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Race, Class, and Real Estate: Neoliberal Policies in a “Mixed Income” Neighborhood

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Race, Class, and Real Estate: Neoliberal Policies in a “Mixed Income” Neighborhood

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Race, Class, and Real Estate: Neoliberal Policies in a “Mixed Income” Neighborhood

Ashley Spalding

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere), a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, on Tampa’s Greenwood neighborhood. The program represents a policy shift away from traditional public housing toward a “mixed income” model that has effectively privatized public housing. Through a HOPE VI program implemented in Tampa in 2000, two public housing complexes were demolished and redeveloped in this way. While some former residents of public housing relocated to other public housing complexes, many moved to apartments and houses in the private rental market with Section 8 subsidized housing vouchers—many to Tampa’s Greenwood neighborhood. In the dissertation, I examine how these policy changes affect both those relocated to the neighborhood and those already living in the neighborhood. The dissertation also examines the social dynamics of Greenwood in order to understand an actual mixed income neighborhood. In addition, the dissertation is concerned with the intersection of HOPE VI with other neoliberal trends in Greenwood—such as models for social order and particular discourses.

Chapter One

Introduction

A local newspaper article opens with the following description of Tampa's Ponce de Leon public housing complex: "It was a startling baptism for a busload of well-dressed volunteers who ventured into a world where 28-year-old grandmothers live in crumbling homes and children play in glass-strewn dirt yards" (Rupert 1998). The article reports on the visit of a new Tampa Housing Authority advisory committee to Ponce de Leon. One of the committee members is quoted as saying, "I was astonished at how horrible the projects were. It looks like a Third World country." Toward the end of this short newspaper article, the HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program is presented as an opportunity to rectify the "deplorable"¹ conditions of the Ponce de Leon complex. Another article featuring the new HOPE VI development begins, "Crammed into more than a 1,000 apartments amid rows of drab concrete buildings, generations of Tampa's low-income residents called College Hill and Ponce DeLeon home" (Lengell 2003). The headline for yet another Tampa Tribune newspaper article reads: "Hopes and Dreams: The Tampa Housing Authority is razing to rebuild decades-old public housing, with the hope of replacing 'the projects' with a community"; this reveals the assumption that community did not exist in public housing.

Based on these representations of traditional public housing, who would disagree with a program designed to improve these conditions? This program, HOPE VI, began in 1992 in

¹ The term is attributed to Jerome Ryans, the Housing Authority's executive director.

response to recommendations made by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing.² The program aims to transform public housing in the following ways:

- Changing the physical shape of public housing
- Establishing positive incentives for resident self-sufficiency and comprehensive services that empower residents
- Lessening concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in nonpoverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed-income communities
- Forging partnerships with other agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses to leverage support and resources

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/about/>, accessed October 27, 2007)

Over the past fifteen years, more than six billion dollars have been allocated to this program's implementation in cities all over the country.

HOPE VI must be understood in the context of neoliberalism. Definitions of neoliberalism vary considerably but tend to focus on several important shifts characteristic of the past thirty years: the withdrawal of the state (i.e., the privatization of formerly public services), the valorization of the market, and a focus on individual responsibility. Although the program is currently being phased out, HOPE VI effectively privatized public housing. In addition, the focus on “self-sufficiency” and services that “empower” residents reveals neoliberal thinking about how to cure poverty—focusing on reforming individuals rather than addressing political and economic causes of poverty.

The local newspaper articles quoted above are just a few examples of the countless media treatments of HOPE VI, many of which were generated by the national office for HOPE VI (thomas-houston 2006). Treated as common sense in the media, there seemed to

² This group was created by Congress in 1988 and charged with the task of identifying the most severely distressed public housing and proposing a solution.

be very little questioning of this policy on any front. However, for some of us, the program raised important questions glossed over in the rhetoric presented in the media: Where do public housing residents go when these complexes are demolished? Are they really better off after relocation? How many move back into the redeveloped public housing? Do people from very different economic backgrounds really want to live in the same community?

I first became aware of this housing trend while finishing my Master's degree in 2000 at the University of South Carolina. Columbia, South Carolina had received a HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) grant and plans were underway to demolish and "revitalize" one of the city's public housing complexes. When I moved to Tampa to pursue my PhD, I was fortunate to link up with an existing research team of faculty and graduate students already involved in investigating how families relocated through HOPE VI and now living in Tampa's somewhat notorious Riverbend neighborhood were faring. Contrary to the predictions in media reports, this preliminary study uncovered many unexpectedly positive memories of public housing and surprisingly difficult experiences in the new neighborhood.

Looking to expand the research, in 2003 our research team applied for and received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to study HOPE VI relocations on Riverbend as well as Greenwood, another Tampa neighborhood into which former residents of public housing were relocated. The focus of this study was to understand relocatees' social capital before and after relocation—as well as to learn more about how HOPE VI was affecting relocation neighborhoods.

The research questions for this dissertation developed out of my participant observation in Greenwood. While conducting research in this neighborhood, I realized the importance of exploring policy issues at the local level. Greenwood could easily be considered a “mixed income” neighborhood—which would seem to be an ideal relocation neighborhood for HOPE VI relocatees. However, I quickly learned that homeowners in Greenwood vehemently opposed the presence of low-income renters in the area—and the apartment complexes in which relocatees lived were not necessarily desirable living situations. I developed the following research questions to investigate further: 1) What are the social dynamics of a mixed race, mixed income suburban neighborhood in Tampa, Florida? 2) How has the HOPE VI program affected this neighborhood? 3) How do these changes in housing policy intersect with other neoliberal practices—such as spatial patterns and discourses that reflect neoliberal ideology?

Attempting to answer these questions, I engaged in over three years of ethnographic research in Greenwood in conjunction with the larger NSF project—conducting interviews with both relocatees and homeowners, attending civic association meetings, and working as a leasing agent in one of the low-income apartment complexes. This dissertation presents the story of Greenwood through the lens of mixed income housing policy. In Chapter Two, I review the relevant literature. Chapter Three describes the research methods I undertook in my investigation of these issues. In Chapters Four and Five, I describe the settings of my research—in Chapter Four, the Greenwood neighborhood as a whole, and in Chapter Five, Harbor Pointe Apartment Homes, a low-income apartment complex where I worked in the leasing office. Chapter Six examines how homeowners and local law enforcement in the Greenwood neighborhood have enacted a particularly neoliberal version of social order in the

neighborhood—for instance, eliminating visual signs of disorder in lieu of addressing social problems—while Chapter Seven focuses on the perspectives of HOPE VI relocatees. In Chapter Eight, I examine how homeowners and low-income renters both support and contest neoliberal ideas about poverty and housing. Chapter Nine provides some concluding remarks that link my research findings back to the ideas discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Two

Mixed Income Housing, Neoliberalism, and Poverty Knowledge

The early 1990s heralded the “transformation” of public housing in the United States. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that public housing had failed and a new model was being implemented. Leaving its Keynesian roots in the welfare state behind, privatization (and therein a phasing out of “public” housing) has been a central part of HUD’s new approach. These changes are often glossed as “mixed-income housing” or “poverty deconcentration.”

HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) is the largest of the programs to implement these ideas. Since 1992, through HOPE VI, Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) have been eligible to apply for multi-million dollar grants for the demolition and “revitalization” of public housing complexes deemed “severely distressed.” The redeveloped public housing follows New Urbanist³ design principles and provides a mix of housing options aimed at a diverse clientele; a percentage of the units are reserved for individuals who qualify for public housing assistance while other units are market rentals. Over 200 grants and six billion dollars have been awarded to PHAs across the United States (Comey 2007; Popkin, Cunningham, and Burt 2005).

These changes have resulted in a complete restructuring of public housing. Because HOPE VI does not require a one-for-one replacement of public housing units, there has been a reduction in the number of “hard” public housing units nation wide. One conservative

³ An architectural design trend that aims to promote social interaction and community through design.

estimate suggests that there has been a reduction of more than 50,000 public housing units nation wide (Hackworth 2007:50). In addition, the criteria for moving into the redeveloped public housing are much stricter than was the case in traditional public housing. Meanwhile, the Section 8 voucher program⁴ was expanded and is now HUD's largest program to provide low-income housing—although cuts are being made to this program as well. A large percentage of residents of public housing complexes slated for demolition through HOPE VI are relocated with Section 8 vouchers.

Jason Hackworth (2007) has suggested that housing policy in particular usually echoes larger political and ideological changes. This dramatic shift in housing policy must be understood in relation to the broader social, political, and economic changes associated with neoliberalism. I will discuss the neoliberal turn in greater depth in the next section, but want to introduce it here as an important aspect of understanding mixed income housing policy. Much has been written about the importance of understanding neoliberalism as it is articulated at the local level (cf. Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Tampa's PHA, the Tampa Housing Authority (THA), has been a recipient of two HOPE VI grants, enabling the demolition and redevelopment of three public housing complexes. The HOPE VI project of concern to this dissertation involved the relocation of 1,100 residents of the public housing complexes College Hill and Ponce de Leon in 2000; the new mixed income development that replaced these two complexes is Belmont Heights Estates, into which only a very small percentage of former residents have moved. Now only three traditional public housing complexes remain in Tampa⁵—and one is now slated for

⁴ Although the program was renamed "Housing Choice Voucher Program" in 1998, the new term is rarely used at the local level. I will therefore be using the term "Section 8" throughout the dissertation.

⁵ Small, scattered-site complexes are not included in this count.

demolition through a public-private partnership. Many who use Section 8 end up moving to a limited number of neighborhoods, and the influx of low-income renters has been a source of considerable conflict.

This dissertation focuses on one of these areas—Tampa’s Greenwood neighborhood. In addition to being a primary site of HOPE VI relocations in 2000, Greenwood provides an opportunity for examining the dynamics of a truly diverse, “mixed income” community—as well as for studying neoliberal social control mechanisms, among other issues. A full description of Greenwood will be provided in Chapters Two and Three.

Neoliberalism

Theoretical perspectives on neoliberalism are important for understanding the shift to mixed income housing policy. There is a considerable amount of work devoted to understanding what neoliberalism is, how it has become hegemonic, and what impact it is having socially, politically, and economically. I find Foucauldian characterizations of neoliberalism as a form of governmentality particularly useful—although I also depart from these ideas in several important ways. Following Jeff Maskovsky and Catherine Kingfisher (2001), I treat neoliberalism as both global economic restructuring and the forms of governance that have accompanied it.

Neoliberalism and Political Economy

Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has guided economic policies in the US. This has had lead to profound changes—including the opening up of global labor markets and a widening gap between the rich and poor. Some of the most significant economic shifts associated with neoliberalism have been the strategies designed to lower labor costs and develop a more “flexible” workforce—for instance, relocating industries to low-wage anti-union regions in

the US and overseas, as well as increasing corporate reliance on subcontracting and temporary part-time workers (which lead to the decline in the number of jobs, wages, and security of low- and semi-skilled jobs) (Goode and Maskovsky 2001). These and other changes—including cutbacks in social services—have effectively resulted in an increase in poverty and homelessness (Lyon-Callo 2004). However, as discussed previously, dominant neoliberal discourses place the blame elsewhere.

Neoliberal Governance

The role of the state in neoliberalism is complex. The state is vilified through neoliberal discourses and social policies; “big government” is treated as an enemy of the poor—blamed for facilitating their “dependency” on the state by providing too much aid (Hyatt 2001:202). According to this perspective, the state must then free its citizens by withdrawing from their lives (for instance, by weaning women off of their welfare benefits). Neoliberalism is therefore often characterized as the withdrawal of the state. However, many scholars argue that this is not the case. For instance, while neoliberal policies often involve both a “rolling back” of certain services, this is accompanied by a “rolling out” of others (Peck and Tickell 2002). In the case of low-income housing policy, this has meant the demolition (or rolling back) of traditional public housing complexes and the expansion (or rolling out) of the Section 8 voucher program. Maskovsky and Kingfisher in particular emphasize “the continued role of the state in the lives of the poor” (2001:112). They write:

Indeed, modes of neoliberal governance have been introduced into the lives of the poor largely through state action. It is thus inaccurate to say that downsizing, deregulation, privatization, welfare state retrenchment (including welfare ‘reform’ in the U.S.) and other neoliberal austerity measures have simply removed the state from the lives of the poor; rather, these policies have brought the poor into new relations with the state (and the private sector) (Maskovsky and Kingfisher 2001:112).

Rather than directly intervening in people's lives, neoliberal state action involves reshaping poor people's relationship to the state. Hyatt writes that "neoliberal social policies have defined the role of the state, away from its older stance of providing 'a safety net' for the poor and basic services for the citizenry at large and toward the notion that it is now the primary job of the state to 'empower' the poor, and other citizens as well, to provide for themselves and for their communities' own needs" (2001:205). These new measures often involve orienting citizens (including the poor) to the values of the marketplace (Hyatt 2001:202). For instance, states have adopted policies that require Medicaid recipients to choose among numerous competing private-sector managed care plans. Maskovsky describes this policy shift in the following way: "Politicians, policy makers, and pundits have justified this shift on the basis that it will cut costs and improve the quality of care for the poor. They argue that market forces will keep the costs of poor people's health care down and that states will be able to use the resulting savings to expand coverage" (2000:121-122).

While state action is important to understanding neoliberalism, a broader focus on "governance" reveals the complex relationship between individuals and the state. Foucault introduced the concept of "governmentality" in a few brief writings and lectures (see for instance, his published lecture, "Governmentality," 1991) to describe political power in such a way that it was not limited to the state. As explained by Nikolas Rose, who has further developed Foucault's initial ideas:

Government, here, refers to all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, whether these be the crew of a ship, the members of a household, the employees of a boss, the children of a family or the inhabitants of a territory. And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself. Foucault thus

implied that, rather than framing investigations in terms of state or politics, it might be more productive to investigate the formation and transformation of theories, proposals, strategies and technologies for 'the conduct of conduct.' Such studies of government would address that dimension of our history composed by the invention, contestation, operationalization and transformation of more or less rationalized schemes, programmes, techniques and devices which seek to shape conduct so as to achieve certain ends (1999:3).

Rather than governance occurring only through concrete structures, Foucault examines the less tangible influence of ideas and discourses, introducing a vocabulary for understanding these mechanisms. "Technologies" of government are the means by which governance is enacted. According to Rose, a technology of government is:

an assemblage of forms of practical knowledge, with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgement, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices, inscription techniques and so forth, traversed and transected by aspirations to achieve certain outcomes in terms of the conduct of the governed (which also requires certain forms of conduct on the part of those who would govern (1999:52).

Often these technologies are articulated and enacted through discourse as well as social policies. In fact, Foucault considers language to be constitutive of governmentality (Rose 1999:28).

Rose suggests that to govern in an "advanced liberal way" involves "techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy, and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom" (1996:53-54). According to Hyatt, this involves the creation of "new kinds of subjects, whose own goals as 'free' individuals become aligned with those of the state" (2001:212). Among the specific technologies of government associated with neoliberalism are the promotion of various ways of acting on the self (what Foucault 1988 refers to as

“technologies of the self”) in order to address poverty—for instance, through self-esteem, self-sufficiency, self-empowerment, and other ways of embracing individual responsibility such as homeownership. Taken up by the state in various ways, self-esteem has been espoused to provide, in the words of Barbara Cruikshank, “a technology of subjectivity that will solve social problems from crime and poverty to gender inequality by waging a social revolution, not against capitalism, racism and inequality, but against the order of the self and the way we govern ourselves” (1996:231). For instance, discourses of self-esteem play an important role in popular microenterprise training programs, in which “the individual is encouraged and incited to believe in his or her own powers to succeed and then blamed in the event of failure” (Goldstein 2001:236). Self-sufficiency is similarly conceived of as a way of transitioning from welfare “dependency.” Welfare workers are instructed to require self-sufficiency of their clients (although they must interpret what this means) (Morgen 2001). Self-empowerment also operates in this way. In her study of the transformation of public housing in England to a self-managed system, Hyatt observes that “poverty is represented not as a social problem but as a new possibility for poor individuals to experience ‘empowerment’ through the actualization of self-management” (1997:219). Similarly, homeless persons are required to look within themselves (rather than to structural economic changes) for the cause of their homelessness (Lyon-Callo 2001, 2004). As I will discuss later in this chapter, mixed income housing policy can be seen to utilize such political technologies.

The strength of theorizing neoliberalism in terms of governmentality is that it reveals the nuances of how power works both through and beyond the state. However, there are several important critiques of this approach to consider.

A critique wielded by many influenced by Marx is that Foucault's ideas cannot address political economic processes. However, increasingly it is being recognized that the two theoretical perspectives need not be at odds. For instance, in his typology of four different modes of power, Eric Wolf recognizes the fourth mode of power—which is “power that not only operates within settings or domains but that also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and that specifies the distribution and direction of energy flows”—as being the type not only that Marx addressed in terms of the power of capital to harness and allocate labor power but that forms the background of Michel Foucault's notion of power as the ability “to structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault 1984:428) (Wolf 1990:586). William Roseberry similarly writes that those who view Marx and Foucault as at opposite sides of a philosophical divide are wrong to do so; rather the approach of each can be seen to supplement the weaknesses of the other (1997:44). I follow Maskovsky and Kingfisher (2001) in viewing the category of governance as a way “to return critical questions of state activity, national identity and class relations to the forefront of the discussion...to join studies of governance with those that have attended to recent shifts in the global economy of advanced capitalism” (2001:108).

John Clarke (2004) provides another important critique of using governmentality to understand neoliberalism. He writes:

Governmentalities tend to be seen as too unified and coherent, bringing about too fast a closure between strategy and outcome. Attempts to make the world conform, to produce self-regulating subjects, systems and relationships, and to install (and stabilize) new ways of being are governmental projects. But they should not be assumed to work (2004:115).

Rather, we should not assume that strategies work as the strategists expect – and we should be attentive to the unevenness of outcomes (Clarke 2004:115).

In response to these problematic aspects of the governmentality approach, in addition to viewing neoliberalism through the lens of governmentality, I treat neoliberalism as culturally constructed, with important political economic implications.

Neoliberalism and Culture

Catherine Kingfisher (2002), Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997), and John Clarke (2004) all emphasize the importance of culture for understanding neoliberalism. Kingfisher views neoliberalism as a “cultural system”: “an approach to the world, which includes in its purview not only economics, but also politics; not only the public, but also the private; not only what kinds of institutions we should have, but also what kinds of subjects we should be” (2002:13). Similarly, Clarke emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural aspects of the welfare state: “From a ‘cultural’ standpoint, contexts are active and productive: they frame, shape and constitute what is possible, imaginable, knowable and desirable because they embody contested imaginaries. Such imaginaries claim to tell us how society is, what it is becoming and how we should organize to move to the future” (2004:47). Shore and Wright’s assertion that “policy” is an important cultural category (much like “family” and “society”) provides another way for neoliberal social policies to be treated as cultural phenomena (1997:7).

In conceiving of neoliberalism as cultural, I draw on the same concept of culture utilized by Kingfisher (2002), that articulated by John and Jean Comaroff:

the semantic space, the field of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories. It is not merely an abstract order of signs, or relations among signs. Nor is it just the sum of habitual practices. Neither pure langue nor pure parole, it never constitutes a closed, entirely coherent system. Quite the contrary: Culture always contains within it polyvalent, potentially contestable messages, images, and actions. It is, in short, a

historically situated, historically unfolding ensemble of signifiers-in-action, signifiers at once material and symbolic, social and aesthetic (1992:27).

This definition of culture importantly acknowledges variation, contestation, and historical contingency. Treating neoliberalism as a cultural phenomenon in this way, I recognize that neoliberalism is not coherent or complete—and its dominance in contemporary life should not be overstated (Clarke 2004). The interconnection between language and culture is another important part of this definition—for instance, in its description of culture as “semantic space,” “an abstract order of signs,” and “neither pure langue nor pure parole.” Language is a primary way that “human beings construct and represent themselves and others and hence their societies and histories” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:27).

Examining linguistic practices provides a unique vantage point for gaining insight into political economic situations in particular (Kroskrity 2000)—which is therefore very significant for understanding neoliberalism.

Examining neoliberalism as cultural includes understanding the ways it shapes raced, classed, and gendered identities. Kingfisher provides important insights through her analysis of neoliberal ideas about personhood (2002:16-20). She points out that the neoliberal notion of personhood is based on a particular notion of Western individualism that is equated with economic self-sufficiency. Kingfisher points out that cultural constructions of personhood also involve conceptions of non-personhood. In terms of neoliberalism, the poor are not seen as being full persons. Examining neoliberal discourses, Kingfisher demonstrates that poor single mothers are often portrayed this way—particular those who are seen as pathologically “dependent” on welfare benefits (2002:22). Kingfisher also points out the racialized aspects of these portrayals—that African American single mothers have come to epitomize welfare

dependency (2002:26). She states: “this particular view of personhood, and of the societal relationships developed on its basis—particularly those related to welfare reform—are ethnocentric, masculinist, and racist” (Kingfisher 2002:30).

Another aspect of understanding neoliberalism as a cultural construction involves considering how neoliberalism is articulated at the local level. As Hackworth, among others, demonstrates, neoliberalism “is a highly contingent process that manifests itself, and is experienced differently across space” (2007:11). This relates to the idea of “actually existing neoliberalism” proposed by Brenner and Theodore (2002), that ideologically neoliberalism seems less contingent than it is likely to be in practice. For instance, the “withdrawal” of the state (for instance, the dissolution of public housing) is often simultaneously accompanied by new programs designed and implemented through the state (for instance, self-sufficiency and homeownership programs).

One way that actually existing neoliberalism can be explored is by how it manifests itself in particular cities. Because urban environments undergo such rapid transitions, the inner city, for instance, has been called a “soft spot” for the implementation of neoliberal ideals (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000). A central argument of Hackworth’s book *The Neoliberal City* is that “there is an urban geography to neoliberalism, and that the practices associated with it is sometimes at odds with theoretical neoliberalism” (2007:173).

In this dissertation, I contribute to understandings of neoliberalism as it is actually articulated at the local level in an urban neighborhood. Like Clarke (2004) and Hackworth (2007), my research suggests that neoliberal practices may contradict “theoretical neoliberalism.”

Mixed Income Housing as a Neoliberal Policy

Mixed income housing—like welfare reform and the restructuring of Medicaid (Maskovsky 2000)—is a neoliberal solution to poverty. This policy largely frames the cause of poverty as spatial concentration and its solution as “deconcentration.” This conceptual framework ignores structural economic issues such as the lack of a living wage for most entry-level jobs, the high cost of housing in relation to wages, and ongoing housing policies and practices that actively created racial and economic segregation (or “concentration”) in the first instance.

Why Deconcentration?

Through dominant discourses on poverty and affordable housing, it has become “common sense” that poor people living close together is a bad idea. It is popularly understood that this has to do with the inevitable reproduction of pathological behavior due to a lack of role models, positive social ties, and defective neighborhood social organization.

The prominence of these ideas has had much to do with the work of sociologist William Julius Wilson. In his influential book *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), Wilson framed increasing poverty concentration as the cause of most urban problems (i.e., poverty, unemployment, welfare dependency). Wilson’s ideas about poverty concentration support neoliberal ideology because they are based on Wilson’s concept of the “underclass” as the socially and spatially isolated poor who develop pathological behaviors such as criminal activity, chronic unemployment, welfare dependency, and teenage pregnancy. Drawing primarily on census data, Wilson’s argument is that an “underclass” has developed in US inner cities—distinguishable from urban populations prior to the 1980s. Defining the urban “underclass,” Wilson writes: “Today’s ghetto neighborhoods are populated almost

exclusively by the most disadvantaged segments of the black urban community, that heterogeneous grouping of families and individuals who are outside the mainstream of the American occupational system” (1987:7-8). Among those falling into the “underclass” categorization are individuals lacking job training, skills and experience; those engaged in street crime and other such behavior; and families experiencing long-term poverty and/or welfare dependency (Wilson 1987:8). Wilson largely attributes the development of the “underclass” to global economic restructuring that has eliminated certain sources of employment for low and middle-income people. His explanation also connects the exodus of the black middle class from central-city neighborhoods to the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the prior lack of opportunity for black families to move to suburban areas. The result, in Wilson’s view, is a significant “underclass” population isolated in US inner cities. While Wilson links the growth of the “underclass” to structural economic changes, he positions concentrated poverty itself as a primary cause of the reproduction of poverty—therein deemphasizing structure. Wilson suggests that the growth of the “underclass”—and the resulting concentration of poverty—in black communities he describes as largely heterogeneous in terms of class before the 1960s—has lead to “social isolation”: isolation from the “social buffer” that the presence of more affluent families affords; isolation from social networks that might provide job opportunities; and isolation from role models for mainstream norms of family life (Wilson 1987:56-62). As Wilson sees it, it is this social isolation that leads to pathological behaviors.

Susan Greenbaum et al. (nd; see also Greenbaum 2002b) have written about how influential the concept of “social capital,” popularized by the work of political scientist Robert Putnam (1993, 1995) has been to deconcentration efforts. Although theorized

differently by various social scientists, social capital generally refers to the benefits (possibly economic) of social networks and relationships. As Greenbaum et al. (nd) point out, proponents of poverty deconcentration assume that relocation to non-public housing neighborhoods (and also residence in mixed income developments) will lead to an increase in social capital. The social capital of public housing residents is considered to be negative or non-existent.

Neighborhoods are themselves also believed to have “effects” on individuals and families. Proponents of deconcentration suggest that a high poverty neighborhood will have negative effects in terms of employment, adolescent sexual behavior, and success in school. Based on the “neighborhood effects” literature, the mechanisms of transmission of these effects from neighborhood to the individual are: 1) the differential quality of services available to residents of different neighborhoods; 2) the socialization of young people by non-kin adults; 3) peer influence; 4) social networks; 5) exposure to crime and violence; and 6) physical distance from jobs and educational opportunities (Ellen and Turner 1997).

