-04-30-baltimore-city-department-housing-community-development-names-developer.
[701] Quoted in, Ethan McLeod, "City Picks Developer Team to Rehab Nearly 40 Vacant Homes in Historic Upton," *Baltimore Fishbowl* (blog) (April 30, 2019), https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/city-picks-developer-to-rehab-nearly-40-vacant-homes-in-historic-upton/.

produced material deficiencies that political commitments to austerity cannot accommodate – continues to persist. And in spite of the HOPE VI intervention, its focus on redeveloping "distressed" spaces, and its claims to bolster public housing, HUD continues to argue that the housing needs of poor are too great to address through government alone.[702] Beginning in 2011, the Obama administration initiated a process that invited more private actors into the housing process.[703] Their plan, HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, solicits private financing, development, and management companies to take on the responsibility of renovating and maintaining HUD-controlled buildings. In exchange, over the long term, local housing authorities and owners of publicly controlled buildings transfer ownership and control to these private institutions. Housing aid to residents within these developments shifts to voucher-based aid, and residents are assigned one of two types of contracts organized through the RAD program: One is a Project Based Voucher (PBV), which maintains the housing authority's central role managing the property and administering vouchers to residents, leaving the property subject to the housing authority's administrative plan; the other is project based rental assistance (PBRA), in which the local housing authority has little say in the property, while the rental assistance contracts are between the private owner and HUD. [704] According to HUD, RAD "seeks to preserve public housing by providing Public Housing Agencies

[702] Shamus Roller and Jessiva Cassella, "The Promise and Peril of HUD's RAD Program," *Shelterforce* (July 30, 2018).
[703] 112th Congress, "The Obama Adminstration's Rental Assistance Demonstration Proposal: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Insurance, Housing, and Community Opportunity of the Committee on Financial Services US House of Representatives," https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-112hhrg72624/pdf/CHRG-112hhrg72624.pdf.
[704] Shamus Roller and Jessiva Cassella, "The Promise and Peril of HUD's RAD Program."

(PHAs) with access to more stable funding to make needed improvements to properties."[705]

The RAD program has been framed as necessary, given the austerity conditions housing authorities currently navigate. As their marketing puts it, "RAD provides PHAs a way to rehabilitate, or repair, units without depending on additional money from Congress."[706] HUD has noted on many occasions that there is a "$26 billion-dollar backlog on deferred maintenance," requiring private intervention to maintain a hope of every fixing substandard low-income housing.[707] What in practice should differentiate the RAD program from complete public disinvestment are assurances that accompany RAD privatization that residents will remain protected from eviction, rent increases, or a transition of the housing to condominiums or other ownership schemes. As HUD has stated, the long-term voucher contract must be renewed in perpetuity, ensuring, they claim, "that the units remain permanently affordable to low-income households." [708]

While its stated intention has been to address "aging" buildings, newer developments are being absorbed by this privatization scheme. As of December 2018, the Enterprise, the same private non-profit developer contracted to build Heritage Crossing has been awarded the contract to renovate the development's 75 remaining public housing units.[709] As Janet Abrahams, the executive director of the Housing

[705] Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Toolkit #1: Why RAD? A Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Overview," n.d., https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/TOOLKIT1WHYRAD.PDF.
[706] Ibid.
[707] "Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)," Department of Housing and Urban Development, https://www.hud.gov/RAD.
[708] "Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)," https://www.hud.gov/RAD.
[709] "75 Homes in Baltimore Community to Be Renovated but Remain Affordable," Enterprise Community Partners, accessed April 28, 2020, https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/news-and-

Authority of Baltimore City, noted, "We are excited to partner with Enterprise Homes on the renovation of Heritage Crossing through HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program."[710] "This public-private partnership," Abrahams notes, "will enhance the living environment for 75 families in this West Baltimore community. Converting these affordable units to RAD allows HABC to fulfill its mission of creating and providing quality affordable housing opportunities in sustainable neighborhoods for the people we serve."[711]