This scholarship draws implicitly on a concept that has been harshly critiqued—the culture of poverty. In many ways “poverty deconcentration” seems to be a new way of asserting “culture of poverty” ideas that emphasize self-perpetuating pathological differences among low-income blacks. Alice O’Connor, for instance, suggests: “In writing about the ghetto as a ‘tangle of pathology,’ then, Wilson was reviving a framework that many social scientists and activists had rejected, not only for fear of ‘blaming the victim’ but because it raised conceptual, practical, and political objections that, at the very least, were themselves worthy of debate” (2001:271). Although Wilson (1987) differentiates his ideas from the culture of poverty, this does not convince O’Connor (2001), among others. In fact, Wilson

has been called “the intellectual reincarnation of Daniel Patrick Moynihan” (Steinberg 1995 cited in Rosenthal 1999). As Goetz writes, “While some analysts object to the concept of the underclass, and others argue that the association of underclass behaviors with minority groups is an empirical exaggeration, there is general consensus regarding the set of behavioral pathologies associated with concentrated poverty” (2003:27). Culture of poverty ideas support neoliberal ideology because of their emphasis on individual behavior, and disregard for structural inequality.

As a neoliberal approach to poverty, relocation programs largely place the responsibility on the individual—who is constructed as someone who will thrive once freed from the confines of public housing and given the opportunity to thrive in better neighborhoods populated by more successful neighbors. If they fail in their new locations, it is then clearly seen as their own fault—or the fault of their race. Meanwhile, voucher holders’ housing “choices” are limited to landlords who find it profitable to accept Section 8 vouchers. Community building in HOPE VI’s mixed income developments is based on similar ideas. Subsidized renters are expected to view those paying the market rate for their apartments as role models, and only the behavior of the low-income renters is expected to be in need of monitoring. Meanwhile, very few former public housing residents relocated through HOPE VI end up living in these developments.⁶

Residential Segregation

In the common sense discourses regarding deconcentration, the old model of public housing is harshly critiqued, but the political and economic context of poverty concentration remains unaddressed. Concentrating the poor in public housing complexes wasn’t simply the

⁶ A recent Urban Institute Report estimates that less than 5% return to the HOPE VI developments (Comey 2007).

result of poor planning limited to public housing—it had everything to do with far-reaching racist (as well as classist) practices enacted by some of the very institutions that are now called upon to deconcentrate poverty.

Although legally enforced residential racial segregation lasted less than a decade (from 1910 to 1917) and in only about a dozen cities, racial residential segregation has been a defining spatial feature of US cities for over a hundred years (Massey and Denton 1993). Over time, this pattern has been enforced and maintained in a variety of reprehensible ways—between 1900 and 1920, through acts of violence by white against African Americans; then through neighborhood “improvement associations” that lobbied city counsels for zoning restrictions, threatened to boycott real estate agents who sold houses to blacks, and enacted restrictive covenants that, if a certain percentage of property owners in a given area signed, could prevent all properties from being occupied by, leased to, or sold to blacks for up to twenty years (until 1948, when the Supreme court deemed them unenforceable) (Massey and Denton 1993:35-36).

Racial residential segregation in the US has largely been enacted and enforced by real estate practices. Real estate boards often initiated restrictive covenants and were instrumental in their widespread use. “Blockbusting” became a common practice among realtors. Realtors would select an area for racial turnover, acquire a few homes or apartments, and rent or sell them to black families. Then the realtors would go door to door warning neighbors of the impending “invasion” of blacks and offer to buy their properties. There was so much demand for housing by blacks, who were prevented access to many neighborhoods, that the realtors could then rent or sell real estate to blacks for much higher prices than whites would have paid (Massey and Denton 1993:37-38).

Real estate valuation has played a major role in maintaining racial/ethnic segregation, with homes in non-white or mixed neighborhoods appraised at significantly lower values than in all-white neighborhoods. In his important book *Crabgrass Frontier*, Kenneth Jackson notes that in determining the value of a home in the 1920s it was well known that the socioeconomic characteristics of a neighborhood determined the value of housing much more than the structure itself. As Jackson writes:

Prominent appraising texts, such as Frederick Babcock's *The Valuation of Real Estate* (1932) and *McMichael's Appraising Manual* (1931), echoed the same theme. Both advised appraisers to pay particular attention to 'undesirable' or 'least desirable' elements and suggested that the influx of certain ethnic groups was likely to precipitate price declines (1985:198).

The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), signed into law in 1933, systematized property appraisal nation-wide, devising a rating system that explicitly undervalued dense, mixed, or aging neighborhoods. Neighborhoods were sorted into four categories of quality—first, second, third, and fourth—corresponding with code letters of A, B, C, and D and the colors of green, blue, yellow, and red. Jackson points out, “The Home Owners Loan Corporation did not initiate the idea of considering race and ethnicity in real-estate appraisal. Bigotry has a long history in the United States, and the individuals who bought and sold houses were no better or worse than the rest of their countrymen” (1985:198). However, the HOLC applied these ideas to real estate appraisal in a formal and far-reaching way.

Since its inception in 1934, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has further perpetuated racial segregation and discrimination. The FHA had a profound effect on the lives of many Americans—namely by promoting the modern mortgage system that enabled a person to buy a home with a small down payment, at reasonable interest rates, and

guaranteed for 25 to 30 years. However, financing was largely confined to suburban areas where blacks were not welcome (Wiese 2004), and the FHA underwriting manual clearly recommended restrictive covenants. The FHA perpetuated “red-lining,” a practice of not financing mortgages in minority neighborhoods.

HUD policies and practices have also been implicated in the persistence of segregation, as evidenced by the Gautreaux lawsuit. In 1976, in response to a racial discrimination lawsuit against HUD on behalf of Chicago public housing residents—the lead plaintiff being long-time public housing resident Dorothy Gautreaux—the Supreme Court ordered the implementation of a program to address residential segregation. As a result, the Gautreaux Program provided Section 8 vouchers to public housing residents (and those on the waiting list) to be used in relocating to predominately white suburbs or low-income predominately black neighborhoods in the city of Chicago. Over the program’s twenty year duration, more than 5,000 participants were relocated to qualifying neighborhoods (Rosenbaum 1995).

The interconnection of slum clearance and public housing since the inception of public housing in the 1930s has been a major factor in segregation, ensuring that the new housing would be built in poor, minority areas located in the central city (Goetz 2003:31). Additionally, most suburban areas opted to not have housing authorities and hence no public housing, a choice built into the public housing legislation (Jackson 1985:225). The passing of the Housing Act of 1949 furthered the segregation of public housing. An amendment was opposed that would have prohibited racial segregation and discrimination in public housing funded under the Act, but opponents of the amendment argued that if racial segregation were not allowed, the much-needed housing would not be built (Julian 2004:5).

Despite the end of restrictive covenants and many other overtly racist real estate practices, the US remains spatially segregated by race and class. Massey and Denton document continued black-white segregation in cities across the US, basing their assertions on a standard dissimilarity index that measures the percentage of blacks that would need to move to achieve an “even” residential pattern where every neighborhood reflects the racial composition of the city (1993:20). Deconcentration programs have not had a significant effect on residential segregation. (Goering et al. 2003). However, there is some evidence that these patterns of segregation are slowly changing (Kingsley and Pettit 2003; Rawlings et al. 2004)

Although overt housing discrimination may have been checked in recent decades, subtler discriminatory practices continue to operate. Massey and Denton (1993) cite a study by George Galster (1990) who synthesized written reports he received from local fair housing organizations nation-wide concerning seventy-one different audit studies carried out in the 1980s. Although the studies had different measures and methods, he concluded that racial discrimination continues to be a dominant feature of housing markets in the 1980s (Massey and Denton 1993:99). In addition, a dual housing market has remained in place—for instance, homebuyers are often “steered” into either white or black neighborhoods, depending on assumptions made about their racial/ethnic identifications (Greenbaum 1993; Massey and Denton 1993:100).

Just because a recent policy shift announces that heterogeneity is a positive neighborhood feature, does not make it so. In fact, Putnam (2007) recently asserted that “diversity” in urban neighborhoods can actually be seen to impede social capital—although he neglects to examine the historical context in which what he views as “diversity” came to

be. In terms of how mixed income housing policy operates in the context of continuing segregation, similar to segregationist activities of the past, many white, middle-class homeowners have opposed deconcentration and mixed income policies, creating significant barriers to the successful implementation of mixed income housing programs. Although white middle-class homeowners increasingly express attitudes of openness toward integrated housing, in practice they are very hesitant to live in racially mixed neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993:92-95). While the mixed income housing programs do not specifically address racial deconcentration, it is to some extent implied given the historical connections between race and class in the US (Oliver and Shapiro 1995).

Political Economic Understandings of Poverty

The focus on the behavior of the poor obscures complex political economic processes that contribute to poverty—e.g., neoliberal economic restructuring, the affordable housing crisis, and the sub-prime meltdown.

Mixed income housing policies like HOPE VI view poverty as a problem of “incentive” that can be addressed through training programs. However, the neoliberal economic model valorizes the market above all else, and companies pay low wages (often to temporary or flexible workers) and do not offer benefits. Studies on low-wage work have shown that it is not possible to make ends meet working these jobs (Edin and Lein 1997, Newman 2000, Ehrenreich 2002). The focus on “dependency” would therefore seem misguided in this context. Edin and Lein (1997) found that, in contrast to the stereotype of welfare recipients being strangers to work, most women who received welfare benefits had spent time working at low-wage jobs. However, because of the cost of childcare and transportation—and the reduction in benefits—it was more expensive for these women to

work (than to receive welfare benefits). However, Edin and Lein (1997) also found that welfare alone was not enough to support any family in their study, recipients worked informally or illegally in order to get by.

Understanding the current affordable housing crisis in terms of “dependency” is similarly flawed. Wages have not kept pace with the rising cost of housing. The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s (NLIHC) annual report (2006) states that there is no county in the entire country where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford a one-bedroom apartment at the calculated Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the area. More than nine million renter households in the US pay half or more of their income for housing (and 99% of them are considered to be low-income) (NLIHC 2006). Nationwide, on average, even a household with three full-time minimum wage workers could not afford a two-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent (NLIHC 2006).

In the political economic context of this year’s subprime mortgage crisis, homeownership rhetoric—which has been a focus of neoliberal poverty policy (including through HOPE VI)—is particularly troublesome. Through the sudden availability of unconventional mortgages, homeownership became a possibility for many who would not have otherwise qualified to purchase a home based on income, job stability, and personal credit criteria. However, a record-breaking number of individuals and families are defaulting on their mortgages and foreclosure rates are skyrocketing. Many found themselves overburdened by sharp increases in variable interest rates and other aspects of their loans (Nocera 2007). It might be useful to ask why the critics of concentration focus on fixing the behavior of the poor, rather than the behavior of bankers and other lenders. It is probable that a further increase in poverty will result from these foreclosures.

Considering this political economic context, it would seem that more effective solutions to poverty would involve political economic changes rather than targeting the behavior of the poor. One intriguing solution is Chester Hartman's (1998) proposal that housing be treated as a basic human right. He argues that the cost to individuals and society at large of not having adequate housing is in fact much greater than the cost to provide housing for everyone. Another aspect of his argument is that a right to housing would supersede a right to other resources because it takes up such a large portion of one's income—as well as its centrality to everyday life.

Poverty Knowledge and Neoliberal Ideology

Neoliberal ideology dominates scholarship on poverty and housing in the US as well. In this way, neoliberal ideology has had an effect on the type of research that is conducted on these issues—and certainly the research that influences policy. Alice O'Connor articulates the relationship between poverty research and policymaking in the following way:

What matters in determining whether and how knowledge connects to policy is not only the classical enlightenment properties of rationality and verifiability; nor is it only the way knowledge is mobilized, packaged, and circulated; nor even whether the knowledge corresponds with (or effectively shatters) popularly held values and conventional wisdom. All of these things have, indeed, proved important in affecting the course of poverty and welfare policy. Even more important in determining the political meaning and policy consequences of poverty knowledge, though, has been the power to establish the terms of debate—to contest, gain, and ultimately to exercise ideological hegemony over the boundaries of political discourse (2001:17).

In this way, neoliberalism has defined the terms of what poverty research will influence poverty and low-income housing policies. Although there are numerous strands of research on these issues, those that gain institutional support are framed in terms of neoliberal ideas. As previously established, neoliberal ideology involves a focus on individual responsibility

rather than social structures. Along those lines, the research used to support the neoliberal shift in housing policy focuses on the problematic behaviors of the poor.

As previously discussed, more than any other contemporary scholar, William Julius Wilson's work (1987, 1996) has been taken up by policymakers to justify this shift. Very soon after the publication of *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), aspects of Wilson's work were taken up by policymakers. During Henry Cisneros's term as HUD secretary, 1993 through 1997, a number of HUD initiatives were enacted to deconcentrate poverty (the obvious solution to "concentrated" poverty)—most significantly HOPE VI and the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) Program, another mixed income housing program that, beginning in the early 1990s, was implemented in five US cities. The elements of HOPE VI as listed on the HUD website—the third, in particular—reveal this strong connection to Wilson's work:

"Lessening concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in nonpoverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed-income communities"

(<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/about/>, accessed October 27, 2007).

Cisneros was obviously influenced by Wilson when he depicted the contemporary "American nightmare" as: "high concentrations of poor minorities in poverty-impacted, revenue-strapped, physically decaying inner cities and older suburbs who are isolated from the opportunities generated in wealthier, vigorously growing outer communities of metropolitan areas" (1996:37).

This concern with poverty deconcentration now dominates social science scholarship on these issues. Citing Paul Jargowsky (1996), Ed Goetz discusses three main "streams of scholarly inquiry" inspired by the publication of *The Truly Disadvantaged*: 1) contesting the factors that cause concentrated poverty; 2) further documenting poverty concentration nation-

wide; and 3) considering the consequences of concentrated poverty—on those residing within such neighborhoods, as well as the larger communities in which the neighborhoods are located (Goetz 2003: 21-22). It is important to note that despite differences, all three strands of scholarship retain the unchallenged focus on poverty deconcentration.

The “neighborhood effects” literature, which fits somewhat with this third strand of research inspired by Wilson’s work, is also influential in the policy arena. This scholarship is frequently cited to support deconcentrating poverty and promoting mixed income communities. The studies (both theoretical and empirical) consider how one’s neighborhood (i.e. economic environment) can have positive and negative effects on a person’s health, employment, education, and likelihood of teen pregnancy, among other social issues (Ellen and Turner 1997). This body of research supports neoliberal ideology because it frames the problem (and solution) to poverty in terms of changing the behaviors of individuals by changing their environment. Although these studies are not very conclusive about the positive effects of moving from high poverty to lower poverty neighborhoods (Galster and Zobel 1998), they continue to be cited to support mixed-income housing policy.

Empirical research on the MTO program is largely structured in terms of neighborhood effects. However, this research suggests mixed results rather than supporting the neighborhood effects claims; this is never mentioned in dominant discourses on the program. For instance, the results reported in Goering and Feins’ (2003) recent edited volume on MTO research are framed very positively, but most studies presented less than overwhelming findings. MTO studies report that many relocatees reported satisfaction with their housing and new neighborhoods; however, the program has not resulted in an

improvement in income (Clampet-Lundquist 2004, Goering, Feins, and Richardson 2002, Katz, Kling, and Leibman 2001, Turney et al. 2006).

Research reports on HOPE VI are much like those on the MTO program. Despite a positive framing of the findings that supports the continuation of HOPE VI, the details of these reports often contain some troubling data. For instance, the most recent Urban Institute report on HOPE VI—*HOPE VI: Where Do We Go From Here?* (2007), a series of separately authored reports—was presented as support for HOPE VI reauthorization. Indeed, a large percentage of HOPE VI relocatees rated their new housing very highly (Comey 2007), fear of crime had been reduced (Popkin and Cove 2007), and, most significantly, youth behavior was improved (Gallagher and Bajaj 2007). However, living costs increased for many (Buron, Levy, and Gallagher 2007); moreover, there was no increase in the percent of relocatees employed and the health of relocatees had worsened considerably—although the specific cause could not be determined (Manjarrez, Popkin, and Guernsey 2007).

In terms of examining the relationship between poverty knowledge and politics as O'Connor (2001) does, HOPE VI research is an interesting example. Research on HOPE VI has been primarily produced by two Washington, DC independent research institutes—the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute (UI). The major publications have been the Urban Institute's *HOPE VI Panel Study: A Baseline Report* (2002) and two reports co-authored by representatives from both institutions: *A Decade of HOPE VI: Research Findings and Policy Challenges* (Popkin et al. 2004), and the most recent *HOPE VI: Where Do We Go From Here?* (2007). All of these reports follow the pattern I described previously, of framing the findings positively despite the fact that much of the evidence presented would seem to challenge the effectiveness of the policy. It is important to note that

many of the researchers in these organizations also have ties to HUD. Brookings and UI receive funding to conduct research on HOPE VI and have also supported HOPE VI legislation (for instance, UI researcher Susan Popkin provided Congressional testimony for HOPE VI's reauthorization in 2007). Similarly, Xavier de Souza Briggs, an academic who publishes on these issues, and Margery Austin Turner, a UI researcher, have spoken out in support of mixed income developments in New Orleans (Briggs and Turner 2005). Popkin, Turner, and even Briggs all formerly worked for HUD. Bruce Katz is Vice President of the Brookings Institution (and has authored a number of publications) and was also Cisneros's former chief of staff at HUD in the early 1990s. Jill Khadduri, a researcher at the research firm ABT who publishes on the topic of mixed income housing (Khadduri and Martin 1997; Khadduri 2001; Khadduri, Buron, and Lam 2004) also used to work for HUD.

Ethnographic Perspectives on Poverty and Housing

Although they have not necessarily influenced policy (for reasons discussed above), other strands of scholarly research have posed questions that destabilize the ideas upon which neoliberal policies are based. Anthropological contributions have been significant.

A number of anthropologists have challenged Wilson's ideas with ethnographic evidence. Anthropologists have taken Wilson to task for making claims about low-income black communities without any ethnographic evidence. For instance, Wilson's portrayal of a mythic past of racially segregated cross-class communities where poor black children lived next to middle-class role models is placed in question by ethnographic accounts that describe social distancing and feelings of contempt between the different groups (Curtis 1999:124; Newman 1992; Williams 1992). Kathryn Newman's article, "Culture and Structure in *The Truly Disadvantaged*" (1992), provides an excellent critique of the mismatch between theory

and data in Wilson's work. She identifies several ways that Wilson, without using the term "culture," connects structural causes to certain cultural effects although he has no real data; such conclusions cannot be made using census data and Newman suggests that this is where ethnography comes in. She discusses Wilson's ideas about household formation and childbearing behavior; his "social isolation" hypothesis; the institutional structure of the ghetto community; and the aspirations and expectations of minority children—disputing Wilson's assertions by presenting contrasting ethnographic data (Newman 1992). For instance, Newman presents ethnographic research from anthropologist Ulf Hannerz's ethnography of a street in Washington, D.C. to counter Wilson's claims of heterogeneous class mixing in black communities prior to the 1960s. Stephen Gregory (1998) also indicates that the mere presence of middle-class blacks is not the answer. His ethnography of Black Corona, a historically black Queens, New York community, describes black middle-class activism that embraces conservative homeowner politics rather than more class-inclusive politics.

Anthropologists have also challenged the stereotype of poor, black communities as pathological. As emphasized by Carol Stack (1974), among others (for instance, see Greenbaum 2002b), poor families living close together can have the positive effect of enabling the formation of social networks to provide basic needs and services such as food, transportation, and childcare. As Alice O'Connor writes, "The pathology, Stack and others emphasized, lay not within the family but in the racism and chronic unemployment—and a welfare system—that made stable, monogamous relationships difficult to sustain (2001:269).

An increasing number of anthropologists have begun to view social policy as an important area for research. For instance, Karen Curtis calls for an ethnographic approach to

poverty policies in her 1999 article, “Bottom-Up” Poverty and Welfare Policy Discourse: Ethnography To the Rescue?” Lamenting that poverty research has been dominated by economics, political science, sociology and geography, she writes: “Thus, the poor are well counted and classified by income, race, ethnicity, gender, household and family status, as well as location, but much less is known about their provisioning strategies, interactions with societal institutions, perceptions of opportunity structures, values and aspirations, or decisions about household and family formation” (Curtis 1999:104). Ethnography’s “bottom-up” approach, Curtis asserts, is uniquely equipped to fill in these critical research gaps. Similarly, in her review article, “Poverty among African Americans in the Urban United States,” Brett Williams suggests that “...ethnography can dismantle the widespread notion that the poor, especially the ‘underclass,’ compose a homogenous mass across the nation, and that their behavior is predictable and uniform” (1992:168). She emphasizes the importance of “[l]ooking at actual, rather than hypothetical neighborhoods” in understanding poverty (1992:168).

A number of anthropologists have responded to the need for ethnographic studies of policy. Sandra Morgen and Jeff Maskovsky’s review, “The Anthropology of Welfare ‘Reform’” (2003), synthesizes recent ethnographic contributions to the study of welfare policy. Anthropological research has recently challenged claims of welfare reform’s success; brought to light the lived realities of poor families; explored policy from the perspective of welfare bureaucrats as well as those receiving benefits; and examined the effects of welfare restructuring on the citizenship of the poor (Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). The growth of ethnographic research on policy is also evidenced by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) recent establishment of a committee on public policy.

By conducting ethnographic research on HOPE VI, our research team has contributed to understandings of this policy (see for instance, Greenbaum et al. 2007). Contrary to the theoretical literature that supports HOPE VI, our research has shown that HOPE VI relocatees had considerable social capital before relocation—and less after relocation. Although many are comfortable in their new homes in new neighborhoods, they also recalled many positive aspects about living in public housing that are not considered in dominant discourses on these issues.

This dissertation contributes to the growing literature critically engaging neoliberal social policies by examining “mixed income housing” through ethnographic research in a Tampa neighborhood affected by the policy through HOPE VI relocations. On the one hand, my dissertation research investigates the impact this policy shift has had on one particular neighborhood. On the other hand, it is an examination of a particular local articulation of neoliberalism. Chapter Three details the research project I undertook.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

This chapter outlines the methods I utilized to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the social dynamics of a mixed race, mixed income suburban neighborhood in Tampa, Florida? 2) How has the HOPE VI program affected this neighborhood? 3) How do these changes in housing policy intersect with other neoliberal practices (i.e., spatial arrangements and discourses)?

In order to answer these questions, I conducted ethnographic research in Tampa's Greenwood neighborhood over a three-year period, from 2003 to 2006. I relied primarily on participant observation and semi-structured interviews but also incorporated archival research and discourse analysis into my research design.

Research Setting

My research questions evolved from initial participant observation activities in the Greenwood neighborhood for a team research project on HOPE VI for which I was a research assistant. Greenwood was selected as a site for that research project because the community was a key site for HOPE VI relocations in Tampa in 2000. Statistically, other than public housing complexes, the Greenwood neighborhood received more HOPE VI relocatees than any other Tampa neighborhood. While the team research project was interested in "social capital" before and after relocation, I began to focus on the increasingly popular idea of mixed income housing as a solution to poverty. In Greenwood, I was able to observe the social dynamics of an actual mixed income neighborhood and the effects of the

implementation of this policy in this sub/urban Tampa neighborhood. HOPE VI was my point of entry, but in Greenwood this program intersects with larger issues related to mixed income housing policy—such as race and class identities and discourses and neoliberal shifts in definitions of the social order.

The Greenwood neighborhood is ideal for exploring these research questions. In particular, while the idea of creating mixed income housing is being promoted nation-wide through HOPE VI and the Section 8 program, Greenwood already consisted of a “mix” of residents of varying incomes and racial/ethnic backgrounds, ranging from very low income to highly affluent families who are black, white, and Latino. I became fascinated with the neighborhood as a “naturally” occurring example of a mixed income neighborhood—especially when it became apparent to me that a significant constituency of Greenwood homeowners were actively contesting the presence of low-income renters in their neighborhood. The resistance and hostility of more affluent homeowners to income “mixing” would seem destined to undermine the primary goal of mixed income housing programs—namely, that poor residents benefit from their interactions with middle-class neighbors. This resistance would seem to complicate, if not contradict, the policy vision of mixed income housing. In Greenwood, it seems that the affluent component does not want to mix with the public housing group, let alone “mentor” them.

For the purposes of my dissertation, Tampa’s Greenwood community is defined by the boundaries of the census tract that includes it. Working with a census tract definition enabled me to obtain statistical data relevant to my research questions, such as the neighborhood’s economic and racial/ethnic make-up. The boundaries of the census tract referred to throughout the dissertation as “Greenwood” are: the Hillsborough River to the

north; 17th Street to the east; Park Avenue to the south; and 35th Street to the west. This area includes a number of residential developments, apartment complexes, churches, schools,⁷ and to the south, a heavy industrial area. Although residents' definitions of their neighborhood vary, they generally follow this definition. While not all residents used this name to refer to the area—in fact, most did not identify with a neighborhood name—the neighborhood civic association, the Sheriff's department, and the local newspaper had adopted it.

Participant Observation

Much of my insight into the Greenwood community has resulted from my participation in the neighborhood. Because the neighborhood consists of residents of various economic backgrounds, in order to interact with both middle-class homeowners and low-income renters, it was important for me to make multiple points of entry. The necessity of this research strategy alone reflects the lack of interpenetration of the various social networks of these different segments. Along these lines, I spent over three years conducting participant observation with the neighborhood's civic association and nearly two years working in the leasing office of one of Greenwood's low-income apartment complexes. My observations were recorded in written field notes over the research period.

The Greenwood Community Council

My introduction to the Greenwood neighborhood was through the neighborhood civic association, the Greenwood Community Council, which I will refer to as "GCC." Driving through the area, I had seen the organization's monthly meetings advertised on a bus stop bench with the slogan "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." Prior to attending my first GCC meeting in June of 2003, I knew only generally about Greenwood—that it had been a major

⁷ Actually, while one of these schools, Hoover Elementary, is within the census tract boundaries, Robinson High School is just outside the census tract boundary.

site of HOPE VI relocations, and I had examined its decennial demographic profile. During the first GCC meeting, I learned that there was significant resistance among homeowners to low-income renters in the neighborhood. After listening to the racially and economically coded discourses at this meeting, I began developing my dissertation project to investigate critically mixed income housing policy on the ground.

I attended Greenwood Community Council meetings almost every month for more than two years, from the summer of 2003 to the summer of 2005. After this two-year period, I remained on the organization's email list to receive monthly meeting minutes and important announcements and also attended meetings when I could. During my two years of intense participant observation, in addition to attending meetings, I participated in two of the neighborhood clean-ups the GCC organized, and I successfully wrote a small grant that provided funds for the GCC to purchase portable signs for advertising their meetings in numerous places in the neighborhood.

By attending the GCC meetings, I learned about the concerns and activities of a group of organized homeowners—much of which revolved around low-income housing in Greenwood. I also learned about the mechanisms of social order (and control) that the group utilizes in its efforts to enact their vision of a better neighborhood, which seems to include controlling and where possible reducing low-income housing with the help of code enforcement, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department (HCSD), nuisance abatement, and companies such as Private Security Services (PSS)—a private security company hired by many of the area's apartment complexes. Representatives from these institutions attended monthly GCC meetings. During the meetings, I gained much knowledge about interrelated raced, classed, and gendered discourses circulating in the neighborhood.

Harbor Pointe Apartment Homes

While requesting a key informant interview with Janice, the property manager of Harbor Pointe Apartment homes, I stumbled upon an amazingly valuable participant observation opportunity. The complex happened to be changing ownership on the day that I dropped by the leasing office to schedule an appointment. The new owner, Pete Edwards, was in the office and asked about the purpose of the interview I was seeking with Janice. When I explained my research goals—including learning about Section 8 in the neighborhood—he invited me to work in the office to learn first-hand about low-income housing.

For the nearly two years (March 2004 to February 2006) that I was employed at the complex, I worked part-time (between twenty and thirty hours a week), although for two months in the summer of 2003 I worked full-time. This paid work experience was an incredible research opportunity. Through daily office tasks—including answering the phone, leasing apartments, filing residents' paperwork, and making photocopies—I learned first-hand about low-income property management, Section 8, apartment applicant screening, and tenant concerns. It allowed me to have lots of interactions with low-income applicants and renters who both did and did not have Section 8.

On a typical day in the 232-unit apartment complex,⁸ I fielded phone calls and visits from dozens of prospective and current tenants. I showed apartments to prospective residents who visited the property. I filed paperwork in tenants' files and the complex's financial files. I processed applications. I made sure apartments were ready for tenants scheduled to move

⁸ Two of these apartments were set up as offices—a leasing office and a maintenance office.

in. Throughout these work activities I learned much from my conversations with applicants, residents, and staff.

For many reasons, these tasks proved much more challenging than I anticipated—and this too was part of my learning experience. Maintenance requests were constantly backlogged —many of which were quite serious—and tenant complaints were constant. Turnover among employees was high. From my conversations with other employees who previously had worked at other complexes, all of these challenges seemed to be typical of low-income apartment complexes. These were important observations; policymakers often note the assumed “instability” of low-income communities but rarely comment on the instability of the agencies that serve them.

I also gained insight into the Section 8 program from working in the leasing office. Before working at Harbor Pointe, I understood Section 8 vouchers only in theory. Working as a leasing agent in a complex where nearly half of the residents are voucher recipients, I learned how Section 8 operates on the ground. There was a period when I was instructed to fill out some of the Section 8 paperwork. I learned about how the bureaucracy of Section 8 is often a major source of stress and concern for voucher-holders. Just because a person has a voucher, does not mean he or she is guaranteed housing.

I also learned much about the business side of apartment complexes and how these decisions and actions affect applicants and tenants. There is a great deal of turnover in apartment complex jobs. During my nearly two years at Harbor Pointe, there were three different property managers. In addition, I witnessed the sale of the property and transition to yet another new owner in July 2005. These business decisions affected the quality of

apartment renovations, the number of staff members retained, approaches to maintenance issues, evictions, tenant payment arrangements, rental rates, and late fees.

Working at Harbor Pointe also enabled me to understand better the context for the semi-structured interviews I conducted (which will be discussed in the following section). In particular, Miss Diane, a HOPE VI relocatee, had been interviewed for the NSF research as a resident of the other neighborhood in the study, Riverbend. About a year into my working at Harbor Pointe, Miss Diane began working in the office at Harbor Pointe and later moved to an apartment in the complex. One of her daughters worked at Harbor Pointe in various capacities (most recently as the property manager) and at times her son did as well. Miss Diane had been to the office several times to visit her daughter and sell Avon products, and when the other leasing agent quit, the property manager hired Miss Diane. She worked the days that I did not, and we worked together on Fridays, a particularly busy day of the week. Working with Miss Diane brought a new dimension to my participant observation experience. She was outspoken about racism and other issues, and we had many good conversations about my research. It was also an opportunity for me to understand what had happened to her since HOPE VI—and since being interviewed.

Although the owner who hired me saw me primarily as a salesperson, I viewed myself as a problem-solver and often an advocate. While working at Harbor Pointe, I attempted to assist both applicants and tenants to solve their problems. Many of these problems had to do with unresolved maintenance requests. Many applicants did not fit screening criteria. Many tenants were struggling to pay their rent and hoped to make arrangements with management; often I was positioned as a gatekeeper to management, and I

would attempt to get the manager to hear these requests. Residents also often needed information, access to a phone or fax machine, and sometimes a sympathetic ear.

Private Security Services

I also gained a great deal of insight into neoliberal forms of social order operating in Greenwood (and intersecting with mixed income housing policy in the neighborhood) by conducting two “ride-alongs” with PSS officers. Through this participant observation, I learned first-hand about the organization’s “community based,” prevention approach to safety and security. I observed PSS officers patrolling various properties, interacting with residents, responding to resident calls, writing reports, and working with the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Department.

In many ways, PSS seems to conceive of social order as physical order—for instance, a tidy property with residents inside their apartments after dark rather than standing in doorways, sitting in cars, or socializing in the parking lot. When a PSS officer encounters a person at night, he/she⁹ will often ask if the person lives in the complex and if so, where. If the person is not specific enough, he/she might be questioned further, asked for identification, and looked into through criminal databases accessible through the computer in an officer’s car. Residents are told that their lease only applies to the inside of their apartments—not the outside—and they cannot loiter in the parking lot. Officers also inspect the properties they patrol for physical damage (such as exterior lights and windows). PSS officers report social and physical disorder to property management daily.

⁹ I conducted one ride-along with a male officer and one with a female officer. At the time, this female officer was the only female officer employed by the company.

My Positionality in the Neighborhood

My position in the community—as researcher, Harbor Pointe employee, and GCC volunteer provided both opportunities and limitations. Sometimes it felt like my community roles as Harbor Pointe employee, GCC volunteer, and researcher were in conflict with each other.

When I attended the GCC meetings, I saw myself as a researcher in a participant observation capacity. However, Harbor Pointe saw me as an employee who could represent the complex in place of the manager (they were willing to pay me for the time I attended the meetings). GCC meeting attendees seemed to see me as one of them even though I did not live in the neighborhood—but also as a source of information about Harbor Pointe.

My position as an office worker at Harbor Pointe provided me with important “insider” knowledge of the complex. However, at certain times this identity seemed at odds with my researcher identity. For instance, when interviewing HOPE VI relocatees who lived in Harbor Pointe about their current living situations, I was concerned that their answers might be influenced by my position in the office.

My own race, class, and gender positioning are also important to this discussion of my position in the neighborhood. At Harbor Pointe, I stood out because of my white, middle-class background. Although I was struggling economically as a graduate student, my education and opportunities for economic mobility were apparent. Also, I should note that I am very fair, blond, and blue-eyed. The majority of Harbor Pointe residents are

economically disadvantaged and African American, although when I first began working in the leasing office the manager and assistant manager were both white.¹⁰

Sometimes residents, my co-workers, and others commented on my “difference.” When I first began working in the office, for instance, two men who had been hired to clean carpets assured me that I could find a job in a nicer complex. Miss Diane, my co-worker, commented several times that “at least I had anthropology,” meaning there were opportunities for me outside of the leasing office. At the same time, however, she and I did commiserate with each other about the negligible size of our paychecks, struggling to pay our bills, and trying to save money. However, I began leaving work early twice a week to teach a class at the University of South Florida (USF) and traveled out of state to academic conferences and to visit my family during the holidays—which very much emphasized my class difference. One day Miss Diane and I were discussing what constituted “middle-class” and she said, “Oh, you mean someone who’s doing well enough to go on vacation.”

Despite my outsider status with respect to race and class, after a few months at Harbor Pointe, because of the high turnover of employees, I felt like an “insider” in another way, in that I had worked at Harbor Pointe longer than any other employee. In this way, I knew well the residents, complex policies, etc.

Interviews

The interviews I conducted for my dissertation were part of the data collected for the team research project on HOPE VI relocations in Tampa in which I have been participating since 2001. Although the goal of the larger project was to understand the importance of social capital in relocations, the semi-structured interview protocol elicited much information

¹⁰ Because of the high turnover in employees, the racial make-up of the office and other work areas frequently changed.

important to my own research questions. In 2003, the project, entitled “Deconcentration and Social Capital,” received a grant from the National Science Foundation. Twenty HOPE VI relocatees and twenty homeowners were interviewed in each of two neighborhoods—one of which was Greenwood—from the summer of 2004 until the winter of 2005. All HOPE VI relocatees interviewed were African American women. Homeowners interviewed were racially varied and both male and female; sometimes they were married couples. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts were coded and analyzed using NVivo software.

All interviewees were asked numerous questions about the neighborhoods where they live, why they moved to these neighborhoods, and about their current—as well as past—housing situation. In the Greenwood interviews, at my request, questions were also asked about gates and fences in the neighborhood, as these were potential sources of social control in the neighborhood that might affect income “mixing.” I actually participated¹¹ in nineteen out of the forty Greenwood¹² interviews.¹³ Eight of these were with HOPE VI relocatees and eleven were with homeowners.

Homeowner interviews were solicited through letters sent to addresses we selected using random sampling. With the HOPE VI relocatees, letters were sent to all of the relocatees’ initial addresses after relocation; this information had been provided by the Tampa Housing Authority (THA) during a pilot research project. We received few responses from the letters to the HOPE VI relocates, which we inferred meant that many had moved

¹¹ For safety reasons—and because of the collaborative nature of our research—interviews were usually conducted in pairs. However, I conducted several interviews on my own—because the interviewee wished to be interviewed in a public place or because I knew the interviewee personally.

¹² I also conducted five interviews in the other study neighborhood, Riverbend.

¹³ However, as agreed upon by the group, I have full access to all of the interviews conducted, as data for my dissertation project.

from their first addresses after relocation—which was potentially telling about the stability of housing choices and options through HOPE VI. By the time we were ready to begin interviewing relocatees in 2004, at least three years had passed since residents moved out of College Hill and Ponce de Leon.

Many of the Greenwood HOPE VI interviews were therefore obtained through snowball sampling, many from contacts I made at Harbor Pointe. At times, I would learn through a conversation with a resident that she had been involved in the HOPE VI relocations. Other times, I approached particular residents based on the list of relocatees' names compiled by the THA.

The interviews provided much information about how HOPE VI had affected the lives of relocatees, beyond the program's stated goals, as well as other neighborhood issues related to mixed income housing policy. In addition, as mentioned previously, through my participant observation activities at Harbor Pointe I was able to collect some follow-up information about interviewees who lived at Harbor Pointe—for instance if they ended up moving. From homeowner interviews I also learned much about how they perceived and have experienced HOPE VI relocations into the Greenwood neighborhood, other neighborhood issues, and the problem of low-income housing.

In addition to the interviews with HOPE VI relocatees and homeowners, I personally conducted four key informant interviews with neighborhood figures to learn more about neighborhood issues: the manager of Harbor Pointe, the president of the GCC, an aggressive homeowner activist, and an active resident of Bradford Park Condominiums, a more expensive complex located adjacent to two low-income complexes.

Archival Research

Archival research also played an important role in my methodology. Census data, information on the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser's website, local newspaper articles, past GCC documents, and Harbor Pointe documents provided an important context (often historical) for the data collected through other research methods.

Because of the importance of neighborhood demographics in the literature on mixed income housing programs (for instance, on the MTO program and "neighborhood effects"), I collected demographic information about Greenwood from the census. This enabled me to understand the neighborhood's racial and economic make-up and changes across census periods, as well as unemployment, and renter and owner occupancy. I also collected information about criminal activity for the census tract from the HCSD website.

I examined a number of policy documents. These include: the THA's successful HOPE VI grant application to redevelop College Hill and Ponce de Leon and documents posted on the THA related website; and Urban Institute and Brookings Institution reports on HOPE VI, as well as reports by the National Coalition of Low Income Housing (NCLIH) that contest rosy assessments by the other foregoing entities.

The Hillsborough County's Property Appraiser's website enabled me to look up neighborhood addresses and learn specific information about various properties. I was especially interested in piecing together a history of the development of the community by understanding when homes, subdivisions, and complexes were built.

Local newspaper articles published in the Tampa Tribune and St. Petersburg Times over the past fifteen years enabled me to understand the history of the GCC and Tracy Dix Estates, a

public housing complex that was constructed so shoddily that it was torn down scarcely a decade after it was built.

GCC documents collected by the current president, John Sanders, also helped me understand Greenwood's history. These documents included past GCC meeting minutes and newsletters (beginning in 1997) as well as letters John had written to government entities requesting various actions in the neighborhood.

Working at Harbor Pointe, I had access to numerous useful archival data sources—including residents' rental applications, credit and background reports, and their files containing archived personal and housing information from their application to the present day (which for some, was more than a decade's worth). For ethical reasons, I did not collect or systematically analyze these documents, although I did make a count how many residents had Section 8 Vouchers. I do, however, draw on the general knowledge I gained from my exposure to these materials in this dissertation.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is another way that I investigated my research questions. The methodology of discourse analysis is grounded in the recognition that "our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but, rather, play an active role in creating and changing them" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:1). In this way, I utilize ethnographic discourse analysis (cf. Messing 2007), an approach that considers speech in its cultural context. This method proves useful in understanding the powerful discourses related to race, class, gender, and real estate at work in the Greenwood neighborhood.

After analyzing the interview data, I selected portions of interviews for discourse analysis to further consider issues of race and class in the neighborhood. I re-transcribed

these interviews, paying close attention to linguistic features. A transcription key is provided in Appendix A.

Ethics

Informed consent was obtained in writing from everyone formally interviewed. I received verbal permission to conduct research from the owner of Harbor Pointe Apartment Homes when I was hired to work in the office. When the next owner bought the complex over a year later, I discussed my research activities with him. However, I was never confident that he fully understood that I would draw heavily on my work experiences in the complex in writing my dissertation. I also later learned that he was not actually the “owner” of the complex but represented a trusteeship that owned the complex. While I shared my research with many complex residents—and formally interviewed several—certainly not all residents at the complex over the two-year period knew about my research. Similarly, while I clearly presented myself as a researcher to the GCC—and interviewed several members—there were undoubtedly meeting attendees who did not fully understand what this meant.

To protect the anonymity of my research subjects, pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation for the neighborhood, the complex, all individuals, and certain other neighborhood entities. Also, the team research project was reviewed by USF’s Institutional Review Board.

Chapter Four

The Greenwood Neighborhood as a Site of Neoliberal Policy

This chapter introduces the research setting, Tampa's Greenwood neighborhood. I will explore the neighborhood's history, institutions, and concerns through the lens of my research questions.

Greenwood is an intriguing site for conducting research on low-income housing policy. More than any of the other neighborhoods into which Tampa HOPE VI relocatees moved, Greenwood is a model relocation neighborhood as specified by mixed income program guidelines. The literature on "mixed income" and mobility programs posits that once out of public housing, relocatees will move to neighborhoods that increase the economic opportunities—among other quality of life improvements—of individuals and families. In theory, these "neighborhood effects" are accomplished in part by residing in a neighborhood with middle-class neighbors to model and with whom to network—and that also have better schools, lower crime rates, and are located in closer proximity to better jobs. Most HOPE VI relocatees do not move into neighborhoods that fit this model. In contrast, in many ways Greenwood would appear to be an ideal relocation neighborhood.

Unlike other neighborhoods where a significant number of former residents of public housing in Tampa were relocated through HOPE VI—for instance, other public housing complexes and Tampa's Riverbend neighborhood—Greenwood is fairly low-poverty. Greenwood's poverty rate is right at 20 percent (Census 2000), substantially below the threshold of "high poverty" neighborhoods (40% poor) set by Paul Jargowsky (2003) and

other proponents of poverty deconcentration.¹⁴ Greenwood also has the lowest poverty rate of all of Tampa's major HOPE VI relocation sites.

The neighborhood itself could also be considered "mixed income," with housing ranging from low-income apartments to homes worth several-hundred-thousand-dollars — and much in between. In Greenwood, in fact, HOPE VI relocatees share a neighborhood with a state representative who is currently running for state senate and another resident who is a serious candidate for the County Commission. Tampa's Greenwood neighborhood is a diverse mix of young and old, African American and white, renters and owners. Low-income and middle-class individuals also live in very close physical proximity to each other in Greenwood. Most of the apartment complexes are located immediately next to residential subdivisions, although complexes tend to be surrounded by fences and have limited access.

As a research site, Greenwood provides an opportunity to look at the dynamics of relocation into an extant mixed income community. To a large degree, the benefits of mixed income living are assumed and are based on theory rather than on empirical research. As discussed in Chapter Two, Wilson's (1987) writings on the "underclass," the neighborhood effects literature, MTO research, and the idealized example of mixed income African American neighborhoods of the past are consistently cited to support the inferred benefits of mixed income housing. The entrenched historical norm of residential racial and income segregation is treated as a mere speed bump in attaining mixed income utopia. However, my empirical research thus far does not support these claims. Perceptions of declining property values and social danger persist among the higher income homeowners, who are not often

¹⁴ At the same time, the MTO experimental group, for instance, required that relocatees move into neighborhoods with no more than a ten percent poverty rate.

willing participants in the utopian schemes of the foregoing theorists. The Greenwood neighborhood provides an important opportunity to study actual interrelations in a heterogeneous neighborhood.

My Introduction to the Neighborhood

Greenwood is a suburban neighborhood consisting of a mix of low-density and high-density housing—and an industrial area in the southern part of the area. As discussed in the previous chapter, the area referred to as “Greenwood” in this dissertation, has an area of 1.68 square miles. The tract had a population of 7, 578 residents in the 2000 census. Greenwood is centrally located just south of Temple Terrace, an historically separate urban municipality surrounded by the City of Tampa. Greenwood is not included in the official boundaries of either Tampa or Temple Terrace, but is jurisdictionally part of unincorporated Hillsborough County. This liminal status means that it is served by Hillsborough County’s Sheriff’s department rather Tampa’s Police Department, among other governmental differences.

I will begin my introduction to the Greenwood community by describing my own introduction to the neighborhood. During my first drive through the neighborhood, I was struck by the contrast of well-maintained suburban homes and yards with dilapidated apartment complexes and small corner stores. This contrast is especially noticeable driving down a primary neighborhood street, Beckin Drive, which runs parallel to the Hillsborough River. On either side of Beckin Drive (a major east/west corridor), are quiet streets lined with single-family homes. Many of the homes built near the river are quite impressive—appraised at around \$250,000. However, when Beckin Drive crosses deeper into the neighborhood, the scenery changes abruptly. On either side of the road are two physically deteriorating apartment complexes—which I have named 1) Harbor Pointe (to the south) and

2) Ashton Heights (to the north). These house primarily low-income renters (in the past, both complexes have accepted Section 8 vouchers, although neither complex currently accepts the vouchers). Beckin Drive then dead-ends at the ornate gates of a well-maintained, predominately middle-class condominium complex.

Continuing south on a busy north-south street are small boxy houses, two low-income apartment complexes similar to those I described previously, and two small commercial strips with convenience stores, hair salons, restaurants, and a laundromat. The large Presbyterian Church, where the Greenwood Community Council meetings used to be held, is also located along this corridor. These meetings are now held at the Greenwood Recreation Center because the Presbyterian Church closed when its pastor moved. Farther south is an industrial area in the midst of which is a Hillsborough County Sheriff's sub-station.

Traveling east on Denton Avenue from 20th Street is the Greenwood Recreation Center, Hoover Elementary School, a gated condominium complex, and the Apartments at Plantation Homes, a gated low-income apartment complex. Traveling west on Denton Avenue from 20th Street is another low-income apartment complex. To the west of 20th Street is a stable, working-class area with single-family homes known as "The Orchard" because all its streets are named after fruit trees (i.e., Peach Street, Apple Street, etc.).

During this first drive through the neighborhood, as mentioned in the previous chapter, I learned about the GCC from an advertisement for the organization on a bus stop bench. GCC meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month, and when I called the phone number on the advertisement—which turned out to be the phone number for the sheriff's substation—I was told to arrive at the Presbyterian Church by 6:30 pm. I will

describe the first GCC meeting I attended as it was a crucial point in the development of my research—and my understanding of the Greenwood neighborhood.

When I arrived at the meeting on June 17, 2003, I was impressed by the turnout—nearly forty people—although I soon learned that a number of the attendees were not Greenwood residents but representatives of neighborhood institutions providing reports to residents. Meeting attendees sat in metal folding chairs at long tables that faced another table at which sat the GCC’s president, John Sanders and the area’s Community Resource Deputy, Deputy Carter. Attendees ranged in age and racial/ethnic background; most were at least middle-aged, and a significant number were elderly. John and Deputy Carter called the meeting to order promptly at 6:30 and began following a formal agenda, copies of which were passed out as attendees entered the meeting.¹⁵ The items listed on the agenda were: 1) Welcome/Introductions; 2) Appoint Recording Secretary; 3) Review and Approve Minutes of Last Month; 4) Reports (Committees); 5) Unfinished Business; 6) New Business; 7) Good of the Community; 8) Next Meeting Date/Time/Place; and 9) Adjournment. When, under “Welcome/Introductions,” first time attendees were asked to introduce ourselves, another member of the NSF research team and I stood and introduced ourselves as USF students conducting research in the Greenwood Neighborhood; we seemed to be positively received.

As the meeting proceeded through the agenda, the issues that I would explore for the next three years were already becoming apparent to me. The meeting seemed to consist of homeowners whose concerns for the neighborhood centered on the area’s low-income renters. This became apparent to me at numerous points in the meeting.

¹⁵ The printed agenda also included meeting minutes from the previous meeting.

When the Sheriff's report was given, it was stated that criminal activity was on the rise in Greenwood. A discussion of what could be done to decrease crime—especially in light of low “manpower” following recent retirements—followed. John mentioned that he hoped to start a neighborhood watch but he also emphasized the importance of apartment complexes doing background checks on potential residents. John's insistence on background checks for apartment applicants interested me because it located the source of neighborhood crime in apartment complexes. Similarly, in a report under “Unfinished Business,” the owner of Harbor Pointe Apartments stated that the complex was at low occupancy because a number of “bad boys” had been evicted. Also, under “New Business,” PSS, the security company that patrolled Ashton Heights, proposed a new strategy for addressing crime. Because once drug dealers are pushed out of Ashton Heights, they may still be in the area, PSS planned to patrol other areas of the neighborhood as well, involving homeowners' properties if necessary (with permission). These were some of my first not very subtle clues about homeowners' attitudes toward low-income renters.

I was also intrigued by discussions of the importance of adding gates and fences to apartment complexes. It sounded like a way of containing the apartment-dwellers. The owner of Harbor Pointe, apparently in response to past GCC concerns, reported that a fence would be installed in the next week, and tenants would need an access card to enter the complex; also, the complex's entrance located the nearest to Bradford Park Condominiums would be closed off.¹⁶ Under the agenda item labeled “Good of the Community,” a woman who lived in Bradford Park Condominiums related that the recently installed fence at Ashton

¹⁶ Only one of these promises was fulfilled—a rented chain link fence was installed.

Heights was a great improvement; she could now drive home without being stopped by a crowd of people in the street.

A prospective buyer of Ashton Heights introduced himself, and homeowners asked him about the rental range for units, whether or not the complex would continue to accept Section 8 renters, and what hours the gates would be closed. To me, this discussion further reflected homeowners' concerns—not just about low-income renters but specifically about Section 8.

I found this obvious opposition to low-income renters interesting because of my research questions about the social dynamics of a mixed income community. It became apparent that what demographically—and in other ways—appeared to be a “good” neighborhood for HOPE VI relocatees when compared to public housing, contained forceful opposition to low-income housing and people. Though a “mixed” neighborhood, it seemed to be socially segregated. My continued involvement with GCC and the interviews we conducted with homeowners reinforced that early impression.

Neighborhood Institutions

In this section, I will describe neighborhood institutions through the framework of mixed income housing policy. I will consider neighborhood institutions that—according to the neighborhood effects literature, for instance—could potentially improve the circumstances of families moving from public housing.

Schools

There are two large public schools in the Greenwood area, Hoover Elementary and Robinson High School. Both schools have scored low on the mandatory standardized test, Florida's Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). Based on information provided at the

Hillsborough County public schools website

(<http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/schools/SelectSchool.asp>), Hoover is predominately African American and “economically disadvantaged.” Robinson is more racially/ethnically mixed and less economically disadvantaged. It also has a competitive International Baccalaureate magnet program. In interviews, perceptions of, and experiences with, these neighborhood schools were varied.

In addition to Hoover and Robinson, there is one charter school in the neighborhood—Science Academy. This middle school, serving sixth through eighth grade, opened three years ago and currently has an enrollment of 70. The Academy’s mission includes upholding the ideals of science and humanism. The school has scored a “D” on the FCAT for the past two years. Another charter school in the neighborhood, Eastside Multicultural School, closed in 2005 after receiving “F” grades on the FCAT two years in a row. It was an elementary school (kindergarten through fifth grade) with around two hundred students, that opened in 1997 and was known for serving primarily poor neighborhood children (Brown 2005).

Hillsborough County also has a School Choice program that enables some students to attend schools other than the one to which they would be assigned based on their home addresses. At certain points in the school year, a parent or guardian may fill out an application that allows the choice of three non-magnet schools from a list of schools with space; once all applications are processed, a student’s family is notified about availability for the student at any of these three schools. While this can mean that a student attends a better school than the one in his/her neighborhood, transportation is not always provided—and such a program discourages increasing funding for schools with fewer resources.

Recreation Centers

The Greenwood Recreation Center and Park provide some after school recreation opportunities. There are basketball courts, a tennis court, a football practice field, and a playground for neighborhood youth to use. The center also offers an after-school program and summer program for children ages 6-17. However, most of the women with children that we interviewed did not utilize the recreation center.