Residents of Heritage Crossing will see their rent converted to project based rental assistance (PBVA), rendering the Housing Authority no longer active in the development.[712] This conversion will cost the private financers roughly $6.6 million.[713] Under the new terms, Heritage Crossing residents will sign a new lease with the private "business partner," who will assume ownership of the units from the housing authority.[714] New management, new maintenance staff, and new rules will govern the space, no doubt shaping a new culture within the community.[715]

In practice, in Baltimore, RAD privatization has meant that "public stewardship" of once public housing has been effectively reduced down to a handful of rules. Within spaces of racialized poverty, like West Baltimore, the stabilizing effects of this new arrangement have proven elusive. Citing the consent decree

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events/news-releases/75-homes-baltimore-community-be-renovated-remain-affordable.
[710] "75 Homes in Baltimore Community to Be Renovated but Remain Affordable."
[711] "75 Homes in Baltimore Community to Be Renovated but Remain Affordable."
[712] US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "RAD CHAP Awardees and Reservations," December 23, 2016, 9, https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/RADRESERVATIONS_122316.PDF.
[713] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "HABC RAD Inventory," n.d., https://www.habc.org/media/1086/rad_inventory.pdf.
[714] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "What You Should Know About the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) Phase II," August 24, 2018, https://www.habc.org/media/1416/rad-phase-3-faqs-for-residents_82418.pdf.
[715] Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

generated through *Thompson v. HUD*, HUD has granted HABC flexibility with respect to rent prices.[716] Early research of rent-court records suggests that private developers and management firms have been quick to evict residents.[717] Further, residents have noticed less access to due process within the new RAD arrangement under private management firms. For example, Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) uncovered multiple examples of management in newly privatized buildings prematurely and improperly serving eviction notices to residents, without communicating how to request a hearing to object.[718] As DRM attorney David Prater has noted, "[t]he Housing Authority made some public promises about how the [privatization] was going to secure the rights tenants had, that those would carry over…[w]hat we've seen is that has not always been the case. The privatization has caused many to lose out on their rights."[719]

A feature of our current moment within urban capitalism is that each public shortfall produces an opportunity to privatize. "Failed" public housing has been no different. Removing these units from direct public control, within a context where they remain commodities, will likely lead to less rather than more access to affordable housing for low income residents in the future. As property value fluctuates, increases, residents will likely lose access to their affordable housing.[720] This new

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[716] "Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) – Alternative Requirements of Waivers," *The Federal Register* vol. 80, no. 163 (August, 2015).
[717] Luke Broadwater. "Tenants Evicted Improperly from Baltimore's Privatized Public Housing, Complain Alleges." *Baltimore Sun* (February 8, 2018).
[718] Luke Broadwater, "Abuses Alleged in Privatized City Housing; Tenants Evicted Wrongly, Disability Rights Group Says," *Baltimore Sun*, (February 9, 2018).
[719] Quoted in, Luke Broadwater. "Tenants Evicted Improperly from Baltimore's Privatized Public Housing."
[720] Housing Authority of Baltimore City, "Rental Assistance Demonstration Program," https://www.habc.org/habc-information/programs-departments/public-housing/rental-assistance-demonstration-program/.

approach to addressing the material deficiencies of federal housing has led some critics to charge that Congress has "abandoned public housing properties, public housing residents, and the notion that the federal government should continue to own affordable housing."[721] "What is broken," they note, is an understanding of the social value that comes from federally controlled and commonly held resources like public housing, "based largely on racist mythologies about the people who live in subsidized properties, about violence, and the 'undeserving' poor."[722]

At a macro level, these three converging forces acting on the residential spaces in the southeastern tip of West Baltimore – private CDCs moving into Upton, evictions moving homes out of the hands of lower-income black residents and into the hands of investors, and the RAD-mediated privatization of the last vestiges of a once expansive array of public housing developments in the area – signal that the privatization process that started with HOPE VI is accelerating in its aftermath. A residential landscape that was built in the postwar period in order to meet the needs of low-income black residents has increasingly been used to leverage the suffering produced within racial capitalism in order to facilitate greater private claims to the land and property. As long as housing remains a commodity and the concern for private profit shapes and mediates housing policy, the great social need that on display in spaces of racialized poverty will remain unaddressed.