Social Services

Unlike the location of former College Hill and Ponce de Leon public housing complexes, Greenwood has no social service agencies. One church in the area provides some services to low-income families, like, for instance, a health fair that was advertised in the apartment complexes.

Public Transportation

Greenwood is fairly well served by Tampa's Bus Service Hart Line. However, public transportation was more convenient in the College Hill/Ponce area. While there are sixty-one bus stops in Greenwood, there were one-hundred-sixty-one in the public housing area. Both sites include an express bus route; however, the College Hill/Ponce de Leon area borders additional express routes (Spalding and Ward 2002).

Sheriff's Department

Because Greenwood is considered to be part of unincorporated Hillsborough County, rather than the City of Tampa, the area falls under the jurisdiction of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) instead of the Tampa Police Department (TPD). More so than the TPD, the HCSO has a much larger area to patrol, with fewer proportional resources.

Unlike an ideal relocation neighborhood (from the policy perspective), Greenwood is considered a fairly high crime area—especially in terms of robbery, assault, burglary, stolen vehicles, and drugs. (<http://www.hcso.tampa.fl.us/pub/default.asp?/Online/UCRCRIMES>, accessed July 26, 2006). A ranking of “high crime” by HCSO means that the number of crimes that occurred in the area is double and above the number of crimes per 100,000 residents in Unincorporated Hillsborough County.

HCSO has a substation located on 20th Street, in the industrial area of the neighborhood, staffed by a sheriff’s deputy and a community resource officer. The two officers—Deputy Carter and Officer Watson—hold monthly meetings with managers from all of the area apartment complexes in order to discuss common issues and go over the log of calls received from each complex over the past month. The HCSO also assists with the GCC meetings, which were originally organized through a community policing grant.

Greenwood Community Council

The GCC began in 1994 through a federal community oriented policing grant from the US Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing.¹⁷ The grant financed the leasing of property and buildings for a community station, equipping the stations, and the salaries for a Community Service Officer. HCSO paid the salary of a community station deputy. A community council, the GCC, was formed, ideally consisting of the Community Service Deputy and Officer and local residents, merchants, area elementary school principals, county park personnel, and county code enforcement officers. The purpose of the council was to “assist in identifying community needs/priorities and work

¹⁷ The grant actually funded community policing operations in two Hillsborough County communities, one urban (Greenwood) and one rural (Wimauma).

with the station deputies on projects and tactics to resolve problems” (The Greenwood Community newsletter 1998).

According to a newspaper article in the Tampa Tribune, when the GCC was first organized, “the entire community—a mixed group of apartment dwellers and homeowners was more involved with fighting the area’s drug and crime problems” (Parker 1997). The article notes that a few years later, “with those problems subsided, council interest has waned” (Parker 1997). In my experience with the GCC, only homeowners attended meetings, and although attendance at meetings did wax and wane, the organization remained very active in the neighborhood.

At monthly GCC meetings, like the one I described previously, Greenwood residents report neighborhood issues and incidents to sheriff’s deputies and code enforcement officers. Among the issues frequently of concern were abandoned houses with overgrown landscaping, crime (mostly car break-ins and thefts, drugs, and prostitution), concerns over apartments and Section 8, property values, the possible presence of a “rooming house” in the neighborhood, pot holes, and speeding. Residents also used these meetings to share information about neighborhood developments and strategize about neighborhood improvements. For instance, in the summer of 2006, residents made plans to oppose a proposed multi-family development in the neighborhood at a series of zoning hearings. These meetings were also a time to gain information about numerous issues affecting homeowners, and a number of guest speakers were invited—including the principal of the local high school, the head of the Tampa Housing Authority, the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser, a developer, and a representative from the Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Office to educate residents about landscaping options. Literature was

also provided at meetings about safety, living wills, and voting, among other issues. When I first began attending these meetings, there were refreshments (brought by different homeowners each month) and socializing afterwards. This tradition ended during my research period, although many residents still used the meetings as an opportunity to chat with their neighbors.

Residents also organized their own activities to address neighborhood concerns. Over the GCC's history, two efforts stand out as being particularly hard fought—the demolition of Tracy Dix Estates and the Nuisance Abatement Order placed on Ashton Heights Apartments. Both of these efforts have to do with low-income housing in the neighborhood.

Beginning in 1995, the council was concerned with getting the Tracy Dix Estates, a seventy-unit Tampa Housing Authority project, demolished (Parker 1997). John, a homeowner activist and the GCC president, in addition to other homeowners, suggested that the building of Tracy Dix was, in many ways, the cause of the downfall of the community. He described the neighborhood's history in the following way:

This [neighborhood] was the white flight from downtown. This was the outskirts of Tampa years ago and this was kind of the suburbs of downtown and this was where the better homes were being built. This was quite a place at one time and I think a lot of people give credit to the Tracy Dix thing for destroying the neighborhood.

According to a time-line of Tracy Dix compiled by a GCC member from various documented sources, Tracy Dix was built and deeded to the Tampa Housing Authority in January 1984. In September 1994, just over ten years later, the complex was closed due to structural problems. A newspaper article reported that the outside walls were constructed from flimsy sheeting, and the buildings' roofs were not built to sustain high winds and showed visible damage (Rosen 1994). In May 1995, the Corps of Engineers assessed the

refurbishing cost at \$2.1 million. Instead, Tracy Dix was officially condemned by Hillsborough County in July 1996; the formal condemnation order for demolition then occurred in May 1997.

The GCC organized to have Tracy Dix Estates demolished. According to John, during the five year period that the complex was vacant there was “all kinds of crime, drugs, and prostitution, and stolen vehicles were ending up there.” For nearly three years after the complex was condemned, the GCC remained in close contact—making phone calls, sending letters, and meeting—with representatives from the local, state, and federal government as the Tampa Housing Authority sought federal approval and funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for demolition.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development denied the Tampa Housing Authority’s second application to demolish the complex (Parker 1997). In 1998, a newspaper article reported that for the first time in three years, the Tampa Housing Authority was pushing to have the federal government approve a plan to demolish Tracy Dix (Parker 1998). Finally, the complex was demolished in June 1999.

Recently the GCC has been concerned with what will happen to the vacant lot that remains. They fear more low-income housing in their community. When they invited the Director of the THA to speak to this issue, he stated that eventually the land would be used for “affordable housing,” but that not all such housing had to look like public housing.

Regarding the Nuisance Abatement Order against Ashton Heights Apartments, homeowners drew on a Florida statute that states that a property can be declared a nuisance if two felony arrests for drugs and/or prostitution occur on the premises over a six-month period. If pursued by local citizens, the case goes before the Hillsborough County Nuisance

Abatement Board to make a determination. James, a concerned Bradford Park Condominiums owner (and president of the main condominium association) began video taping the nighttime activity at Ashton Heights Apartments, outside of the complex's gates, and put together a fifteen-minute tape characterizing late-night rowdiness in the apartment complex's parking lots and what appeared to be drug deals, which he showed at the hearing. He worked with other GCC members and the complex was successfully declared a nuisance in September of 2002. Ashton Heights Apartments was charged with fines and a list of required actions, which included: providing on-site management (or property representative) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; ensuring that all residents sign a Crime Free Lease Addendum; conducting criminal background checks for all prospective tenants; providing on-site security; and repairing all perimeter fencing.

After the Nuisance Abatement Order was in effect, the GCC saw many of what they consider to be desirable changes in Ashton Heights Apartments—including the addition of a gate with controlled access—and used the order as leverage to pressure Harbor Pointe Apartments to make changes as well. According to James, Harbor Pointe Apartments' management was made aware that area homeowners were observing the complex and they could be the next to be declared a public nuisance. Representatives of both apartment complexes began attending the GCC meetings in order to respond to homeowners' concerns. Harbor Pointe Apartments' owner made promises to add a fence, gate, and security cameras and eventually surrounded the property with an unsturdy chain-linked "Rent-A-Fence" explicitly advertising itself as such.

The GCC has also organized around proposed developments in the community. One development was of single-family homes, but the GCC opposed the density of the

development and was able to cut the number of houses considerably. Very recently, a developer proposed building over 200 units of multi-family housing behind Bradford Park Condominiums, with an entrance off of 20th Street, next to Harbor Point Apartments. The GCC was especially concerned that the developer proposed building *either* apartments or condominiums and that a high number of apartments would increase the percentage of renters in the neighborhood. Increased traffic was also a concern. The GCC protested the development at a series of rezoning hearings, and a rezoning request was denied—primarily because the access road to the development was not wide enough. However, the property owner and its developers continue to try to gain approval through mediation with Board of County Commissioners.

Neighborhood History/Changes

Greenwood History

Based largely on information pieced together from the Hillsborough County's Property Appraiser website (<http://www.hcpafl.org/www/index.shtml>) and the US census, I will sketch a brief history of development in the Greenwood area.

The Greenwood neighborhood consists of smaller subdivisions—although their demarcation is not in any way explicit. The first housing developments in Greenwood were modest single-family houses in the 1950s and 1960s. One interviewee was one of the first to build in the area; in fact, the street he lives on bears his last name. He remembers that when he first moved into his house, centrally located in the neighborhood, there was absolutely nothing between where he lived and the Hillsborough River (bordering Greenwood to the north).

Houses in the subdivision known by locals as “The Orchard”¹⁸ were built in the 1960s. An interviewee who moved into a house in The Orchard with his wife in the early 1960s related the following: “When we moved in there were orange groves back there and cow pastures. There were no apartments. It was really like the country.”

The houses on Puritan—some of which are considered to be part of the Orchard—were also built in the 1960s. The houses on side streets off of the south side of Beckin Drive were built in the 1960s and 1970s. These houses are somewhat larger than those built in the Orchard. The subdivisions off of the north side of Beckin Drive, near the Hillsborough River, were developed at various times. One house on the river was built in 1973 and another, farther west, was built in 1989.

In addition to residential growth, Robinson High opened in 1960, followed by Hoover Elementary in the mid-1960s. Another neighborhood fixture, the industrial area just north of Park Avenue, seems to have a longer history in the neighborhood, as homeowners recall.

Demographically, the neighborhood has changed a great deal since the 1970s, the first time a separate census tract existed for the area. I am including a table to summarize these changes, which I will discuss in greater detail below.

¹⁸ The Property Appraiser refers to this subdivision by a different name.

Greenwood Demographic Profile				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	3,363	6,130	7,744	7,578
% White	98	77.2	48.7	27.7
% Black	2	21.4	48.8	66.6
% Hispanic	12.8	8.9	8.2	8.5
% Other	N/A	1.4	2.5	5.7
% Poor	9.2	10	20.2	20.1
% Female	43.3	50.7	46.6	54.8

Table 1

As illustrated through Table 1, a great deal of growth occurred in Greenwood between 1970 and 1980, likely due to the addition of several apartment complexes. The first apartment complex in Greenwood was Ashton Heights Apartments, built in 1973, after a couple of the small subdivisions were developed, suggesting that the neighborhood was originally envisioned as a neighborhood of single-family homes. John described the introduction of apartments to the neighborhood in the following way:

Ashton Heights, that was, this whole area back here was all farm land, grazing land and Ashton Heights was actually put in cold corruption, they didn't have permitting, they didn't have the right zoning. But, the county commissioners got their palms greased and they let it slide.

According to John, three of the commissioners ended up in jail for other corrupt deals, and the construction of Ashton Heights led the way for Harbor Pointe Apartments. Harbor Pointe was built in 1974, and The Apartments at Plantation Homes in 1974. Then Howard Park

Apartments (a THA public housing complex) was built in 1976, Bay Village in 1979, Grace Manor Estates in 1982, Tracy Dix Estates (a THA public housing complex discussed previously) in 1984, and Granville Court in 1986. I understand that another complex was built next to Bay Village at about the same time but was condemned and torn down approximately ten years ago. Bradford Park Condominiums and Carrington Homes Condominiums were built in 1981. Riverview Estates, a complex of townhomes, was built in early 2000.

Low-Income Housing in Greenwood

Housing targeted to low-income renters in Greenwood began in 1976 with Howard Park Apartments, a public housing complex with a hundred units. Tracy Dix Estates, a public housing complex with seventy units, was then built next to Howard Park in 1984. At some point, in the mid-1990s as homeowners understand it, neighborhood apartment complexes began accepting Section 8 vouchers.

As several area homeowners remember it, when they were first built, Ashton Heights Apartments and Harbor Pointe Apartments were considered to be upscale complexes. According to John, when Ashton Heights Apartments was built, it was “the place to live” for “New Tampa type people¹⁹ that didn’t buy, that rented.” One homeowner remembers attending fraternity parties at Harbor Pointe when he was a student at USF.

Several homeowners suggested to me that the neighborhood began “declining” when Tracy Dix was condemned and residents moved into other area apartment complexes, which had begun accepting Section 8. If that is true, Section 8 would have become prevalent in

¹⁹ (Fairly well off.)

neighborhood apartment complexes around 1994. Unfortunately I do not have specific information dating that far back.

The census data summarized in Table 1 suggest that a significant increase in poverty actually occurred between 1980 and 1990, a decade before homeowners identify neighborhood “decline,” perhaps because of the addition of the Tracy Dix complex during that period. Homeowners did not seem to notice this shift until the low-income renters moved from Tracy Dix to more central areas of the neighborhood.

Other Neighborhood Changes

Many Greenwood homeowner interviewees were concerned with neighborhood changes over the past decade. In particular, many long-term homeowners described an increase in crime (particularly drugs), a physical and aesthetic decline in properties—both single-family homes and apartment complexes—an increase in low-income renters or a different “type” of people, a larger number of children in the neighborhood, and some turnover among homeowners—particularly the elderly. Several interviewees mentioned recent changes for the better regarding the physical rehabilitation of a couple of the apartment complexes and the diligent efforts of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s department in the neighborhood. Only one homeowner specifically mentioned HOPE VI relocations as a source of neighborhood changes. He claimed to have heard from a representative of the Sheriff’s department that a large number of people had been relocated to the neighborhood from College Hill and Ponce de Leon, causing a significant increase in crime.

One noticeable change in Greenwood is that between 1990 and 2000 (when HOPE VI relocations occurred), Greenwood went from being 48.8% Black and 48.7% white to 66.6 %

Black and 27.7% white. However, the poverty rate remained almost exactly the same—20.2% poor in 1990 and 20.1%²⁰ poor in 2000. Several white interviewees specifically mentioned the increasing number of African Americans in the neighborhood as a significant change. In all of these cases, the interviewees were suggesting that other white homeowners were unhappy with this change (and that many had moved because of it). However, homeowners were more likely to hint at economic changes in the neighborhood, primarily the perceived increase of low-income renters, especially between 1990 and 2000. It is interesting that such a shift is not supported by the census data, while a shift in racial demographics is. It is also important to note the significant increase in the percentage of females between 1990 and 2000, which could be associated with an increase in female headed households. Again, homeowners did not identify this specific change, but their general concerns about “decline” could be connected to this change as well.

Greenwood Complexes

Although Greenwood contains a diverse “mix” of residents from various economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds, in many respects homeowners seem to maintain their distance from renters in apartment complexes. Unlike planned mixed income communities, in which low-income and middle-class families live in the same housing development,²¹ in Greenwood low-income renters are almost exclusively relegated to apartment complexes. And, as discussed in the previous section, a significant number of homeowners resist the presence of low-income housing in their community.

²⁰ These percentages refer to number of persons below the poverty level (rather than number of families/households).

²¹ Even in these planned mixed income communities, separation may be enforced according to class or even race (Clark 2006).

There are six privately owned apartment complexes²² and three condominium/ townhome complexes within the census tract boundaries. Currently three of these apartment complexes accept Section 8. This includes The Apartments at Plantation Homes, which is also a Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)²³ property. Individual owners of condominiums may also accept vouchers.

All of these complexes are fenced (or walled) and many are gated as well. Ashton Heights Apartments, Bradford Park Condominiums, Granville Court, and Riverview Estates are all fenced and gated. Bradford Park Condominiums has a guard patrolling the gate twenty-four hours a day and the swimming pool is even separately gated. The Apartments at Plantation Homes used to also have a guard sporadically in place at its guard shack, although currently the complex is fenced and patrolled by a private security company, but the guard shack is no longer in use. Ashton Heights Apartments and Riverview Estates have gates accessible with an access code. However, when there was a guard hired to limit access to The Apartments at Plantation Homes, he/she was frequently not present and did not always strictly control access, and the gates at Ashton Heights Apartments often remain open. Harbor Pointe, Grace Manor Estates, Bay Village, and Carrington Homes have fences around the perimeter of the properties but access is not controlled.

Based on my experiences at Harbor Pointe, I understand that these apartment complexes are not in and of themselves mixed income. Harbor Pointe, for instance, could not be considered “mixed income.” Although the complex is approximately half occupied by tenants with Section 8 vouchers, the other half would not be considered to be middle-class.

²² This does not include the one public housing complex in the area.

²³ The LIHTC provides rental housing development investors with a yearly tax credit for developing rental housing reserved for households with incomes no greater than 60 % of the area’s median income; at least 40% of a development’s units must be reserved for these households (Khadduri 2004:2).

Many tenants held service jobs. During my employment at Harbor Pointe, I only encountered two or three tenants who might be considered to be “middle-class.” One of these was a police officer who made over \$40,000 a year. Another had a mid-level job but owned a house out of state. Another helped run a family-owned funeral parlor.

Most residents—those who did and did not have Section 8—might be characterized as “working poor.” In many ways, the non-Section 8 residents were more economically insecure than those with Section 8. Residents who fell behind in rent payments were usually not those with Section 8. Certainly those evicted for non-payment were rarely Section 8 voucher holders. Many residents who did not have Section 8 vouchers consistently made payment arrangements because they could not pay their rent on time. One woman, Ms. Harding, had a standing arrangement to pay her rent late, with a late fee. She made a payment toward her rent about twice a month, each time she got paid. She was renting a three-bedroom apartment and supporting her daughter and grandson alone by working at a daycare center. Another woman and her husband often made payment arrangements for their one-bedroom apartment. They had chronic health problems. She worked in an office, and he was a truck driver. Things were especially difficult when her husband lost his job. Ms. Wright lived in a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment with her two teenage daughters. They both worked and contributed to the household. One dropped out of high school and the other started at USF on an academic scholarship. The entire period that I was at Harbor Pointe, Ms. Wright only paid her rent on time once or twice. Her employment was rarely stable, which made things very difficult. Undependable transportation was another problem. For a period, Ms. Wright had a temporary job at a call center that became permanent. Her wages were between \$10 and \$12 per hour. Although the job came with benefits, Ms. Wright soon

cancelled them because they took too much of her paycheck. Ms. Wright ended up losing this job when she lost her cool during taped customer service calls. She has since found other work, but none of the jobs she has held has been very high paying or stable. Recently Ms. Wright moved to another apartment complex outside of Greenwood, though nearby. She lives with her college-aged daughter (the other daughter moved to Atlanta).

Blockgroup census statistics support these observations regarding the clustering of low-income renters within the Greenwood neighborhood. For instance, in 1990 the median household income for the census tract was \$20,536. However, one blockgroup within the census tract had a median household income of only \$7,934 (Greenbaum and Ward 2004).

Harbor Pointe Apartments

I will describe Harbor Pointe Apartments in detail as it is the complex I know most intimately, in order to shed further light on neighborhood issues—from the perspectives of both low-income renters and homeowners. In over thirty years, the complex has been through many owners, managers, maintenance supervisors, and other staff.²⁴ I will begin my description of Harbor Pointe with its ownership by Felix Rodriguez, beginning in 2002. Although I did not work at the complex at that time, two of the complex’s employees that I worked with had also worked for him.

In August 2002, Felix became the property’s owner. From talking to employees who had worked for Felix, I learned that it had been very difficult to keep the complex running under his ownership. He was pretty much characterized as a slumlord. He lived in another city in Florida and did not visit the property often. The rumor was that he had inherited the

²⁴ The Hillsborough County Property Appraiser’s website lists four “qualified” sales and three “unqualified” (this means that the sale price did not match the market value, involved multiple properties, or was between family members). Two of these sales occurred in the past three years.

property. Employees did not always get paid on time. Vendors weren't paid. PSS had made this fact known at a GCC meeting—announcing exactly how much money Felix owed PSS. The lawyer wasn't paid so evictions were not possible.

Many corners were cut. Apartments were rented “as is,” with cleaning done by the office staff. At a GCC meeting where homeowners were continuing to ask the managers of the complex to put a fence around the property, Felix admitted that he was “cheap” and did not want to invest much money on the fence. When he sold the property to Pete and Sam in February 2004, the property was in a deteriorated state and appeared to have been neglected for years—certainly even prior to Felix's buying the property.

Felix did not seem to be interested in the homeowners' concerns. Although the property manager, Janice, attended GCC meetings, she hinted that Felix was unavailable much of the time. When Felix did attend a meeting (the first meeting I attended), he made promises he did not keep. In terms of responding to homeowners request for a fence around the property, he finally installed a worn out Rent-A-Fence, that was aesthetically much worse than having no fence at all and certainly was not what homeowners had in mind.

For residents during this period, the maintenance workers did not have supplies to make repairs. At least one woman's apartment went into abatement²⁵ through Section 8 because it failed inspection three times. Residents who did not pay their rent received warnings, but were not evicted, because Felix was past due with the lawyer.

In 2004 Felix sold the property. In contrast, Pete (the new primary owner) and Rich (his partner) were very hands-on owners. Even though they lived in—and were based out of—Ohio, the first months that they owned the property they were there much of the time.

²⁵ An apartment goes into abatement, meaning that Section 8 will not pay for a voucher-holder to inhabit it, when it fails three consecutive inspections.

They rented a condominium in the Tampa area and stayed there on and off for months.²⁶

Their company's mission statement involves providing quality housing and compassion for low and moderate-income seniors and families and persons with disabilities while also providing investors with a profit. The statement also provides information about their management style's emphasis on personal integrity, which seems very much in contrast to the approaches of other Harbor Pointe owners. For the most part, Pete and Sam seemed to fulfill this mission.

During my first year at Harbor Pointe, under the new ownership of Pete and Sam, the complex underwent major aesthetic improvements that many complex residents and area homeowners viewed positively. The complex also began tightening its applicant screening requirements, which I will discuss in-depth in a later chapter. Many evictions were filed for non-payment. A few months after beginning these changes, Pete and Sam hired a new property manager,²⁷ who tightened up on all community policies. Pete also hired the security company, PSS, which had previously patrolled the property (before Felix stopped paying them).

After Pete and Sam bought the property, a flurry of construction immediately commenced. They brought a general contractor and his crew of construction workers. The construction workers were housed in vacant apartments. Work progressed quickly, although it was halted for a period for permitting reasons.

Although Pete and Sam created a higher standard for the apartments—painting the cabinets white to cover their 1970s look, replacing many carpets and appliances, and so on—

²⁶ After a year, Pete moved his belongings from the condo to an apartment at Harbor Pointe fixed up for him but he only visited occasionally.

²⁷ The current manager Janice was demoted to “office manager” and quit as a result.

at the same time, they were still very cautious with expenditures. They were involved in even the smallest purchasing decisions. For instance, they went through the vacant apartments and personally determined which carpets they thought needed to be replaced. Certainly Pete and Sam were interested in making a profit.

Pete seemed very concerned about the larger Greenwood neighborhood. He made sure that a representative from Harbor Pointe attended monthly GCC meetings and even attended a couple himself. At one point, the Sheriff's department arranged a separate meeting with representatives from Harbor Pointe, Ashton Heights, Bradford Park Condominiums, and PSS to address youth crime. Pete and Sam flew from Ohio just for this meeting.

Not even sixteen months after Pete and Sam bought the property, they sold it to "Executive Group." Robert Jackson, who introduced himself as the owner, actually represented a living trust composed of multiple people (of which he was not one). Robert's approach was much different than Pete and Sam's approach. Based in North Carolina, Robert was very much an absentee landlord. Most of the employees—including me—came to see him as a slumlord.

It seemed like Robert's only concern was profit. Employees became "independent contractors." Promises were made and not kept. Bills were not paid. Employees were let go to cut costs. During Christmastime the waste removal company had not been paid, and trash was piled up around the dumpsters, which were overflowing. Work orders were terribly backed up—in part due to the decreased number of staff. They were unable to get apartments move-in ready by the day that residents were scheduled to move in. Meanwhile, Robert pressured Harbor Pointe office workers to lease more apartments. He even had the

maintenance office cleared out and converted into an apartment to rent out. The grounds were consistently strewn with trash because there weren't enough maintenance workers to address maintenance requests and also take care of this task.

Based on my experiences attending GCC meetings, I surmised that to homeowners, changes in ownership meant changes in screening guidelines for who would move into the community, decisions about evictions (who stayed in the community), and care of the physical property. To renters, changes in ownership meant changes in rental rates, management style, applicant screening policies, and late payment arrangements.

In contrast to the ways that mixed income housing programs and policies are theorized, HOPE VI relocatees in Greenwood are segregated in apartment complexes that—while not inhabited only by Section 8 voucher holders—certainly are not economically diverse. Living in these complexes, they become the generalized targets of homeowners who view low-income renters as contributing to neighborhood “decline.” The activist efforts of a group of homeowners, some of which involve gating and fencing, further prevent the social mixing envisioned by HOPE VI advocates. In this new, privatized model of “public” housing, HOPE VI relocatees also become subject to the decisions of landlords who treat Section 8 vouchers as an investment opportunity.

Harbor Pointe is an important site in Greenwood because it has housed a large number of HOPE VI relocatees and has also had an impact on the larger Greenwood neighborhood. The following chapter describes the complex in detail as both a home and an investment.

Chapter Five

Home or Investment?: The Privatization of Public Housing

Chapter Two discussed the history of the problem of affordable housing and the various government programs designed to address the issue. Of particular importance here is the recent neoliberal approach, which has resulted in the privatization of existing public housing through HOPE VI and has also increased government reliance on the private housing market to provide subsidized units through the Section 8 program. Therefore, in order to understand low-income housing policy on the ground, it is necessary to examine the private rental market. In this chapter, I describe in detail the everyday workings of an apartment complex geared toward low-income renters²⁸—Harbor Pointe Apartments. The chapter details the perspectives of both landlords, who see the property as an investment, and renters who make the apartment community a home.

Harbor Pointe Apartments

Harbor Pointe Apartment Homes is located in the northwest part of the Greenwood neighborhood. The complex is located amidst single family houses; between solidly middle-class subdivisions and The Orchard, a subdivision with more modest homes. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Harbor Pointe is located immediately next to a middle-class, gated condominium complex—Bradford Park—and across the street from another low-income apartment complex, Ashton Heights Apartments.

²⁸ During my research period, nearly half of the residents were Section 8 recipients. A number of residents had moved to Harbor Pointe after being relocated through HOPE VI.

Built in 1971, Harbor Pointe consists of twenty-nine two-story buildings of varying sizes housing 232 apartments. Most of the apartments face inward toward a common parking lot, except for the apartments along the west side and back of the complex. There are three different floor plans for one-bedroom apartments, three different floor plans for two-bedroom apartments, and one floor plan for three-bedroom apartments. Most of the apartments are spacious, with ample closet space and private balconies. All of the apartments have central heat and air.

During the time that I worked at the complex, the interior details of the apartments varied considerably depending on which property owner, manager, and particular maintenance staff were working in the apartment at the time it was prepared for a tenant to move in. For the most part, the carpeting was a utilitarian dark brown to hide regular wear and tear. Standards for replacing carpeting in an apartment varied. A trusted and affordable carpet cleaner was often called in to evaluate the carpets and recommend new carpeting when necessary. Older appliances were retained whenever possible. This meant that many apartments had dishwashers from the 1970s and ovens with only one rack while others had brand new appliances. The same applied to the vinyl floor covering in the small entranceway, kitchen, and bathroom/s; sometimes new vinyl was provided and other times, worn and often very stained vinyl was left in the apartment for the new tenant. Kitchen cabinets were made of pressed board and the exterior was usually a color popular in the 1970s—yellow or lime green—covered with white paint. Counter tops, and sometimes bathtubs, were painted over rather than resurfaced.

Among the several amenities at Harbor Pointe are the three laundry rooms dispersed throughout the complex; none of the apartments had washer/dryer hook-ups. Pete and Sam,

the owners for whom I first worked, had brand new washers and dryers installed—four of each for the three different laundry rooms. While originally the laundry rooms were open for twelve hours a day, this changed when several residents reported to the management that some teenagers were using the facilities to engage in sexual activity and gambling. The laundry rooms were then open from 9 am to 6 pm, which was an inconvenience for many who worked during the day. The cost to wash and also to dry was very affordable, \$1.25 each, but there were a limited number of machines—and the machines were somewhat small. A number of residents washed their clothes at a nearby Laundromat instead.

Harbor Pointe advertises several outdoor recreational facilities: two swimming pools, a basketball court, and a playground and picnic area. However, use of these amenities was limited. The two pools remained locked except when the leasing office was open; in addition, the pool that was located at the back of the complex remained locked most of the time. The other pool was directly behind the leasing office, so the managers felt they would be able to more closely supervise swimming there. Often the pool remained locked until someone requested that it be unlocked. The colorful, well-constructed plastic playground that Pete and Sam added to the property was certainly enjoyed by resident children; however, repairs were not made when the slide eventually broke. In addition, although there was a basketball goal, nets were rarely provided. With the renovations instigated by Pete and Sam, the former club house instead became a building in which to store building materials and the golf carts that the maintenance workers used for transportation throughout the complex.

The cost of apartments at Harbor Pointe was relatively reasonable when compared to Fair Market Rent calculations, although many families did not find the rent affordable. In 2006, the monthly rent for the least expensive two-bedroom apartment at Harbor Pointe was

\$670²⁹ (including water), which is considerably less than the Fair Market Rent for Hillsborough County for a two-bedroom apartment—\$817 a month (Low Income Housing Coalition 2006). HUD’s assessment of the Fair Market Rent for the Tampa/St. Petersburg/Clearwater area lists a two-bedroom at \$785 a month (US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006), which is still more expensive than the most expensive two-bedroom apartment at Harbor Pointe—the two-bedroom, two bath townhouse that rented for \$740/month (including water). An illustration of the actual lack of affordability of Harbor Pointe is that most applicants did not meet the minimum income requirements for renting an apartment. These guidelines—like most established by landlords—are based on the premise that a family cannot truly afford an apartment (and are at risk of defaulting on rent) if more than 33% of the household’s income is expended on rent. Therefore, in order to be approved for an apartment at Harbor Pointe, a family’s monthly income (before taxes) needed to be three times the monthly cost of rent. Many applicants were single mothers working low-wage jobs or elderly persons living on Social Security and did not meet these guidelines. As leasing agents, we were told that we could stretch the guidelines as long as an applicant’s monthly income was at least 2.5 times the monthly rent. However, many, especially elderly persons on social security, still did not meet these requirements. In order to further demonstrate the relative cost of Harbor Pointe, the one-bedroom apartment that I lived in outside of the neighborhood was nicer and less expensive than the comparably sized unit at Harbor Pointe. Although Harbor Pointe residents made their housing choices based on a number of factors, I believe that one reason many chose the complex was that while the rent might be more affordable somewhere else, background and credit checks might also be

²⁹ This apartment is a two-bedroom, one bath apartment.

stricter (as was the case with my landlord). I discuss credit and background screening issues later in the chapter.

Many individuals and families who visited Harbor Pointe for information learned about the complex through word of mouth. Those who were first exposed to the complex from mainstream advertising seemed less likely to be seriously interested once they actually visited the complex. A very large percentage of those who expressed interest in visiting the complex never did. Although this is probably common even with more upscale apartment complexes, another leasing agent who lived in the complex before working there speculated that many did arrive at the property but after seeing its exterior and the location, did not bother coming inside. Several individuals or families who visited the complex made explicitly disparaging remarks as I showed them around the complex. For instance, on one occasion, I began showing a white male and female around the property; they quickly made a comment that it was the “ghetto” and that they would never live in a place like this. On one or two occasions, white prospective residents explicitly asked me if there were any white people who lived in the complex. Not all of those who made negative comments were white. When I showed apartments to prospective tenants, the lack of updating they could expect was a concern for many. Because there were no “model” apartments, I had to show apartments in a range of conditions. Prospective residents would ask if the carpet was going to be replaced or the linoleum or even the light fixtures, and I would have to tell them that it was up to the manager and maintenance crew to determine what changes needed to be made to particular units.

Managing Low-Income Apartments

For private landlords who own and manage low-income apartment complexes, the two primary goals are to generate profits and to protect their investment. It is usually a lesser goal to provide quality housing to residents, although in some way this remains a stated goal of many landlords who own low-income apartment complexes—even if it is often accomplished in order to attract more renters and therefore generate more profits. The stereotype of the “slumlord,” who profits by renting substandard housing to poor families, is a somewhat accurate portrayal of many landlords of low-income apartment complexes. Certainly Tampa has a record of such landlords.

Steven Greene is an infamous example of a Tampa slumlord. He was once listed among New York City’s ten worst landlords and holds the record for the highest fines ever issued by Hillsborough County, Florida code enforcement (Dennis 2006). As described in a 2002 newspaper article, Green is known for buying:

...an aging apartment complex in need of work, getting a bargain price and a venture capital mortgage loan that keeps his down payment near zero.

He hires painters, landscapers and other workers to do renovations as a prelude to raising rents. He often keeps his contractors waiting for their money. As his cash flow improves, Green uses his new apartment complex as collateral for a new, larger mortgage loan from a big bank or other conventional lender (Wexler and Testerman 2002).

Green has owned at least one Greenwood apartment complex—Grace Manor Estates, which advertises “luxury” apartments and provides housing primarily to low-income families. In 2002, code enforcement officials cited Green for more than 500 code violations

at several of his apartment complexes (Wexler 2002). Grace Manor Estates was one of these. Since that time, he has sold most of his properties.³⁰

Although the various owners of Harbor Pointe Apartments were not all so easily defined as slumlords, the complex has proved quite profitable for several of its owners, in large part through disinvestment. As described in a previous chapter, the first owner I encountered was Felix Rodriguez, who invested very little in the property. Pete and Sam put a great deal into the property (approximately a million dollars), but they then profited from the sale of the property just over a year later—more than two million dollars above their total investment. Profits notwithstanding, they did try to improve the property for the tenants and appeared to regard low-income housing as an honest enterprise. In contrast, Robert Jackson, the current owner, appears to be primarily concerned with profits. During the course of my fieldwork, the property turned over three times, and it is important to reiterate that none of these Harbor Pointe Apartments owners lived locally.

Robert Jackson's company bought a number of properties in various states with the idea that providing housing for low-income clientele is a market niche. In a casual conversation in the leasing office during one of his visits, he explained his investment approach to me. He said that renters in higher end apartment complexes would likely soon become homeowners—since the rate of rent is nearly the amount of a mortgage.³¹ In contrast, low-income renters will likely never become homeowners and will always need an

³⁰ He is now in a coma, from being hit by a car in front of a New York nightclub; his condition has allowed him to evade high dollar civil proceedings in a Tampa courtroom.

³¹ In fact, in some markets, the monthly rent for an apartment is more than the average monthly mortgage payment.

apartment to rent. He indicated that he and his business partners bought properties wherever the market dictated, which included Miami and a couple of cities in California. Looking at the housing situations of these cities (including Tampa), it seems that Robert's company may have been interested in buying properties in cities where homeownership was becoming unattainable for a large percentage of the population.

Unlike with public housing, profits are always at the forefront of low-income housing management in the private housing market. However, in order to turn a profit, a complex cost-benefit equation must constantly be negotiated—and these management decisions have significant effects on the lives of those who call the complex “home.”

Section 8 Program in Practice

The Section 8 program is an attractive option for profit for low-income apartment complexes. In many ways, the Section 8 program can help make a complex that is not competitive with newer complexes more profitable, because revenue is guaranteed. Only a limited number of landlords accept vouchers, so demand remains high. Participation in the Section 8 program may also enable a landlord to charge higher rent for apartments than their realistic market values; the Fair Market Rates calculated by HUD are often relatively high. However, a landlord cannot charge more for an apartment rented by a Housing Choice Voucher holder. Comparable units must be rented at an equivalent rate.

In order to understand how this policy operates in the private rental market, it is necessary to comprehend how the Section 8 program works in practice. I will briefly describe the process of receiving and using a voucher in the private rental market, based on my experiences working in the leasing office of Harbor Pointe Apartment Homes. First, a prospective participant in the program picks up his/her Section 8 voucher and Request for

Tenancy paperwork at the Section 8 office. The voucher is the top sheet of a carbon copy document containing basic information about the size and price of the rental unit for which the voucher holder qualifies. In contrast, the Request for Tenancy paperwork is a thick packet of forms that the landlord fills out; this is the paperwork (not the voucher) that actually secures the rental unit. Among the information required for these forms is a list of three comparable rental units in the same area and the prices for which they rented. The paperwork requires signatures from both the landlord and the voucher holder on numerous pages. Sometimes, the voucher holder is given the voucher and not the Request for Tenancy paperwork; in this case, the voucher holder can show the landlord that he/she does indeed have a voucher and will be able to bring the Request for Tenancy paperwork soon. I observed that a number of times this caused problems for applicants who obviously had their vouchers but for some reason could not get their Request for Tenancy paperwork from their counselors. This meant that the entire process was held up because an inspection and move-in cannot occur without the Request for Tenancy paperwork—and a good amount of time must be allowed between the time an applicant submits the paperwork (filled out by the landlord) to his/her counselor and the date the applicant actually moves in to his/her apartment. Many Section 8 Program participants find the “street-level bureaucracy”³² involved at this stage very time-consuming and often frustrating, with long waits at the Section 8 office and frequent miscommunication.

Having secured the initial paperwork, the voucher holder must find an apartment or house to rent. In the search for suitable housing, in addition to difficulties with

³² Michael Lipsky defines “street-level bureaucrats” as “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (1980:3).

transportation³³ that many face, it can be hard to find landlords that accept vouchers; this has been noted as a possible barrier to voucher use in the literature on MTO programs (Goering et al. 2003). I have also witnessed this problem first-hand, as many apartment complexes near Harbor Pointe stopped accepting vouchers, decreasing the pool of housing from which voucher holders can “choose.”³⁴ Landlords and leasing agents at apartment complexes can provide significant challenges, as well as assistance, in the process. Sometimes leasing agents are not explicit about screening policies or timely with application processing, which can lead to wasted application fees and time. Especially in today’s “risk society” (Beck 1992), most landlords require some form of credit and background check. Even though voucher holders have a significant percentage of their rent paid by the Housing Authority (or Hillsborough County), guaranteeing a landlord that at least a good portion of the rent will be paid, poor credit may still be held against an applicant. Although a voucher holder has at least 60 days to find a suitable unit—and the voucher can be renewed for an additional 30 days—these time constraints still prove to be very stressful for many. For instance, even if a voucher holder’s expiration date is not pending, if she has given a current landlord notice, she might have to move out of the current housing unit before a new home is secured. This often became a problem when landlords caused delays.

Once approved by the landlord, the future tenant pays a deposit, which is the tenant’s responsibility, unless it is a forced relocation like HOPE VI,³⁵ and the landlord signs the Request for Tenancy paperwork; the future tenant then takes the paperwork back to the

³³ Relying on public transportation in Tampa can be problematic, and low-income families are less likely to own a vehicle. Although only 8% of households in Hillsborough County, do not own vehicles, in census tracts with a high rate of poverty, the percentage is much higher; for instance, in the census tract in which the public housing complex Central Park Village is located (Census Tract 40) 62% of households do not own vehicles (Census 2000). 70% of the HOPE VI households we interviewed in Greenwood did not have cars.

³⁴ In fact, Harbor Pointe currently does not accept Section 8.

³⁵ In this case, the Housing Authority pays the deposit.

Section 8 office. At this point, the landlord prepares the apartment for the Section 8 inspection. Meanwhile, the future tenant's Section 8 counselor processes the Request for Tenancy paperwork. The paperwork must go through the counselor's supervisor and then on to the agency responsible for inspecting the unit, which could be an internal department or an external one (in Tampa this depends on whether or not it is the city or county voucher program). The voucher holder's counselor examines the paperwork, making sure the unit meets certain criteria—including not being overpriced for the area. Then an inspection agent makes an appointment with the landlord to inspect the unit. If the unit passes the inspection, the tenant can move in immediately. If the unit does not pass inspection, a new inspection will have to be set up—often weeks later. A unit will not be inspected more than three times. If an apartment fails three times, the voucher holder will have to find another rental unit.

Based on my experience, it usually takes at least two weeks to complete the entire bureaucratic process. However, I have seen residents wait several weeks and even more than a month just for an inspection date to be set. Often the paperwork would get held up with the voucher holder's counselor. A woman who formerly worked as the Assistant Manager at Harbor Pointe had the personal cell phone number for one of the Section 8 counselors notorious for holding up paperwork, and sometimes would call him directly when there seemed to be a delay in setting the inspection date, to make sure the paperwork had left the counselor's desk. Delays can also occur at the apartment complex. For instance, this occurs when an existing tenant does not move out of an apartment pre-leased to a voucher holder, or if the complex is poorly managed, and the maintenance crew does not prepare the apartment correctly. In most cases voucher holders cannot move in until the apartment passes inspection, because a voucher holder will be held fully responsible for the rent until the

apartment passes. Before Harbor Pointe had a policy against a resident moving in prior to the units having passed inspection, a woman moved in early and it took another two months for her apartment to pass. She ended up owing the complex over a thousand dollars, even though her monthly income was so low that once the apartment had passed inspection, the Section 8 program paid her rent in full each month. After almost two years, she was still paying off this debt to the apartment complex.

The experience of an elderly resident of Plantation Homes is illustrative of the stressful events that can occur when a voucher holder attempts to move into a new apartment/house. The woman was attempting to relocate to the new HOPE VI development, Belmont Heights Estates. Because she has a number of serious medical conditions, she cannot live alone. She recalls that the Section 8 program approved her request to have her 25-year old grandson live with her based on the medical documentation she provided. However, Belmont Heights Estates required additional documentation. The woman recalled that the leasing agent “just kept putting me off, putting me off. I mean this lady had me to the point, I had got stone sick nervous.” The stress of the situation was overwhelming:

What we couldn't make her understand was this. My lease was going to be up...But you couldn't make her understand that. So I got Miss Mary Dooley, and she's a sweet person. She deals with Section 8. I talked to her and I explained things to her. She told me, it's like she said, “Miss Lily if your paperwork's done everything's in order. You shouldn't have to go through this. She said, ‘DON'T sign nothing on your lease until-“ She said, “If you sign that lease now that you're moving out, you're going to have to move out on that time. Then if they say that they're not ready for you to move, then guess what? You're not going to have a place to stay.”

She was afraid to put in her notice at Plantation Homes because if her apartment at Belmont Heights Estates did not come through, she would be left without a place to live. For these reasons, the woman now has given up her plans to leave Plantation Homes. This woman's

experience trying to move into the HOPE VI development, Belmont Heights Estates, also illustrates how inaccessible HOPE VI actually is for many low-income renters. In fact, nationwide, only five percent of households relocated through HOPE VI have returned to the new developments (Comey 2007).

Benefits to Landlords

There are a number of important ways that the Section 8 program benefits landlords. As mentioned previously, participating in the Section 8 program enables landlords to rent lesser quality housing at the market price. In addition, landlords who accept Section 8 are assured that the rent for an apartment will be paid in full each month,³⁶ while non-voucher holders might stop paying their rent at any time. Landlords may also find that they can rent an apartment for a higher price because the Section 8 program will pay it, while a low-income family without a voucher cannot afford the price and a middle-income family can pay a higher price for a better quality apartment. Pete and Sam raised the rent for the three bedroom apartments when they learned the maximum rent that the Tampa Housing Authority would approve for a three bedroom apartment. In addition, a manager at Harbor Pointe believed the Section 8 program was beneficial to landlords because it increased the amount of “control” a landlord had over a tenant. For instance, she knew she could threaten to call a tenant’s Section 8 counselor if certain issues were not addressed; this might put the tenant in jeopardy of losing his/her apartment. At the same time, a tenant can threaten to call the Section 8 program on the landlord; though I only knew of this happening once, I did occasionally hear residents suggest that they might take this action. The woman who did call the Section 8 program reported that Harbor Pointe had not addressed some significant

³⁶ In my experience, the Tampa Housing Authority often did not pay the rent for an apartment during the month that it was due. However, they eventually did pay rent in full.

maintenance issues in her apartment. The Section 8 counselor called the property manager to discuss the problem, and the repair work in the woman's apartment was promptly completed. More often, however, voucher holders seemed concerned about the Section 8 program knowing about the disrepair of their apartments. If their apartments did not pass the yearly inspection conducted by the Section 8 program to re-establish that the apartment was at an acceptable standard, they would withhold payment and the resident would have to move. The Section 8 inspector could also fail the apartment during the inspection because of "housekeeping" issues for which the voucher holder was faulted.

Costs

Although there are many benefits for landlords participating in the Section 8 program, there are also some challenges. This is especially true when a large number of tenants in a complex receive vouchers, requiring an immense amount of tedious paperwork and bureaucracy navigation. For instance, as I mentioned above, a landlord (and voucher holder) might have to wait long periods of time for the processing of paperwork and scheduling of inspections. In addition, unlike non-voucher holders, lease renewals need to be addressed several months ahead of time so that paperwork and inspections can be taken care of. For instance, if the rent had increased since the previous year (which it usually had), the Section 8 counselor would have to approve the amount and determine what the tenant's new payment would be. Also, depending on the changing circumstances of a tenant (new child, marriage, changes in income from various sources), the portion of rent that a tenant should be paying could change at any time. This was a source of constant frustration for Harbor Pointe's managers as well as voucher holders. If several months passed before this amount was correctly figured, a tenant could end up owing a large amount of money.

In addition to these “costs” associated with the Section 8 program, in order to make a profit, a landlord must very carefully evaluate every expenditure. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Felix simply accomplished this by making as few expenditures as possible. He even quit paying his bills, so it was impossible to file an eviction through a lawyer, buy supplies, and sometimes pay employees on time. Because Pete and Sam were explicitly trying to provide quality housing, they did make many significant expenditures, although they were also very cautious about spending money to replace carpets, linoleum, and appliances. Robert Jackson seemed to be only concerned with his bottom line. He would tell the managers that they had to spend less on supplies—without reviewing what was purchased, and even though the basic materials purchased could be easily justified. He had the assistant property manager research termite treatment options (for the buildings Pete and Sam had not yet treated) but never followed up on this because of the expense. He also changed private security companies, to a less effective company, because of cost.

How the various owners approached the complex was, in many ways, reflected in their treatment of the workers—a key monthly expenditure. Pete and Sam initially offered benefits to the employees, although they ended up not following through with several employees. They instituted a number of pay raises and leasing bonuses, and employees were offered discounted rent if they moved into an apartment in the complex. Employees were even addressed in the company’s mission statement, which indicated support of open communication and personal growth for all employees through its management approach.

I felt very valued by Pete and Sam and the managers they hired. They understood my research and school obligations and honored every request I made to miss work to attend academic conferences—and even to take personal trips. I asked if I could attend an

important community forum organized by members of my research team on a Saturday when I was scheduled to work (I was the only employee at the time that worked on Saturday). When no one else could work in my place, they decided to just close the office for the day. Pete and Sam also appreciated my input on various issues—although they were sometimes resistant to my requests to increase apartment improvements for new residents moving in. They even allowed me to conduct several interviews while I was working (off the clock, of course). Other employees received similar accommodations. Pete and Sam lent money to a maintenance worker so that he could buy a car, for instance. However, sometimes I felt uncomfortable that Pete and Sam perhaps valued me too much for an educational and class background that my co-workers did not share. For instance, I was instructed to (and did) record the complex’s voicemail message myself rather than have one of my co-workers’ voices represented. Pete and Sam also sometimes referred to me having helped bring in a “new clientele,” which I assumed was a reference to my class position.

After Robert Jackson bought the property, all employees became independent contractors. This meant that the owner did not have to pay taxes and those who worked at the complex had to pay for their own social security. He also put an end to employee discounts and never provided benefits—although he did retain the leasing bonuses and some raises. He gradually scaled back the “employees” to a mere skeleton crew even though the amount of work required with a much larger staff was overwhelming.

I especially appreciated the positive treatment afforded me by Pete and Sam when Robert Jackson bought the property. Perhaps because of my educational background and second job teaching, even though I had worked in the complex the longest, I was one of the employees he eventually decided to lay off. I also found, in my capacity as a leasing agent,

that my providing input on complex issues was no longer welcomed. It also became more difficult to ask for time off for my research and personal responsibilities.

Risk Management

Managers of low-income apartment complexes want to make sure that their applicant screening guidelines are strict enough to protect their investment (through risk management), but not so strict as to select out most low-income renters, most of whom are likely have some credit or background issues. The idea is to house the “deserving” poor—who will pay the rent, take care of the apartments, and not cause problems with neighbors. However, these characteristics are obviously not necessarily revealed by a credit and/or background check. For instance, a person who had a number of drug arrests and convictions might never cause any problems, whereas a person with no previous criminal background at all might end up in a violent altercation with a neighbor. Also, a resident who consistently pays his/her rent could suddenly end up in an accident or losing a job for another reason. This happened to a number of residents. An elderly woman who lived in the complex for more than ten years—consistently paying her rent in a timely manner—was in an accident and applied for social security because she was unable to work. In the meantime, she fell a couple of months behind in her rent payments. Similarly, another longtime elderly resident with health problems struggled to pay her rent and finally moved in with her new husband (who also lived in the complex) so that they could share expenses. However, soon after this move, her husband was laid off from his trucking job and they were unable to pay their rent in full.

It was interesting that many of those who were hired to conduct the background checks either would not pass these guidelines themselves, or had persons living in their households that would prevent them from passing. The leasing agent with whom I first

worked, for example, who also lived in the complex, told me that she had more than one eviction on her credit report and was open about her live-in boyfriend being addicted to crack cocaine.³⁷ One of the Property Managers had a husband with a significant criminal record. She mentioned that he had spent an amount of time in jail and it was rumored that the charges were quite serious related to an accident that occurred while he was driving under the influence. The Assistant Manger at that time, who later became the Property Manager, was married to a man with a couple of felony charges—one having to do with incorrectly carrying a registered gun in his car and the other related to possession of marijuana. In addition, Miss Diane’s son had spent much of his life in prison for murder charges; he seemed to stay in her apartment at least some of the time.

At Harbor Pointe the application fee was a non-refundable \$40. Voucher holders attempting to rent in increasingly tight housing markets may find that many landlords enforce strict screening criteria, thus the likelihood of rejection and loss of the fee is higher. And application fees quickly add up, especially for prospective tenants with low incomes. When I first began working at Harbor Pointe Apartments, the screening guidelines were that an applicant could have no evictions or felonies at any point in his/her life; collection accounts would be overlooked unless it was a landlord or utility company, and utility charges could be paid off before the person moved in. Several months later the owners loosened the policy. A single balance owed to a landlord (other than an eviction) became allowable if it was more than a year old and half of the amount was paid off. Felonies had to be at least five years old, but were acceptable as long as the charges were not extensive. However, about six months later a new manager drastically tightened the policy again—no evictions or balances owed to

³⁷ This leasing agent was finally pressured by the property manager and owners to move to her own apartment.

landlords; no felonies—or even having been *arrested* on a felony drug or violent charge; and no one on probation or with open warrants—even for very minor crimes. While at one time I was able to advocate for a woman with a Section 8 voucher who had an excellent rental history but ten years ago was charged with cocaine possession—and the way her charges were listed on her report made it look like separate arrests instead of multiple charges for one arrest—if she applied to the complex today her application would be denied. Also, while allowing partial payment of certain bills may seem flexible, it was usually not affordable for applicants; as collection accounts, these charges often included considerable interest and/or fees. Regarding past evictions, many low-income renters have evictions. Although the Section 8 program aims to assist such low-income renters who have struggled with paying their rent, past credit history can impede an applicant from being able to use a voucher. In other words, many voucher holders do not qualify for subsidized housing in apartment complexes.³⁸

Non-voucher holders were also screened according to their incomes and employment history. While initially when I began working at Harbor Pointe, an applicant with no credit (positive or negative) and having held a job for only a very short period of time would have been approved; many of these residents later ended up being evicted for not paying their rent. The policy was then revised so that non-voucher holder applicants had to have held their jobs for a minimum of several months.