Conclusion:

[721] Shamus Roller and Jessiva Cassella, "The Promise and Peril of HUD's RAD Program."
[722] Shamus Roller and Jessiva Cassella, "The Promise and Peril of HUD's RAD Program."

A project that wants to uncover the official history of the demolition of the George Murphy Homes can find all it needs in the city's planning archive. But this project worked to historicize not just the demolition, but the cheers that accompanied that demolition. Likewise, a project that is interested in official story telling can find the necessary data to tell the story of building Heritage Crossing. And, likewise, this project worked to know not just how they were built but what their construction means to those living there. The qualitative research methods utilized here help get at a more rigorous understanding of the material history of urban transformation, while helping to develop a better understanding of the various struggles for power that residents endure, and the political visions those struggles produce. The reflections of residents, their accounts of the history, their re-telling of their political work, their reading of the material conditions they navigated, serve as a body of knowledge that this project 1) argues is necessary for producing a critique, and 2) demonstrates what that critique can look like.

Final reflection:

As discussed in Chapter 6, one affinity building exercise the Heritage Crossing Resident Association facilitated early in the neighborhood's history was a "visioning exercise," wherein residents imagined what the housing would look like in five and ten years into the future. While this exercise may have been open to all residents of the development, public housing residents, whatever contributions they may have made to the discussion, were not recorded in the newsletter that published

these reflections.[723] The record of the event, as it stands a decade later, is one of homeowners imagining home owning as a redistributive practice. Homeownership, the visioning exercise seemed to suggest, produced home equity among a group of residents who would not have otherwise ever had access to that promise before.

One afternoon in 2014, I met with Jasmine Sanders, a twenty-seven year old public housing resident in Heritage Crossing.[724] She had company, another public housing resident, in her mid-thirties. Both had lived in the development from the beginning. Both had numerous interactions with the Residents Association, though neither were especially involved in it. Prompted by me pointing out the above fact, that the HCRA seemed to make no real effort to record public housing residents' "vision" for the future of Heritage Crossing, a comical and frank discussion broke out. Much of it registered a clear frustration that public housing residents live as isolated and marginalized actors in the neighborhood. But interspersed with those frustrated statements were reflections on the exercise itself. How would Heritage Crossing look if Sanders and her neighbor were able to author its future? In between lighthearted discussions of settling scores ("[neighboring homeowner]'s dog would need to go!"), conversation returned more than once to the park. As discussed last chapter, the park remains a site of contention among the community members, in part because of competing ideas and desires it represents. In this ad hoc exercise, the park became the site for new, common investment. "Imagine a garden. I'm talking about one that could feed this whole area." The daydream included food for neighbors and

[723]Sanders, Jasmine. (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 7/15/14. Heritage Crossing, Baltimore, MD
[724] Sanders, Jasmine. (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 7/15/14

those people forced to "hustle" for spare change "on MLK," a multilane street that borders HC on its east side and often utilized by people looking to the cars lined up at the traffic light for money, food, etc.[725] "Or an actual playground. Not just an empty show piece."[726] "A place for the young people...for picnics."[727]

I am concluding with this informal kitchen table, "visioning exercise" because of how it suggests a counter-vision among public housing residents within this HOPE VI neighborhood. The decades-long commitment to privatization has worked to convince residents that the only (and moral) way to address underdevelopment is to apportion individualized access to private property, and the only (and moral) way to address resource asymmetries is to provide access to home equity. When left to daydream, as this exercise suggests, residents sometimes imagined very different correctives. Their jokes captured both the inadequacy of commodified housing as an antidote to their uneven access to resources, while their vision imagined a redistribution of public wealth and a reclamation of the commons.

[725] Sanders, Jasmine. (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 7/15/14
[726] Sanders, Jasmine. (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 7/15/14
[727] Sanders, Jasmine. (Edmonson). Interview with Robert Thomas Choflet. 7/15/14

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