For non-voucher holder applicants, there were also income requirements; before taxes, an applicant's income needed to be three times the cost of rent each month—although

³⁸ Individual landlords—rather than large apartment complexes—may be less equipped to conduct credit and background checks and more accessible for the “hard-to-house”. On the other hand, many voucher holders have complained to me that many individual landlords neglect maintenance issues—even very serious ones—more than apartment complexes with staff and frequent inspections.

at least 2.5 times was considered acceptable. This meant that those receiving social security or disability as their only income did not qualify for even the smallest one-bedroom apartment at Harbor Pointe. On the two occasions that I was able to convince the owners (Pete and Sam) to make an exception, these residents ended up being meticulous about paying their rent.

All of the leasing agents attempted to have exceptions made for certain applicants. Although there was a policy in place (even though it seemed to change frequently), we considered each applicant's situation individually. I advocated for many applicants who did not meet the guidelines exactly—particularly those who had criminal charges that were quite a few years old. I was especially frustrated when a property manager began considering arrests as equivalent to convictions and I really tried to make a case for applicants who had been arrested but not convicted of charges (or for whom the charges had been reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor). I also reasoned that those who had an eviction in the past but currently had Section 8 should be approved, especially if it could be determined that their past eviction was for non-payment of rent (because it was likely that with the help of the voucher, they would be able to afford their portion of the rent). While all of us interpreted the guidelines and our roles in processing an application slightly differently, I was surprised to discover that Miss Diane made more executive decisions on her own than I did. If I encountered someone who seemed “qualified” but did not officially meet the guidelines, I would bring the situation to the property manager (who would sometimes end up asking the owner) and most of the time was able to successfully have the person approved. I noticed several times that Miss Diane excused past evictions that appeared on applicants' credit reports or similar issues when the applicant explained to her that he/she had never lived at

such a complex (without written documentation from the apartment complex or consulting Harbor Pointe's property manager). This may have something to do with Miss Diane having been a victim of identity theft in the past herself and understanding how these injustices occur. It is also likely that Miss Diane's approach to processing applications was related to her more personal connection to potential tenants through informal social networks. It was clear to me, for instance, that Miss Diane's social networks contributed to her success in leasing apartments. Her flexibility in applying management's policies might then be understood as similar to the situation of the tenant managers in a Boston public housing complex described by Hyatt (2001:217), who were caught between two conflicting sets of expectations—those of the complex management and those of community members:

As far as the housing authorities were concerned, the women who rose to positions of tenant leadership were expected to act as 'bureaucrats with human faces,' exercising authority. Yet, in order for them to retain their authority as insiders, which was the very asset that made them effective as housing managers in the first place, they were also required to accommodate the expectations of their friends and family members, who continued to make up their most critical social worlds.

Even though I attempted to bend the rules for many applicants, at the same time, I took the task of processing applications very seriously. An applicant dropped off a "letters of reference" from a past landlord who he said could not be reached by phone and also one supposedly from his employers; they were typed in the same font and formatting and with no signatures, which caused me to take a closer look at his employment. Because he said he had just relocated from Maryland and had not yet received a paycheck at his new job in Tampa, I had to verify his employment by phone. The company he listed as his employer was not listed in the phone book and the address listed for the business matched another business when I conducted an Internet search. When I called the work phone number the applicant

had provided, a woman answered the phone with the name of the business he had provided and confirmed his employment. However, I did a “reverse lookup” of the phone number and found it belonged to an individual who lived across the street at Ashton Heights. I called his “place of work” again and asked for some details about the location—where it was located in reference to other businesses and she could not answer these questions. Needless to say, I politely informed the applicant that he was not approved for an apartment.

Community rules and regulations were another way that risk was managed. On the day a new resident moved into his/her apartment, there were many papers beyond the lease to sign—including lists of community rules, pool rules, and playground rules. These rules were not enforced consistently, but they each revealed the same issues related to risk management. In effect, each resident signed paperwork agreeing to not break these rules, or engage in criminal behavior, use drugs, etc. These documents facilitated evictions for cause if the need ever arose.

Private security companies are another important means of risk management. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, many of the complexes employed these companies. While Ashton Heights was required to have the property patrolled by a private security company through the nuisance abatement order initiated by area homeowners, Harbor Pointe initially hired PSS because of pressure by homeowners using Ashton Heights’ nuisance abatement order as leverage. Although many residents perceive these companies as being hired to protect residents, their main priority is to protect the property itself. One of the main tasks of PSS officers, the company that I observed at length, was to report on the physical conditions of the complex. Another task was to keep residents from “hanging out” in parking lots—or in their doorways—in the evening; they enforced a curfew and told residents that sitting

outside their apartments or standing in their doorways was a fire hazard. PSS officers also distributed a dispatch phone number if they were in distress. The security officers hired by Robert Jackson spent much of their time enforcing the legality of the cars parked in the complex's parking lot, and ticketing cars with expired license plates. I discuss these activities at length in Chapter Six.

Harbor Pointe Apartments as Home

Most residents seemed to view their apartments as their homes and took great pride in their upkeep. Many of the apartments that I visited were very elaborately decorated. I noticed that many residents leased brand new furniture after they moved in from the various local establishments like “Rent-A-Center.” The stores would contact the office to verify the resident's information as part of their application process. Of course, these stores are known for their predatory lending practices (Williams 2004), and I witnessed several instances of furniture repossession. However, residents' use of these stores to acquire furniture illustrates residents' commitment to their apartments as homes.

One woman, Miss Lottie was so proud of her apartment that she was very upset when she was notified that her apartment was going to be inspected, along with all the others, for reasons relating to the financing of the complex. One of her primary concerns was that she would have to prepare her apartment to be viewed, even though she was assured that the inspectors would not be concerned with her décor. Miss Lottie ended up having a very serious continuing conflict with one of the property managers over her “decorating ideas.” She was concerned about some photographs the property manager took to show her why maintenance workers had gone into her apartment without her permission—the water had been turned off for some reason and when it came back on, Miss Lottie's faucets were turned

on with full pressure and her sinks began overflowing and leaking into the apartment below hers. Miss Lottie worried that through these photographs the manager could steal her decorating ideas. She believed that the special touches she had added to her apartment might be generalized for all apartments in the complex—for instance, the rounded light fixture with which she had replaced the fixture provided, the way she accented her apartment by spray painting the air conditioning grates gold, and the alternating color scheme she had applied to her walls.

Similarly, one woman was devastated when the wallpaper border that her mother had helped her to pick out and which she had gone to great pains to apply was destroyed through the work of construction workers residing the buildings. The manager (and later the owner when she addressed the issue with him) pointed out that in the fine print in her lease, it stated that wallpaper borders are not allowed; for this reason she was not compensated. Having an attractive apartment was so important to a couple of residents that they offered to do the work themselves if the apartment complex provided the supplies. A couple of residents painted their kitchen cabinets themselves, and one had a friend install the vinyl in her small entryway, kitchen and bathroom when she finally convinced the complex to provide it. Several residents who lived in ground level apartments (one of whom had lived in the complex over ten years) planted large gardens outside their apartments.

Much like the homeowners in the neighborhood, Harbor Pointe residents are also concerned with issues like aesthetics, crime, safety, and rising housing costs. Families raised their children and held birthday parties, baby showers, and holiday dinners in their apartments. They were, in every respect, their homes.

Maintenance problems were a serious concern for most living in Harbor Pointe Apartments. Termites are a major problem for structures in Florida, and Harbor Pointe Apartments had serious termite problems. When Pete and Sam bought the property, they ended up tenting approximately half of the apartment buildings for termites—a very expensive endeavor that involved paying for residents to stay in a hotel overnight. However, when residents in the other half of the buildings reported problems with termites, the issue was not addressed. As a worker in the office, I was told by the manager that the pest control company needed a sample of the termites to see if they could treat them with insect spray. So I would tell residents this. However, when they brought me the samples in plastic sandwich bags nothing was ever done to address the problem.

Several of the parking lots flooded severely when it rained. Although Pete and Sam repaved the parking lots, additional work was needed in order to resolve this problem. In addition, seemingly small details seriously affected residents' quality of life. Most of the apartments have private balconies or patios. However, with the renovations initiated by Pete and Sam, residents of the bottom-level apartments had the rotten wood of their patio dividers torn out but not replaced, so that these apartments lost their private outdoor area. Many residents complained about this change, however management tried to pitch the decision as positive—"doesn't it seem nicer now that it's opened up?" Similarly, while all of the apartments likely had screens in the windows at one time, during my research period many did not. The property owners decided not to replace residents' screens, which meant that they could not open their windows to cool off their apartments without bugs coming in—and constant air conditioning can be very expensive in warm, humid Tampa.

Although most residents did not seem to fear for their physical safety, many residents were concerned about break-ins. Most of the crimes committed on the property were car break-ins, although there were several cases of apartment break-ins over the years as well. In fact, the leasing office and the maintenance office were both broken into (on separate occasions). It was found that a former employee who lived on site was responsible for breaking into the maintenance office; the perpetrator of the leasing office break-in was never found, although it too was suspected to have likely involved someone who worked in the complex.

In terms of violent crime, there was actually one drive-by shooting that occurred while I was working at the complex. Police believe that it was not meant to physically harm anyone but to send a message to a male teen who lived in the targeted apartment. One bullet made its way into the apartment next door, into the wall of an elderly woman's living room—very near her computer, although she was in bed at the time. Additionally, before I began working there, a woman was shot in 2003 in her apartment by a shooter outside the apartment (it was determined to be a random shooting); she was injured but survived (Greenwood 2003). I also heard from a neighboring homeowner that, after I stopped working there, a woman who lived in the complex was murdered by her former boyfriend, although I was not able to find any official information about such an incident.

Management's response to several of these incidents made some residents feel unsafe. For instance, after the drive-by shooting I mentioned above, the manager of Harbor Pointe insisted that the targeted son and his mother leave the complex, as her neighbors were also endangered by their proximity. Police had suggested that this was a gang related situation. The elderly next door neighbor was particularly invested in having this family relocated. She

spoke to me about how if the shooting had happened on a different evening, she might have been shot as she often stays up late sending emails from her computer; she also felt emotionally traumatized every time she looked at the bullet in her wall. Despite her concerns, and management's apparent interest in calming resident fears, the maintenance crew never got around to removing the bullet from her wall. Moreover, they failed to follow through with removing the presumed threat. The mother of the teenage son who was asked to move out of the complex had poor credit and therefore was having much difficulty finding alternative housing; the manager felt badly for her and gave her more time, and they ended up not moving. This was certainly caused much concern for several neighbors.

Similarly, a woman moved her family into a two-bedroom apartment near the leasing office, and while she was moving someone broke in her apartment and stole a number of items. It was determined that she must have left her back sliding glass door unlocked, and someone took notice and advantage while the family was away for several days. Later a detective discovered that the thief was a teenaged girl who also lived near the leasing office with her very ill grandmother and siblings. The items were returned, but the thief and her family were allowed to continue living in the complex and the victimized family was not allowed to move to another apartment. Such practices, however, were inconsistent. In another situation, several residents reported that two residents had gotten in an argument and one of the woman's two adult daughters had come at the other woman with "machetes." This family was forced to move.

There were many informal reports of illegal drug use in the complex—particularly in certain buildings—however, I never heard of a drug arrest occurring on the property. Pete

and Sam claimed to have “cleaned up” the complex, although I heard from many residents that there was still a serious problem—with crack cocaine as well as other drugs.

Although the complex hired a private security company much of the time to patrol the complex, the presence of such a patrol did not necessarily correspond with a reduction in crime. When the private security company PSS was patrolling the complex, officers passed out cards with a phone number to call if they needed to report an incident. However, the new company that Robert Jackson hired told residents that they needed to call the police for these incidents. The sheriff’s department was called many times each month to deal with resident issues—usually by residents. A couple of times, someone in the leasing office called the sheriff’s department. I called once when a fight between several residents in the parking lot outside of the leasing office began to escalate.

At a monthly complex managers’ meeting for the neighborhood held at the Sheriff’s Department substation, a sheriff’s deputy passed out lists of calls made to the sheriff’s department from residents of each apartment complex, with particular codes for the type of problem for which the resident had called. Although deputies had been sent out to address these issues when the calls were made, the idea was that if managers were more aware of the kinds of events that were occurring in the complexes in which they worked, they could work on some of the residents’ concerns so that they would make fewer calls, causing less strain on the Sheriff’s department. One way of accomplishing this was to work closely with a private security company like PSS to address some of the problems.

Rising rents were also a significant concern for residents. When Felix was the property owner, rents remained very cheap, as the market would not have allowed for higher prices. At the same time, the occupancy rate was very low. However, when Pete and Sam

bought and renovated the property, rents rose considerably. This meant that when residents' leases were up for renewal, their rents might increase \$100 or more a month. However, Pete and Sam ran a move-in special for nearly a full year that, in addition to discounting the first month's rent considerably, lowered the rent from what they had calculated to be the market rate. Existing tenants were also charged these below market rates when it was time for them to renew their leases. Robert Jackson raised the rents to what he had calculated to be the market prices. Often before residents came in to meet with the assistant manager about renewing their leases, they did not know about the considerable rent increases. Because they had not planned for such an increase, this led to some very emotional exchanges—and to several residents unexpectedly moving.

Although several residents had lived in the complex for five to ten years and even longer, as with most rental properties, turnover was very common. Long-term renters were given very few incentives to renew their leases, which is actually counterintuitive to market logic. Occasionally, a resident would negotiate with the manager a small upgrade (for instance, having the carpet cleaned). It would seem to be much less expensive to retain a current resident rather than to renovate the apartment for a new tenant.

A number of residents ran small businesses from their apartments in order to make ends meet. Living in a good-sized apartment complex provides a substantial client base for home based businesses—although most were not truly legal businesses (and some were definitely illegal). One man sold a range of items (many were likely hot) but was best known for the bootlegged movie DVDs he sold. He circulated a list of his current films throughout the complex. He also sold duplicated CDs. Occasionally he would call the office to find out

if we knew anyone who was looking to purchase a particular item—a photocopy machine or an expensive toy car.

Several women sold food items out of their homes; they were known in the complex as the “candy ladies.” In fact, during Pete and Sam’s renovations, a couple of very enterprising young women sold lunches to construction workers that they prepared in their apartments. One woman even had a menu posted to the outside of her door with pictures cut out of magazines. Periodically I would receive a phone call in the office from one of the candy ladies asking me to call over the “walkie-talkies” to tell one of the construction workers that his meal was ready. At one point, Pete and Sam decided to put a stop to the candy ladies since it was not a legal business. One candy lady who was taking care of several grandchildren without Section 8, soon after could no longer pay her rent and left the complex.

There was no real opportunity for residents to organize around these issues. Unlike in College Hill and Ponce de Leon, there was no “Resident Council,”³⁹ for instance. Pete and Sam had intended to have the property manager organize a “neighborhood watch” for interested residents—and about ten signed up—but after an initial meeting, the idea was dropped. There was not even a central space where residents could organize themselves as the former clubhouse had become a construction storage facility. Several residents did, however, come to the office together to protest their treatment by PSS, which ultimately was effective. As I will discuss in Chapter Seven,

³⁹ Very few relocatees reported having attended Resident Council Meetings, but it is significant that such an organization existed—although these types of organizations were not, of course, entirely autonomous from management.

Pete and Sam asked PSS to accommodate residents' indignant request that they be allowed to sit outside their apartments in the evenings—rather than being ordered inside (or to their back patio areas) by the Community Officers.

While HOPE VI relocatees did find some benefits to living in private apartment complexes, there were also many difficult aspects. In many ways, HOPE VI relocatees had experienced better treatment and more freedom while living in public housing.

This chapter has focused on the simultaneous and competing goals of apartment complex residents and investors in a privately owned multi-family development—which can be seen as an important site for examining mixed income housing policy. In the next chapter, I explore the relationship between Harbor Pointe Apartments and the larger neighborhood and analyze the effect of neoliberal trends in governance operating in the neighborhood.

Chapter Six

Social Order, Broken Windows, and The War Against the Poor

This chapter addresses how Greenwood homeowners are responding to neoliberal policy changes. I am concerned here with how homeowners define, enforce, and contest social order in the neighborhood (Chapter Six addresses the perspectives of those relocated to the neighborhood through HOPE VI).

Neoliberalism and Social Order

Spatial governmentality, considered by Sally Engle Merry (2001) to be the dominant form of governance accompanying the onset of neoliberalism, can be seen to operate in the Greenwood neighborhood as a way to enforce a particular version of social order promoted by homeowners and local law enforcement. In her article, “Spatial Governmentality and the New Urban Social Order,” Merry (2001) draws on the work of Michel Foucault (1975) to identify a general shift from disciplinary mechanisms of social control—such as arrest and rehabilitation—to the regulation of space. Increasingly it is spaces that are governed, rather than people. For instance, rather than attempting to reform offenders, they are simply excluded from certain spaces. Merry refers to these new mechanisms of social ordering as “spatial governmentality.”⁴⁰ While Foucault (1975) has theorized the regulation of space through architectural design and security devices as a complement to disciplinary governance (for instance, in prisons) Merry indicates that mechanisms of spatial governmentality are fundamentally different from disciplinary ones in their logic and technologies in two

⁴⁰ She credits Richard Perry and Lisa Sanchez (1998) with this label.

important ways. First of all, disciplinary mechanisms work to normalize the deviant behavior of individuals while these new mechanisms attempt to govern populations as a whole. Secondly, rather than punishing offenders after an incident, spatialized governmentality is future-oriented and focuses on prevention and risk minimization (Merry 2001:16).

Merry looks at this trend in US domestic violence policy—for instance, the increasing popularity of restraining orders, which protect the space around a victim of domestic violence rather than emphasizing punishment and rehabilitation for the offender. However, she writes that spatial governmentality is “typically used by the wealthy to exclude the poor, while those who fail to respect these islands of safety are incarcerated” (2001:17). As an increasingly important aspect of contemporary cities:

The new [spatialized] systems promote safety for the privileged few by excluding those who are dangerous rather than promoting safety for the collectivity by seeking to reform those who offend. Constructing safe, policed spaces requires resources that are not available to everyone. These strategies are limited to those who can mobilize them—typically people located in more privileged positions in class, racial, and gender hierarchies (Merry 2001:17).

Spatial forms of governance focus on concealing or displacing offensive activities from particular spaces. Merry mentions, as an example, the removal of homeless persons from certain areas and new community-policing strategies that move potentially criminal youths to different neighborhoods (to remove them from negative influences) rather than prosecuting them (2001:16).

In this way, middle-class homeowners in Tampa’s Greenwood community draw on mechanisms of spatial governmentality to combat what they perceive as neighborhood “decline.” Descriptions of the decline tend to focus on falling property values, increasing

crime rates, and less well kept properties—all of which are associated with a perceived increase in low-income renters in Greenwood. Homeowners attempt to gain control over certain spaces in the community in order to defend their more middle-class spaces from the threats they believe are posed by low-income housing. Community policing, code enforcement, nuisance abatement, and gating and fencing can all be seen as part of this governance trend.

In terms of to what extent homeowners are actually experiencing economic losses as a result of an influx of low-income renters, it is likely that many are. Certainly real estate valuation does take into consideration the factors with which homeowners are concerned. The surrounding neighborhood strongly affects the economic value of a house—and homogeneity rather than heterogeneity has historically been valued higher in the real estate market. At the same time, it often seemed that rather than homeowners fearing actually losing money on their homes, they were more frustrated that the values of their homes had not increased as much as they had hoped—and that property values in Greenwood were not comparable to homes in different neighborhoods.

The Greenwood Community Council and Community Policing

Community policing can be seen as a form of spatial governmentality because of the particular version of social order it promotes—including a focus on “quality of life” issues, which involve the physical upkeep of neighborhood spaces and removing particular residents from neighborhood spaces, as well as the focus on prevention and risk management. Community policing efforts often draw on the “broken windows” theory of crime prevention, which focuses on eliminating visible signs of neighborhood disorder (Chesluk 2004)—such as broken windows and the presence of “disorderly people” (panhandlers, drunks, addicts,

rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed) in public places—in an effort to prevent crime and promote feelings of safety among neighbors (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This strategy for preventing neighborhood decline—now taken for granted by many as common sense—was introduced by an article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* by criminologists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety” (1982). The idea is that if one window is broken and not fixed (or a comparable “quality of life” issue is neglected), this will suggest to residents and passersby that no one cares about the neighborhood—and this will lead to more broken windows and escalate into more serious criminal activity. Wilson and Kelling warn:

A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other’s children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occur. Litter accumulates. People start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by panhandlers (1982:31-32).

Wilson and Kelling then suggest that the neighborhood becomes vulnerable to “criminal invasion” because of a lack of the informal controls that exist in orderly neighborhoods.

The community policing approach, popularized in the early 1990s and now established as the dominant policing strategy, emphasizes collaboration with communities in order to solve neighborhood problems. Contact between residents and police officers is promoted through community meetings and “mini-stations” located in neighborhoods. In addition to law enforcement, community policing encompasses additional activities that “contribute to the orderliness and well-being of a neighborhood” (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1994:14), such as helping resolve domestic and neighborhood conflicts and

working with residents and local businesses to improve neighborhood conditions.

Community policing embraces the “broken windows” theory, and residents and police officers often collaborative on projects to address such issues. The broken windows approach has been embraced in high-profile ways in New York City and Boston, among other major cities.

The broken windows approach, though widely accepted, does have its critics. Certainly the actions of former New York City Mayor Rudolf Guiliani, a “poster boy” for broken windows, demonstrate what an authoritarian approach it is. For instance, his crackdown on even the lowest level offenses included the criminalization of “squeegee men” and panhandlers.

Of the numerous critiques of the “broken windows” theory, I find two most applicable for understanding how community policing operates in the Greenwood neighborhood. Benjamin Chesluk (2004) suggests that the broken windows discourse:

...has become a powerful commonsense trope—a symbol that condenses an entire, morally charged narrative framework. Specifically, the broken window serves as a figure for a struggle between order and disorder fought in the arena of everyday life and the taken-for-granted. It effectively gives an apocalyptic resonance to an open-ended critique of the everyday—every moment of discomfort can be read as a potential broken window and therefore the first step on the road to chaos (2004:255).

As a result, Chesluk notes:

According to this perspective, the police must help law-abiding citizens to create orderly communities by inciting people to understand and talk about their everyday experiences of the city in terms of signs of disorder. This discourse sorts people and behaviors into categories of order and disorder: natural and unnatural, social and antisocial, good and bad. It reduces the work of understanding human life simply to a task of decoding signs in a binary code (2004:256).

Robert Sampson and Stephen Raudenbush (2004) provide another important perspective on broken windows. Through a multi-faceted study, they show that when people identify disorder, they are primarily associating disorder with the presence of African Americans. The broken windows discourses in Greenwood seem to have emerged at the same time that the neighborhood has become increasingly African American. While the existence of a racial “tipping point” in neighborhoods— the percentage of non-whites that can make up the total population of a neighborhood before white flight and significant racial transition will inevitably occur—is not supported by social science evidence (Goering 1978),⁴¹ this idea seems to persist in popular urban lore and be present in the anxious discourses of neighborhood change produced by Greenwood homeowners.

Gating, fencing, videotaping, and other measures taken by Greenwood homeowners must be understood in the context of broken windows. Homeowner activists become involved in sorting individuals and behaviors into the binary code of order and disorder that Chesluk discusses. This sorting must also be understood as having racial implications.

The GCC, a significant aspect of community policing efforts in the Greenwood neighborhood, works in this way. As mentioned in a previous chapter, the GCC was formed, with the help of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Department, through a federal community oriented policing grant from the US Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing and has been active in the neighborhood since 1994. Homeowners gather once a month, in collaboration with the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Department, to address neighborhood problems. This consists primarily of residents reporting signs of disorder and,

⁴¹ What is perceived as a “tipping point” has been shown to be enacted by the real estate, mortgage, and insurance industries for profit (Hirsch 1983, Sugrue 1996).

with the help of representatives from the Sheriff's Department and other local government agencies, strategizing how to reestablish order in the neighborhood.

Although "quality of life" issues dominate the GCC meetings, criminal activity is also a focus. One of the first items on the agenda is a report by sheriff's deputies concerning criminal activity in the neighborhood and also police activity. Residents are given phone numbers for local law enforcement officers at every meeting and encouraged to report any suspicious activity. They are also advised on how to stay safe. Homeowners typically ask questions about drugs and prostitution during this portion of the meeting. The GCC also organized a drug march in the neighborhood in the summer of 2005.

While these reports by sheriff's deputies focus specifically on criminal activity, the meetings as a whole focus more on "quality of life" issues promoted by the broken windows theory of crime prevention. For example, the concerns about the low-income apartment complexes in the neighborhood were central to many meetings. The physically dilapidated apartment complexes are believed to signal decline. When representatives from the apartment complexes gave their reports, they often focused on aesthetic issues—rebuilding staircases, planting flowers, adding fences and gates.

A code enforcement officer who attended the meetings was also called on to respond to residents' aesthetic concerns. Although Hillsborough County Code Enforcement deals with issues of health and safety as well neighborhood aesthetics, in GCC meetings, they were almost always consulted about aesthetic issues such as overgrown grass, junk left in yards, inoperable cars parked on lawns or in the street, commercial vehicles parked outside homes for long periods, the presence of roosters in a neighbor's yard, and signs that advertise

“Plants for Sale,” among others. Code enforcement can be seen as a mechanism of spatial governmentality that homeowners utilize to control neighborhood spaces.

Community clean-ups, another important activity of the GCC, also reflect the organization’s focus on visible order in the neighborhood. They occur quarterly and involve representatives from the Sheriff’s Department as well as community volunteers.

Other Community Policing Efforts in the Neighborhood

The same substation for the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Department that helps to organize the GCC meetings also coordinates the managers of the neighborhood apartment complexes for a meeting once a week. I had the opportunity to attend one of these meetings with Harbor Pointe’s assistant manager. The complex managers were provided with information about the kinds of calls that were received by the Sheriff’s department from residents of the complexes they manage during the previous month. It seemed that the managers were being encouraged to somehow reduce the number of calls made by residents by proactively addressing some of these issues in-house (for instance, through private security companies). Managers were also apprised of issues that affected them collectively.

Homeowner Definitions of Disorder

Even beyond GCC meetings, the “broken windows” ideology seems to be pervasive through the neighborhood. Based on interviews with Greenwood homeowners, most perceive their neighborhood to be in a state of decline and disorder. Greenwood homeowners seem to be applying the broken windows approach very specifically, identifying unkempt yards, people “hanging out,” unattended children, and low-income housing as visible signs (Chesluk 2004) of neighborhood decline. In fact, all of these visible signs of neighborhood decline are associated with low-income renters, and implicitly with the

significant racial shift in Greenwood. Additional raced, classed, and gendered stereotypes that are encoded in these discussions will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Seven.

Yards

The upkeep of yards is a key concern of most middle-class Greenwood homeowners. This is understandable considering the growing popularity of deed restricted communities in which particular aesthetic standards (such as the type of grass or fencing) have been previously established and are enforceable. Because such restrictions do not formally exist in Greenwood, they are informally constructed by some homeowners who attempt to enforce these standards in their neighborhood. Well maintained yards then come to signal social order and unkempt lawns indicate disorder.

For instance, one white, female homeowner who lives in The Orchard called code enforcement on her neighbors because of the aesthetic disorder of their property. She related the following when asked about why she would prefer to live in another neighborhood:

Well, this area, as you probably already know, is deteriorating. Slowly deteriorating. I just don't like some of the things, the changes, and some of the things that are happening here. And I think what is happening, you know, people are being brought into this area, and I feel that, um, they should be- When they bring them into- Before you bring, uh, families into an area that I feel that's been well-kept ...that they should be put in some type of class or, to know what to expect. That you just don't move into the area and put the old cars in the yard, you know, refrigerators on the carport, this kind of thing. Because I'm one of these people, I call housing code in a heartbeat. Because I feel that I have worked so hard all these years, and I just don't want anybody to come in and just, you know, just make my property value go down. In fact I called housing- Not housing but uh...code enforcement. Because, um, there was um, before they [the neighbors] closed that carport, and they had all of this junk. You know, there was a refrigerator, there was an old sofa. You know, just sitting out there. When I would drive up in my driveway this is the first thing that I would see. And I thought, you know, this is not the way it's supposed to be. So I'm one of those people that I try to keep things going. I called housing code on them. And I will do that. I've already called housing code on a lot of people. And especially this house right back here. I don't understand how people could live right across the street from them. The yard is all grown up.

I quote this interviewee's response at length here because she clearly connects aesthetics with neighborhood decline, low-income renters, and property values. For instance, she connects the physical disorder of properties to people being "moved into" the neighborhood (presumably through the Section 8 program) without any special instructions about neighborhood expectations; in this way, the homeowner links disorderly aesthetics with low-income housing and associated behaviors. The connection between low-income renters and neighborhood decline becomes clear in her description of the aesthetic disorder threatening the real estate valuation of properties belonging to middle-class people who have "worked so hard all these years." Her recourse is to employ code enforcement to restore order to these neighborhood spaces (and maintain the value of her home).

Yards were also a constant theme in GCC meetings, often directed to code enforcement as well, although residents were disappointed with the limits of what code enforcement could accomplish. John considered Hillsborough County code to be weaker—or in his words, to "have less teeth"—than City of Tampa code. For instance, in the Greenwood area, which falls under Hillsborough County jurisdiction, as long as a car has air in all four tires, it is not breaking the municipal code. In contrast, the City of Tampa code defines an "inoperative vehicle" (which it is illegal to have visibly on one's property) as "a vehicle which is in a state of disrepair and incapable of being moved under its own power, or a vehicle which fails to meet the minimum requirements necessary for lawful operation of a motor vehicle on the streets and highways of the state, including a valid license plate properly placed on the vehicle" (Sec. 19-3). Also, unless grass is higher than eighteen

inches, a property owner cannot be cited by code enforcement. According to the City of Tampa's code, grass and weeds can be no higher than one foot (Sec.22.01).

"Hanging Out" in Public Spaces

Middle-class homeowners also often view people sitting, standing, or socializing outside as engaging in inappropriate and disorderly behavior. This pattern of behavior is associated with public housing and other low cost dwellings that may lack air conditioning or adequate indoor space—as well as with households that cannot afford to run air conditioning. The opposition by middle-class homeowners is interesting because one of the design features of New Urbanist developments is to promote social interaction by including front porches close to sidewalks so that those on porches will get to know passersby (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2001).

It seems to be particular uses of space by particular individuals, rather than the mere presence of people outside their homes, that is viewed as disorderly. Following the "broken windows" theory closely, the homeowner quoted above also took issue with neighbors drinking beers and socializing outside. She described this disorderly behavior in the following way:

Sometimes, especially on the weekend, you're coming into this area and you got people sitting all under the trees. I really have a problem with that, you know. Hot as it is, why would you want to sit under a tree and drink beer? Wouldn't it be more comfortable to be inside with the AC and, you know, with your friends, if that's what you want to do? Why do you have to sit, and you know, every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes by—excuse my expression—they want to stop and chit-chat, you know. Sometimes the traffic is even held up there. Yeah, that is a problem.

It seems that the public consumption of alcohol (the authors of the broken windows theory propose that alcohol bottles should be concealed in paper bags in order to promote order)⁴² is

⁴² Some HOPE VI developments do not allow alcohol consumption in public spaces (Brophy and Smith 1997).

only a small part of this homeowner's perception of disorderly behavior. It is also the "chit-chat" with "every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes by" that seems to violate her middle-class sensibilities.

An African American male homeowner considered changes in the neighborhood—for better and worse—by whether or not there were groups of people hanging out. In describing Ashton Heights, he stated that at first they seemed like they were "nice and clean" but "after a while that little crowd start hanging around there." Similarly, with Tracy Dix, he remembered the complex as not being "that bad" but that the "little crowd was over there, too." About the Apartments at Plantation Homes, he had noted recent improvements, although it used to have a lot of problems. He elaborated that before the recent improvements, "You know when you just go around the street, I mean you'd see all the little homeboys out there. And you know they're doing something." By using the racialized term "homeboys," this homeowner is clearly portraying young African American males as a source of neighborhood problems.

A couple of female homeowners similarly described their discomfort with people or young men loitering outside of neighborhood stores. One related the following:

Well, so there's been a population explosion around here and it just makes me a little uneasy to go into a place where there are people loitering around outside. Cause I'm usually by myself. So I don't want to go into places where I feel uncomfortable.

Another specifically described the loiterers as young males:

I don't like when we got to the store, there's always a bunch of young guys. I don't like that but it don't bother me or anything. I just don't like that idea of, I don't care if you go there at 12:00 in the afternoon or 12:00 at night, 30 or 40 people just crowded up there. I wouldn't have them there if I owned that store, just standing around there...not that I'm really afraid but you don't know what may happen. I don't know, the concept of them just standing there. I can't see a concept in their just standing around, a bunch of people just standing around.

Again, the presence of teenagers gathering in front of the corner store is specifically described in Wilson and Kelly's (1982) description of a declining neighborhood. However, in this particular case, both interviewees were white women, and there could be a raced and gendered dimension to their perceptions about this use of public space. It seems that there is a clear, although unstated, fear of young black males in these narratives.

Unattended/Unruly Children

As suggested by the "broken windows" theory, "rowdy teenagers" can signal disorder to residents. For instance, in response to a question about problems in the neighborhood, one interviewee's daughter responded: "Kids running around. Nobody's watching them. They're like twelve years old, they're up at 2:00 in the morning walking around in groups. They're KIDS and I'm wondering why they're walking around."

Similarly, a female homeowner who lives on 20th Street, when asked about what she would like to see changed in the neighborhood, named crime and "the kids hanging in the store and the park" all day long. (this statement also relates to "hanging out" as a sign of social disorder).

Aside from the statement about kids walking around at 2:00 in the morning, the presence of young people in public places without their parents would not necessarily seem to indicate disorder. For instance, New Urbanist designers and architects envision neighborhoods where children ride their bikes to the town square and can walk to and from school (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2001). However, unattended kids are also blamed for much of the criminal activity.

James, who initiated the nuisance abatement order in addition to other neighborhood activist activities, made numerous negative references to Greenwood teenagers in his interview. In relating what motivated him to begin working toward having Ashton Heights declared a public nuisance, James described an incident where several teenage boys from Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights “busted through” the front door of a neighbor’s home while, as James tells it, the man and his son and niece were watching a Disney video. He then convinced one of the residential boards at Bradford Park to purchase a night vision video camera and, as mentioned in Chapter 4, secretly video taped the late-night activity occurring at Ashton Heights. James sees teenagers as responsible for most of the troublesome activities occurring in the neighborhood, including those he caught on tape. While this theme came up repeatedly during his interview but is best summed up in the following statement, made by James in response to a question about why he thought the neighborhood had declined since the Tracy Dix complex was condemned:

The fewer kids, the fewer teenagers you’ve got the less problems you’ve got. And if you look at the video tapes I’ve got, most of the crime is committed by the kids, by the teenagers, nothing to do and they’re just hanging out, doing drugs, selling drugs, buying drugs, using drugs, drinking, fighting.

Unattended kids and their association with criminal activity were also a constant theme in GCC meetings. Homeowners and representatives of the Sheriff’s Department talked about the increase in crime when school was not in session. Those arrested for auto and resident burglaries were often reported in GCC meetings to be juveniles. There was also a constant issue with kids (suspected of living in Harbor Pointe or Ashton Heights) throwing rocks and other projectiles at cars entering Bradford Park—or over the fence dividing the apartment complexes from Bradford Park. Another kid related concern was that kids had

begun hanging out at the bus stop after school. HCSD officers were addressing this issue by making sure kids go home after being dropped off. One homeowner made a telling comment related to this issue, that it would be nice to see some parents waiting at the bus stop for their children.

Family Fun Day is an annual event held each summer, sponsored by the HCSD, as a community policing strategy for targeting kids in the neighborhood. This all day event is held at the recreation center and includes food, games, activities, and prizes. The idea is that families will develop positive relationships with participating neighborhood institutions and services. The event is usually attended by more than 400 people.

Homeowners' concern with unattended children as disorderly is connected to stereotypes about low-income parents—as well as the realities of their lives. There are more children who live in the apartment complexes than in other areas of the neighborhood—and the apartment complexes are known to house low-income families. Low-income families usually cannot afford organized after school activities, and there are few recreational resources for youth in the neighborhood. Additionally, many parents (often single mothers) are at work when their children get home from school and may consider their children at twelve years old to be old enough to take care of themselves until they get home from work. I observed this occurring with some of the residents at Harbor Pointe. In one case a single mother called the leasing office to ask me to meet a phone technician at her apartment because of the company's policy that someone at least eighteen years old be present during the service call. Apparently when technician arrived at her apartment and found several children at home—none over the age of twelve—he called the mother while she was at work.

Since her apartment was close to the leasing office, I was able to meet the phone technician at her apartment.

Low-Income Housing

Although homeowners' concerns with yards, people hanging out in public places, and unattended/unruly children are all connected to homeowners' concerns with low-income renters, homeowners also specifically discussed low-income housing itself as a sign of decline and disorder. Wilson and Kelling (1982) do not name low-income housing in their description of a disorderly neighborhood, but it might be implied. It likely has more to do with a concern over property values, however. Middle-class opposition to low-income housing is well documented, and there is some evidence that in transitional neighborhoods, close proximity to Section 8 rentals—especially when there is a clustering of Section 8 rentals—can have a detrimental effect on property values (Galster, Tatian, and Smith 1999). However, this is likely because many Section 8 rentals are not in good physical condition (not simply because they are inhabited by subsidized voucher holders).

James, a homeowner in his 50s mentioned previously in terms of his role in the nuisance abatement order, lives in the gated Bradford Park Condominiums and views the low-income apartment complexes outside the gates as a threat to the value of his property. He bought his condominium over twenty years ago and provided a descriptive account of the neighborhood's decline:

At that time [1982] it was \$80,000 and it was a good buy. We love it. We like the architecture and we've got a fireplace. And we liked it and looked at other places along the river, if you go down Fowler where River Hills Drive is, the red roofed places there, they were selling for the same prices that these were. Well they're now worth \$260,000, \$300,000 plus, and I'll be lucky right now if I can sell this place for \$95,000. I've had realtors in here and if this place was sitting across the river I'd get \$260,000 for it. It's all related to the outside neighborhood.

James believes that the reason his investment has not paid off, unlike those bought on the other side of the river, has much to do with the condition of the nearby apartment complexes. When James moved to the neighborhood, these complexes were just over ten years old and housed primarily college students. He remembered having gone to fraternity parties at the clubhouse at Harbor Pointe when he was in college—a few years prior to buying his condo. In the letters that James wrote to the two complexes' owners, warning them of his plans to have them declared a nuisance (which I will discuss in greater depth later in this chapter), James emphasized the monetary loss to neighborhood homeowners as a result of the neglect of the properties and the introduction of Section 8 renters:

I said this is what I'm going to do. First, I'm going to have you declared a nuisance and then I'm going to file civil suit against you for the damage to our property values which I calculate to be about \$30 million. That's a very conservative estimate and it would not be a hard case to prove because we've had several people who own their units or rent their units and the realtors would come in here to show their units and they'd see that neighborhood and they'd turn around and leave before they ever came through the door. There was a time before I started being active we would have been lucky to get \$60,000 for this unit.

When asked about his knowledge and opinion of the Section 8 program, James stated that, “Basically the way I see Section 8 is my tax dollars are being used to destroy my property value. Right now Uncle Sam owes me about \$200,000.”

A homeowner who also lives in Bradford Park Condominiums and works as a high school guidance counselor discussed what an eyesore one of the apartment complexes adjacent to Bradford Park on the river is:

If you canoe, you know so much of Bradford Park looks beautiful, and private homes and then you get crappy looking Ashton Heights. Literally there is like garbage, it's really awful. When I drove in there, both apartments, to give my card, and then I took a stack of enrollment forms, you know so they can enroll kids, I wanted out of Ashton Heights as fast as I could get out of there.

Similarly, John refers to this area as a “cancer” in the neighborhood.

Just the physical presence of apartment complexes—or renters—themselves seems to signal disorder to homeowners. For instance, GCC meetings in 2003, several homeowners complained about a house that seemed to be a “rooming house” because a number of adults lived there. The code enforcement officer said that he had looked into the situation and because they claimed to live as a family it was allowable. Similarly, a developer recently bought property in the neighborhood, and homeowners feared that more apartments would be introduced to the neighborhood; the neighborhood plan drafted by GCC members specifically states that they will not support any new apartment complexes.

The low-income apartment complexes are seen as the source of crime as well. In an interview with a homeowner on 20th Street discussed above, regarding unattended kids hanging out in public places, the woman's daughter suggested that the apartment complexes house the criminal offenders—unattended children: “That's usually where the kids live at and they just walk up and down the street, back and forth from the store. Unattended.” Later in the interview, the woman herself also made this connection: “...the people that commit the crime is the same kids that live in Harbor Pointe or Ashton Heights.”

Spatial Strategies for Enforcing Social Order

Greenwood homeowners can be seen to follow the binary of social order and disorder described by Chesluk (2004) as they discuss their neighborhood and its problems. Along with broken windows, low-income housing and its renters get sorted into the “disorder”

category, while middle-class homeowners are assumed to represent “order.” Pierre Bourdieu (1984) examines how one’s “taste” (for instance, aesthetic sensibilities) has much to do with one’s socioeconomic class background—and judgments of taste have to do with maintaining class distinctions. This seems to be what is occurring in the Greenwood neighborhood. Middle-class homeowners’ perceptions of social disorder are associated with low-income renters. Concerns about signs of disorder are also concerns about changes in the socioeconomic demographics of the neighborhood.

Greenwood homeowners attempt to re-instate their middle-class version of social order by governing neighborhood spaces. Homeowners attempt to monitor, control, contain, excise, and prevent low-income housing and its residents through techniques of spatial governmentality. In this section of the chapter, I specifically examine how this occurs through gating and fencing, nuisance abatement, monitoring by private security companies, attempts to “weed out” low-income renters and “screen” so that only the deserving poor are permitted to reside in the neighborhood, and controlling new development in the neighborhood.

Gating and Fencing

It is clear from my research in the neighborhood that many Greenwood homeowners felt “invaded” by low-income renters—which was often depicted as a spatial invasion. This is especially evident in James’s account of neighborhood decline and why he decided to become active in these issues. James’s interview was filled with tropes of fortification against invasion. He described his struggle against the low-income renters outside the complex’s gates who try to “bust” in, “climb over,” and otherwise transgress the physical (and social) boundaries he worked so hard to put in place. He emphasized the importance of

the perimeter being “controlled” so that the condominium complex can “delineate” itself from the two apartment complexes. In another part of the interview, James discussed controlling “the crap that comes in here” (meaning coming into the condominium complex).

James and others pinpoint the 1994 closing of the Tracy Dix public housing complex in the neighborhood as a turning point for the worse in the neighborhood. Public housing residents were relocated with Section 8 vouchers—many to Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights, which had just begun accepting vouchers. Although many of these same residents had previously lived in the neighborhood, Tracy Dix was located on the outskirts, whereas Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights are located in a central area of the neighborhood, near many middle-class homes. James described what it was like to live in Bradford Park after these relocations; at this time, the complex was surrounded by a concrete block wall and had a guard shack monitored by a security guard:

After the Tracy Dix closed down you would come home at 10:00 at night and there'd be 200 people in the street, just partying in the street, milling around... We had kids coming in there, 40, 50 at time, invading the swimming pools, breaking into cars, the guards were afraid to come out of the guard shack.

James further described the disorder as follows:

You would sit here and, on a sunny afternoon, and you would see a mob of about forty people. Some adults, kids, just come out here, and they would line, they would line the entire shoreline...Fishing. And they would throw their garbage down and it was just disgusting and so we just got to where I'd see them, I'd call the police and we'd (lowers voice) haul their ass out of here.

AS: So how did they get in? ...

James: Over the walls...They would climb over the walls. I mean you can't stop them. They're going to get in. All you can do is when you do catch them is have them, you know, trespassed and if they come back you can have them arrested.

James is referring to having the Sheriff's Department issue a trespass notice to these apartment complex residents, which would mean that they are legally banned from the

property. Once a trespass notice has been issued, if they are caught on the property again, they can be arrested.

According to James, this spatial invasion led to a significant demographic shift in the neighborhood; white flight also occurred in the neighborhood at this time. As noted in Chapter Four, census statistics confirm such a demographic shift in terms of the racial composition of the neighborhood, which has become increasingly African American. However, the poverty rate barely changed between 1990 and 2000.

About nine years ago, James became president of the board of the condominium complex's main residential association.⁴³ He claims that he had a plan to improve the complex, which included persuading the condominium complex to add a security gate at its entrance and exit where before it had only the guard shack. The swimming pools were also secured at this time. Under James's leadership, several years ago an additional fence was added near the complex's exit to prevent outsiders from sneaking in when cars exited. The existing walls separating the condominium complex from the apartment complexes were made higher through the addition of a trellis and bougainvillea (since the county would not allow the complex to actually build the wall higher). While there already was a wall separating Bradford Park from Harbor Pointe, it wasn't high enough to prevent someone from climbing over it, so Bradford Park residents planned to build the wall higher. When the county did not approve the action, Bradford Park erected a trellis and planted bougainvillea (which is very dense and thorny) to grow between their community and Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights.

⁴³ James no longer has this position. There was eventually some organized opposition among his neighbors to his approach—largely because of the major expenditures (for instance, for the gate) made while he was president.

James explained the importance of these changes in the following way: “If you’re going to control your neighborhood the first thing you’ve got to do is control the perimeter. You have to control the people coming onto your property because they’ll come in and create problems so you have to stop that.” He repeated his strategy several times in the interview, often using the same wording. James also believes that the gates (which cost \$100,000) added around \$3 million to the value of the Bradford Park Condominiums.

Gating and fencing are very clear forms of spatial governmentality in this context. Gated communities have been theorized as new forms of urban segregation, effectively separating the middle- to upper-class from those with few economic resources—often citizens of color (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Caldeira 1999, 2000; Davis 1990; Lang and Danielson 1997; Low 2001, 2003). In this way, homeowners attempt to gain control over what they perceive as a detrimental influx of low-income renters by imposing a middle-class version of social order on neighborhood spaces. Through the imposition of gates and fences, homeowners create physical barriers where social ones already exist. In these ways, homeowners work to order neighborhood spaces rather than attempting to analyze and address larger political economic issues such as middle-class downward mobility (see for instance, Ehrenreich 2005).

Nuisance Abatement

Once James had completed his project of gating Bradford Park, he turned his attention to improving the neighborhood outside of the gates. James captured what appeared to be drug deals and some rowdy behavior on video tape, and when two relevant felony arrests occurred on the property, he and a number of other neighbors took the case to the Nuisance Abatement Board where he showed show an edited compilation of the footage he

had collected. The board decided in favor of James and declared Ashton Heights a nuisance in August of 2002. According to John, this was only the second or third case the board had ever heard. This action was accomplished in collaboration with the GCC.

The whole concept of nuisance abatement is another example of spatial governmentality, which blames and targets a *space* rather than individuals for criminal activities. In addition to fining the property owner, changes had to be made to the physical space that was thought to make the apartment complex safer—and which also make it closer to the middle-class version of social order. These changes are in keeping with Oscar Newman’s concept of “defensible space” (1972) popularized in the 1970s as a model of crime prevention through architecture and design. Among his design recommendations are territorially defining space in such a way as to imply restriction and promoting surveillance through architecture. These crime-prevention strategies have obviously influenced the gated communities trend.

Included in the nuisance abatement order was limiting access to the complex through fences and gates, tightening the applicant screening process, hiring a private security company to maintain order, and according to two neighborhood activists, evicting a number of residents with criminal records. As noted in Chapter 4, the GCC also pressured Harbor Pointe to add a fence to its property as well. These new fences actually served to keep residents out of the street in front of Bradford Park as well. I heard several Bradford Park residents express satisfaction with the improvement that the fence at Ashton Heights has made, making driving down Beckin Drive to Bradford Park much easier. However, these fences were also about aesthetics.

Private Security – Private Security Services (PSS)

A key mechanism of spatial governmentality in Greenwood, associated with the Nuisance Abatement Order, is the private security company Private Security Services (PSS), which was hired on at Ashton Heights as part of the requirements for compliance with the nuisance abatement order. Harbor Pointe also employed PSS for extended periods of time. Founded in 1992, PSS is a Florida-based private security company. While one employee related to me that she remembers PSS's early beginnings in the CEO's kitchen, according to its representatives the business has grown considerably in recent years—as private security in general has grown as an industry. PSS offers numerous services, among them: “protection of people and property in escalated risk environments; long-term reclamation and rehabilitation of high-crime communities; and protection of high-risk facilities with sensitive process operations” (company's website).

PSS's work occurs both at the operations and dispatch center in Clearwater and “in the field” on residential and commercial properties. The dispatch center takes calls from residents and alerts PSS officers of problems they need to address. In the field, PSS officers are either “foot” officers—those without patrol vehicles—or “patrol” officers—those with patrol vehicles. Patrol officers, with whom I was able to conduct some participant observation, are not only equipped with a black law enforcement style of uniform, they are also issued a gun, a radio, and a cell phone that foot officers have. They also have fully outfitted cars with laptop computers enabling them to access the Internet and various databases. To become a patrol officer, one must first serve time as an officer on foot, and both work together on properties. Based on my observations, officers in the field conduct a range of activities—from reporting an overflowing dumpster to dealing with a domestic

dispute. PSS officers are required to submit “incident reports” each time they work—these can be community contacts (any interaction—positive or negative with a person on the property), prevention activities (like noting that a light is out), and quality of life issues (reporting that a fuse box is broken, for example), among others.

PSS distinguishes its approach to security from others through its central philosophy, the Community and Character Based Protection Initiative (CCBPI), which is characterized largely by taking preventive measures—although it addresses crisis situations as well (i.e., an apartment complex overrun with gang activity).

As stated in a PSS brochure,

CCBPI is based on the philosophy that by building relationships with residents, we can establish trust, confidence, and organization in the community. As history has proven, criminals rely upon disorganization and fear in order to victimize the community. By restoring order and unity, we deny criminals of the conditions [sic] they need to operate successfully (nd).

This is very much a community policing approach, although PSS officers do not have the authority of police officers. For instance, there is a focus on crime prevention and risk management through the imposition of spatial order. I will discuss several ways that CCBPI is implemented in the description that follows—namely through controlling the physical space of a property, instituting community rules that closely follow the broken windows philosophy, the implementation of “STOP Operations,” constant surveillance, and building relationships with residents.

In a brochure for their company, PSS lists several standard community rules that they ask residents to follow: no loitering in common areas; no open alcoholic containers; no loud music; no gang paraphernalia. These rules seem to be influenced by the broken windows theory as they clearly focus on visible signs of disorder. Residents who engage in disorderly

behavior are provided with a written report, a copy of which is given to the property manager. Residents are then told that after several write-ups they can/will be evicted. Of course, this requires the cooperation of the property management, which PSS officers sometimes find to be slow to act.

PSS's Symmetry Target Oriented Patrolling (STOP) Operations approach is one of the strategies utilized through PSS's CCBPI approach. STOP Operations explicitly draws on the Chicago School of Human Ecology, which according to the PSS brochure, acknowledges "that the key to making long-term reductions in crime is rehabilitation and stabilization of the afflicted community" (STOP Operations brochure, nd). STOP operations attempts to "bring symmetry (organization) back to the community by systematically targeting visible criminal activity, nuisance problems, and quality of life issues. STOP operations reclaim the community from predatory elements and lay the foundation for long-term growth" (STOP Operations brochure, nd). These goals are accomplished by both "proactive intervention" and "preventative interaction." Included in "proactive intervention" are "tactics to pressure criminals to abandon their activities or leave the environment" (STOP Operations brochure, nd)—for instance, stopping and interviewing people entering the community and working with law enforcement agencies to remove criminals from the property. "Preventive interaction" involves the following objectives: "to improve the community's perspective of public safety, re-establish a sense of personal security, and raise the community's level of self-esteem" (STOP Operations brochure, nd).

PSS officers accomplish most of their goals through constant surveillance of the properties that they patrol. In order to be able to submit these reports—and in keeping with PSS's philosophy of crime prevention—patrol officers must constantly be on the lookout for

“suspicious”⁴⁴ looking persons and situations. They basically provide surveillance for property management and also law enforcement. PSS patrol officers issue noise violations—which PSS can do without personally confronting a resident—and trespass notices—when they stop a person and he/she does not live in the complex and cannot prove that he/she is a guest of a resident; while three noise violations can result in an eviction by management, trespassing after receiving a trespass notice can result in an arrest. However, this requires the presence of a law enforcement officer to issue the trespass notice; a PSS officer will call for back-up from the Sheriff’s Department, but this is not always effective.⁴⁵ PSS also encourages residents to report on each other by calling a confidential line at PSS.

Forming relationships with residents are also central to the work of a PSS officer. According to the CCBPI philosophy, PSS’s primary approach to crime prevention is to cultivate relationships first with residents—usually first contacts are with children—and then facilitate relationships among residents. Based on this philosophy, at each property there are a requisite number of “community contacts,” which officers report by entering these contacts into a database they access on their laptops. These can be “positive contacts”—saying “hello” to a resident walking a dog—or they can be related to violations (of the law, of the lease, etc.). I was surprised and impressed at how many residents the officers recognized—often by name and able to provide some biographical information. PSS officers also build relationships in the larger community—for instance, by working with neighborhood organizations like the GCC.

⁴⁴ A PSS officer used this term.

⁴⁵ CIS officers told me that they thought the Sheriff’s department was often too overburdened to respond to these calls.

PSS's approach is primarily to alter and control the physical space that they are hired to patrol. By working toward spatial order (free of disorderly graffiti, public drinking, etc.), it is assumed that social order will be achieved. For instance, in the STOP Operations brochure quoted above, it is stated that through PSS activities, it is hoped that criminals will stop their activities or leave the environment.

A different private security company was hired at Harbor Pointe, after Robert Jackson had become the property owner. Their services were cheaper than those provided by PSS, and they did not seem to have as strong a presence in the complex. They seemed to focus primarily on citing residents who did not have current license plates on their cars; after a short period of time they would have the cars towed. This again reflects a focus on physical disorder rather than crime. Certainly the petty crime incidents committed by employees and former employees of Harbor Pointe would not be addressed through these tactics.

“Weeding Out”

James' recipe for how to control one's property advocates that after “controlling the perimeter” (through gates, for instance) you “weed out from within.” Although this is James's personal perspective, it is an effective metaphor for a strategy enacted by GCC members to restore social order to the Greenwood neighborhood—by having disorderly people and places entirely removed from the neighborhood.

Evictions are one way to remove “disorderly” people from the neighborhood space. Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights regularly reported on recent evictions at GCC meetings, to prove that these spaces were, indeed, changing. Much of the discourse generated around these issues concerned removing or “weeding out” the “bad boys,” “bad apples” or “bad

seeds”⁴⁶ from the properties through evictions. When I first began attending these community meetings, I was a bit stunned (and confused) when a representative from each complex stood up and bragged about how low the complex’s occupancy rate was. For instance, in October of 2003, Ashton Heights claimed a 57% occupancy rate, and Harbor Pointe’s manager reported the complex to be 70% occupied in November of 2003. Under new ownership, Harbor Pointe filed over 20 evictions in a month, and the manager was proud to report this to the area’s homeowners. It should be noted that evictees at Harbor Pointe were very rarely Section 8 voucher holders—who would have also lost their vouchers, in addition to their apartments, through this process. Nuisance abatement and PSS were thought to help with the eviction process.

Another aspect of the eviction process is making sure that individuals and families evicted from one complex are not approved to move into another complex in the same neighborhood. Although most apartment complexes conduct extensive credit checks, when an eviction is pending it will not likely show up on a credit report and a savvy applicant will figure out a way to cover up his/her current address so that the rental history at a particular complex is not looked into. To address this issue, a community resource officer at the Sheriff’s Department sub-station in Greenwood requests that all pending evictions be reported to her so that she can circulate an email with the names of these potential applicants to all of the area apartment complexes. When complexes do provide this information, it seems to be effective. However, most complexes are incredibly busy dealing with other issues and do not regularly send out lists of their pending evictions.

⁴⁶ These are terms used by homeowners and complex managers during GCC meetings.

Another way that weeding out is accomplished is through the issuing of trespass notices. If a person is deemed to be engaged in disorderly behavior and does not formally live on the property, a trespass warning can be issued by a law enforcement officer; if the person is found to be on the property again an officer can arrest the person for trespassing.

The activism involving having the Tracy Dix complex demolished can also be seen as “weeding out.” Removing the physical structure from the neighborhood was a strategy for removing problems like drug activity and prostitution—with which, as discussed in Chapter 4, the empty structure was associated—from the neighborhood.

Several homeowners also expressed an interest in having the Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights apartment complexes bulldozed. For instance, James related that at a GCC meeting in 2003, the owner of Harbor Pointe at the time, Felix, “expressed an interest in bulldozing Harbor Pointe and building a three story luxury apartment, which was kind of my plan anyway because what I was in the process of doing is having both places declared a nuisance and at that point approaching them about ‘The dirt’s more valuable than what you’ve got on there.’”

Recently, a number of Greenwood apartment complexes—several of which received HOPE VI relocatees in 2000, including Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights—have stopped accepting Section 8. I heard from my former Harbor Pointe co-workers that it was because too much effort was required to ensure that the apartments passed the required physical inspections. However, not knowing if this was the case for all of the area’s complexes, this could be another example of Section 8 renters being moved out of a number of community spaces as a response to the methods used by the GCC to control neighborhood space.

These examples of activist homeowners attempting to “weed out” low-income renters is very similar to the activist approach observed by Maskovsky (2001) in Philadelphia’s Kensington neighborhood. With the goal of promoting economic growth through the “sanitization of the landscape of its bad qualities” (Maskovsky 2001:225), an activist group organized to eliminate a city-funded needle exchange drop-in center from the neighborhood. Maskovsky writes that the activist group “forged a politics in which the removal of injection drug users is equivalent to the removal of abandoned cars, dilapidated housing and other symptoms of ‘blight’” (2001:224).

“Screening”

Following James’s militaristic strategy for social control, after “weeding out,” a property has to screen the tenants they subsequently let in. In a larger sense, this spatial strategy for social order operates in numerous ways in the Greenwood neighborhood—for instance, controlling who is approved to rent apartments and also what new developments are permitted in the neighborhood.

In GCC meetings, representatives from apartment complexes regularly reported on their screening processes and, in general, on the types of residents they were moving into their complexes. Right after Pete and Sam bought the complex, they began trying to figure out a way to market to senior citizens. In a GCC meeting, the property manager even stated that although they technically couldn’t show preference to one group of people over another, they were hoping to target older renters through marketing. Pete and Sam even offered a senior discount for a while, before they realized this might be considered discriminatory. As I discussed in Chapter Five, Pete and Sam also did make the screening process more rigorous for renters in terms of credit and criminal background requirements.

After owning the property for a number of months Pete and Sam claimed that there was a “new demographic” represented in the complex. In the March 2005 GCC meeting, John said that in addition to physical changes on the property there seemed to be a much better group at the bus stop in front of Harbor Point—“more human, friendlier.” Pete added that they “have jobs.” I believe Pete and Sam were referring more to an increase in “respectable” residents and therein to a certain extent a higher socioeconomic class.

Controlling New Development

As president of the GCC, John’s central strategy for enforcing social order in the neighborhood has been attempting to control new developments. Vacant lots, which residents seem to recognize as liminal spaces, the development of which could significantly alter the character of the neighborhood, are a major concern for Greenwood homeowners. John and others perceive the particular development of these spaces as determining the future of their neighborhood.

Terrace Estates is a development of modest single-family homes originally proposed around four years ago. Area homeowners protested the proposed density of the planned single-family homes and managed successfully to reduce the number of houses built from 54 to 32. However, there remained problems with drainage and the type of fence that was constructed. A representative from the development presented and fielded questions at a GCC meeting. A resident and GCC regular who lived near the development followed up and made sure that the development took down its wooden fence and replaced it with a PVC fence as per code requirements.

Another very small development was proposed nearby soon after Terrace Estates was approved (though by a different developer). The GCC was able to get the number of houses reduced from six to four, which John described in a GCC meeting as “more liveable.”

The vacant lot on which Tracy Dix was formerly located is a significant area of concern for homeowners as it remains owned by the Tampa Housing Authority (THA), which means some form of low-income housing may be developed there—although funding for this type of housing development has been cut drastically. The lot has been vacant since the complex was torn down in 1999, and there have been no plans announced for the property. The GCC had the Director of the THA speak at a GCC meeting. He told the concerned homeowners that there were no current plans for the property but emphasized that the land would be used to house low-income families. However, he maintained that there is a difference between “affordable housing” and “low-income” housing. I gathered that he was referring to the mixed income model for housing low-income families, although he did not elaborate on this point.

There is another vacant area near Bay Village for which there seems to be no plans, where an apartment complex was reportedly demolished around the same time that Tracy Dix was torn down. John conducted research into the situation and found that the property had substantial tax liens against it by the County for much more than the property is worth—and unless the property was sold soon, the County would take ownership. Homeowners fear that this lot might then be developed for low-income housing.

Recently there has been a pressing issue regarding about ten acres of undeveloped land behind Plantation Homes. A developer was attempting to get the property rezoned for multi-family housing—either condominiums or apartments—and Greenwood homeowners

see a huge difference between the two. Even though condominium owners can rent their units, condominiums are primarily associated with ownership. Apartment complexes, on the other hand, are perceived as low-income housing, even though many apartment complexes cater to a middle-class clientele. The GCC organized to fight the development, which could potentially bring in more low-income housing. John kept neighbors informed about how to navigate the bureaucratic process involved in zoning hearings.

At the zoning hearing on July 18, 2006, the developer presented his case, which relied heavily upon his observations that a multi-family housing development was consistent with existing development in the area. However, a major issue was that the development would have to be accessed by a 30-foot wide lane off of 20th Street (which already has a lot of traffic), and code requires such a road to be 50-feet wide, so the developer was (separate from the zoning hearing) seeking an exception. One resident spoke in favor of the development because his family had sold the developer the property with the understanding that the 30-foot access road would be sufficient. Then five residents spoke against the proposal. Although they made separate arguments, all five brought up the impending threat of additional low-income housing in the neighborhood—and the connection between low-income apartments, crime, and the inability of county agencies to handle already existing problems. John and another GCC regular raised the issue of the neighborhood plan the GCC had developed, which emphasizes a focus on single-family developments rather than multi-family ones. John stated that several apartment complexes in the immediate area had already led to an “elevated density” of the neighborhood due to the lack of managerial oversight. Another important point he made was that the rezoning request was motivated strictly by profit. John claimed the developer had been clear that his purpose was the development “of

the dirt” and once it was rezoned he would sell the property (which is why he couldn’t commit to either condominiums or apartments). John’s wife raised the issue that even though such a development may appear compatible, the majority of the neighborhood is made up of single-family homes.

The rezoning petition went before the County Commission a second time on April 24, 2007, and was rejected because of the potential strain on the community if the developer chose to introduce additional rental units into the community.

Zoning is clearly a mechanism of spatial governmentality. Constance Perin has examined the development of zoning to replace the common law of nuisance⁴⁷—so that zoning can be seen to function as “a system of nuisance prevention” (1977:154). Rather than eliminating poverty (and the need for low-income housing), for instance, zoning in many ways protects particular spaces from the presence of low-income renters.⁴⁸

Homeowner Social Networks

Merry (1993) has observed that many middle-class homeowners value privacy over getting to know their neighbors. Because of the lack of social networks that exist among middle-class homeowners, social control then occurs through indirect, formal means rather than through direct confrontation and/or informal enforcement of social expectations (like gossiping).

Greenwood homeowners largely follow this trend—reporting that although they are friendly to neighbors (i.e., waving and saying “hello”), they do not know many very well.

⁴⁷ “The common law of nuisance had been the main avenue of redress for mediating property owners’ disputes over the harm one might cause another (smoke, soot, noise, deprivations of light, or air, for example). Each complaint had to be heard case by case” (Perin 1977:149).

⁴⁸ Although not the case in Greenwood, historic designation often operates in the same way, preventing low-income housing in a particular area (Zukin 1987).

Out of twenty homeowners interviewed, six know more than ten of their neighbors; nine are acquainted with five to ten of their neighbors; and five homeowners are on familiar terms with less than five of their neighbors. The socializing that does occur seems to be primarily with other middle-class homeowners, and only five homeowners reported knowing a HOPE VI relocatee.

As Merry (1993) observes, these socialization patterns influence norms for addressing social order. Greenwood homeowners, as described previously in the chapter, tend to utilize indirect and formal methods of social control such as nuisance abatement orders and code enforcement. As was the case in the transitioning mixed income neighborhood observed by Merry, there is a considerable amount of social conflict in Greenwood—unlike in neighborhoods where there is more class homogeneity and shared standards for neighborhood life (like in private neighborhoods).⁴⁹ Despite the “small government” ideology associated with neoliberalism, middle-class homeowners actually have come increasingly to rely on the government to intervene in these neighborhood conflicts—for instance through code enforcement, nuisance abatement, and an increased police presence.

Political Economic Context

Understanding the activism of Greenwood homeowners requires more than a common sense understanding of the situation—for instance, simply criticizing the homeowners’ actions as misguided; in his article, “The Other War At Home,” Maskovsky (2001) makes this important point in his analysis of neighborhood activism in Philadelphia’s Kensington neighborhood. Instead, the Greenwood homeowner activism described above must be understood as a response to neoliberal restructuring. Although Greenwood

⁴⁹ Of course, this is not always the case.

homeowners are attempting to return to an idyllic version of their neighborhood that never actually existed, their own experiences of economic decline in the current economy are very real concerns. Neoliberal social policies are also part of this context. As public housing, among other social programs, has been effectively privatized, private neighborhoods are in many ways bearing the burden. As mentioned previously, the Greenwood neighborhood received a very large number of Section 8 voucher holders through the implementation of HOPE VI. Many landlords benefit from the Section 8 program while neglecting their rental properties—meanwhile, homeowners see the neglect of these properties as the fault of the Section 8 voucher holders. However, rather than question these structures and policies, Greenwood homeowners embrace neoliberal ideology and organize those they blame for their economic and social losses.

Implications for Mixed Income Housing Policy

Homeowners' attempts to enforce social order in Greenwood run counter to the goals of mixed income housing programs. Greenwood homeowners organize against the presence of low-income housing in their neighborhood. Heterogeneity seems to be a significant part of homeowners' perceptions of disorder.

What is of particular interest to me is that these homeowners can be seen to use neoliberal strategies of governance to resist state-imposed neoliberal policy—although very few homeowners connect the larger federal policy of promoting mixed-income housing with what is occurring in their neighborhood. In addition, even though the state is typically vilified in neoliberal discourses, middle-class homeowners rely increasingly on state interventions.

My research suggests that while federal policies may push for “mixing,” race and class boundaries continue to be enforced through forms of spatial governmentality enacted by self-governing middle-class homeowners. Unlike the examples of state-imposed spatial governmentality explored by Merry (2001) and Robins in his article, “At the Limits of Spatial Governmentality: A Message From the Tip of Africa” (2002), in this context spatial governmentality is taken up by citizens resisting state policies—and, in some ways, by manipulating the local state apparatus to serve their own ends.

Amidst these neoliberal policies and ideas, homeowners make sense of their neighborhood as a middle-class space that reflects their own middle-class identities. And they view themselves as having gained their middle-class status and trappings by virtue of their individual efforts. The spatial threat to this status coincides with the very real economic threat of reductions in property values. On the one hand, homeowners support neoliberal ideology and on the other hand, they contest the neoliberal model of mixed income housing enacted in their neighborhood.

Interestingly, these broader political economic changes have perhaps resulted in a reorganization of political identities in that middle-class homeowners in Greenwood are very much organizing across race (and gender) lines—and that such organizing has proved effective in mobilizing action (though in this case, at the expense of those with similar economic concerns and not targeted at those in power). However, treating homeowners as unified by class in this neighborhood can be problematic. Although both white and African American homeowners are invested in the middle-class identity of the neighborhood, the majority of the low-income renters are African American. And two of the leading neighborhood activists, those discussed in this paper, are white men. White homeowner

discourses on neighborhood problems and neighborhood spaces also seem to be subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) racially coded and this issue begs analysis. Especially because the concern over low-income renters invading the neighborhood occurred at a time when the percentage of African Americans increased but the economic constitution of the neighborhood remained relatively stable.

Greenwood homeowners' versions of social order, which rely primarily on the broken windows approach, tend to exclude low-income renters. Homeowner efforts to achieve social order therefore focus primarily on removing low-income renter from—or containing them within—neighborhood spaces. These activist activities run counter to the goals of mixed income housing. While this chapter has focused on homeowners' perspectives on social order in Greenwood, the following chapter explores HOPE VI relocatees' points of view.

Chapter Seven

The Social and Spatial Practices of HOPE VI Relocatees

The description of homeowner concerns about Greenwood in Chapter Six raises the question of how low-income renters perceive the neighborhood in comparison to the homeowners. I now turn to discussing the experiences and perspectives of those who actually live in the low-income apartment complexes believed by the homeowners to represent social disorder to Greenwood homeowners.

Social Construction of Space

Although the organization of space by societies past and present has long been a subject of anthropological concern (Pellow 1996), there is a growing recognition of the importance of “spatialized” (Low 1999) approaches to culture and society (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003) and to theorizing the urban experience in particular (Low 1996). Setha Low writes about theorizing space and human experience, “By *spatialize* I mean to locate, both physically and conceptually, social relations and social practice in social space” (1999:111). Henri Lefebvre’s understanding of “social space” is useful here. He views all space as being socially constituted—through how a person understands, lives, and experiences a particular “space” (Lefebvre’s 2000). Setha Low, however, importantly distinguishes between the social production and social *construction* of space in the following way:

The social production of space includes all those factors—social, economic, ideological, and technological—whose intended goal is the physical creation of the material setting...The term *social construction* may then be conveniently reserved for

the phenomenological and symbolic experience of space as mediated by social processes such as exchange, conflict, and control (1999:112).

I draw on Low's definition of the "social construction of space" in discussing HOPE VI relocatee perspectives on Greenwood. I also utilize Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga's conception of "contested spaces" as "geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (2003:18).

Brett Williams' *Upscaling Downtown* (1988), based on research in "Elm Valley," a gentrifying Washington, D.C. neighborhood that is very diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and class, illustrates the importance of space to understanding a "contested" neighborhood. For instance, white homeowners increasingly push to have the neighborhood designated as "historic" and welcome new stores to the neighborhood, while the renters—many of whom are African American—see these changes as the demise of their community. Perhaps most telling is how long-time renters perceive the spaces of their apartments as "homes," although their house-owning neighbors consider renters to be transient tenants who are not invested in their dwellings or neighborhoods. Similarly, while Elm Valley homeowners perceive black men loitering in the street as potentially dangerous, the men see themselves as making the neighborhood safer by keeping an eye on the street. Part of the different cultural constructions of space in Elm Valley may have to do with how renters and owners use neighborhood spaces differently. While renters walk the neighborhood, owners drive. Owners also seek entertainment and activities outside the community, rather than within the community like renters.

The Greenwood situation is very similar to Elm Valley's. Although homeowners and renters share the physical space of the Greenwood neighborhood, each group understands, lives, and experiences the neighborhood space in very different ways. Like homeowners, relocatees were certainly concerned with what might be considered "quality of life" issues. However, relocatees—and other renters—define these concerns in very different ways. While many homeowners focused on the very presence of low-income housing in their neighborhood as well as on other signs of social disorder, the relocatees we interviewed were more concerned with their very immediate environment—crime and safety, respectfulness of the neighbors with whom they share space, the convenience of the location, the quality of the housing unit, and closeness to family. HOPE VI relocatees also use and socially construct neighborhood spaces in very different ways.

Defining the Neighborhood

One primary way that HOPE VI relocatees construct space differently than Greenwood homeowners is that relocatees and other renters seem to define the neighborhood in which they live in immediate terms—for instance, as consisting primarily of the apartment complex in which they live, rather than in terms of the larger residential area. Unlike homeowners, when asked about their neighborhood, relocatees spoke primarily about their particular apartment complexes. In addition, relocatees do not seem to recognize that middle-class homeowners perceive them as part of an invasion of low-income renters that they are battling. In fact, none of the relocatees interviewed was familiar with the Greenwood Community Council.

As with Merry's "Elm Valley" example, the major—and somewhat obvious—critical difference between owners' and renters' different use of neighborhood space is that most

(75% of our sample) of the relocatees in Greenwood do not have cars. While they often catch rides with family and friends, most also utilize public transportation and walk to local stores. Similarly, while all homeowners interviewed had at least one car, a number of homeowners do walk in the neighborhood for exercise—one couple using it as an opportunity to pick up trash from the ground on a daily basis. Renters are then more likely to utilize the immediate neighborhood area to access goods and services—the local convenience stores, restaurants, beauty salons, park, or even the local schools—and homeowners often drive instead to more distant locations.

Related to HOPE VI relocatees' social construction of the neighborhood, relocatees were primarily acquainted with others who lived in the same complex. This is likely due to the site plans of large complexes and is similar to public housing in this way. In addition, however, only 14% of interviewed HOPE VI relocatees in Greenwood were acquainted with neighbors who were not HOPE VI relocatees.

While Greenwood homeowners viewed the neighborhood as a threatened middle-class community, HOPE VI relocatees viewed Greenwood in very different ways. In fact, many drew parallels between Greenwood and public housing. Many relocatees indicated ways that public housing was actually a more desirable place to live. When asked to reflect on their experiences in the Greenwood neighborhood and to compare living in Greenwood to living in College Hill and Ponce de Leon, relocatees usually answered decisively that their new homes were “better.” But when they elaborated on these responses, relocatees' experiences before and after relocation did not fit so neatly into these categories of evaluation. For instance, when an elderly woman who lived in Plantation Homes was asked if her current housing situation was better than her housing situation in public housing, she answered, “Oh,

I like it better here...I like it better here ...But things is getting kind of bad. I want to move out.” By “things” getting kind of bad, the woman was referring to her apartment having been broken into on several different occasions. Another elderly woman who lived at Plantation Homes responded that her experience in public housing (College Hill) was better, although the interior of her apartment in Plantation Homes was much nicer: “But other than that I would take College Hill over this.” Similarly, another woman in her late 20s who lived in Plantation Homes responded that her experience in the complex “was better because it wasn’t public housing but it wasn’t better as far as, you know, I got better maintenance service through public housing than I did there, because the whole while that I lived there (Plantation Homes) I didn’t have heat.” Another relocatee, this one in Harbor Pointe, clearly rated her post-relocation living situation as worse than in public housing. She felt that overall because of the disruption caused by noisy neighbors, her living conditions were much worse— although she considered the maintenance to be “about the same” as in Ponce de Leon. However, this same relocatee later remarked that HOPE VI had bettered her life because she no longer lived in public housing.

Crime and Safety

Like homeowners, HOPE VI relocatees were also concerned with crime and safety issues in Greenwood. Less than a third (6 out of 19⁵⁰) considered the Greenwood neighborhood to be safer than College Hill/Ponce. Nine rated the Greenwood neighborhood as about the same as public housing in terms of safety. Four relocatees felt it was actually worse. While drugs and violent crime seem to be improved in Greenwood, theft was mentioned by several interviewees in relation to Greenwood.

⁵⁰ Only 19 out of 20 interviewees responded to this question.

In contrast to College Hill and Ponce de Leon, about which all of the relocatees expressed a concern over the constant presence of drugs and drug dealers, overall Greenwood was a significant improvement. However, two interviewees stated that drugs were just as bad at Plantation Homes (another knew of drugs in other parts of Plantation Homes but not the area in which she lived), and two women at Harbor Pointe mentioned that there were drugs in the complex as well.

Fighting and shooting were also negative activities associated with public housing that were rarely mentioned in association with Greenwood. In addition, several relocatees described feeling unsafe in College Hill and Ponce because the police would chase criminal offenders through residents' apartments. A couple of relocatees mentioned relief from this stress as a benefit of living in Greenwood. However, another reported that there had been a shooting and killing in Plantation Homes.

Theft was mentioned in association with Greenwood complexes several times—and three times in relation to College Hill/Ponce de Leon. One woman had her apartment broken into three times at Plantation Homes and another mentioned break-ins at Plantation Homes. Another woman reported that her car had been broken into at Plantation Homes. More than for homeowners, it is probable that the victims of crimes in the neighborhood are primarily the low-income residents.

Neighbors

Neighbors after relocation were more likely to be described negatively than the neighbors in College Hill and Ponce de Leon—as a detraction to relocatees' quality of life in Greenwood. However, many relocatees did have good experiences with their neighbors in Greenwood.

Seven interviewees related very positive memories of their neighbors in College Hill and Ponce de Leon. One woman, when asked what life was like for her during the ten years she lived in College Hill emphasized the quality of her neighbors in her response: “I liked it...I had some real nice neighbors, everybody helped each other. And I liked where I lived a lot. In the section where I lived it was mostly older people.” Similarly, when asked to elaborate on why she loved College Hill so much and did not want to move, a former 30-year resident of the complex who moved to Plantation Homes responded that it was the people that made College Hill a good experience. One elderly woman who had moved from Ponce to Harbor Pointe recalled that when she lived in Ponce, her neighbors would always check in on her—which was important to her because she had very serious health problems. While at Harbor Pointe, she had one neighbor who checked on her very consistently, but when she lived in Ponce there was a larger network of concerned neighbors. Another elderly woman who now lives in Plantation Homes recalled: “Now in Ponce everybody looked after me, everybody!” A couple of relocatees discussed the respect they received from their neighbors in public housing, even from drug dealers who would not sell drugs in front of them.

No interviewee had strong positive feelings about their neighbors in general in Greenwood. Two, however, when asked if they trusted their neighbors in Plantation Homes more, less, or about the same as in College Hill, responded that they trusted their Plantation Homes neighbors more. Another woman, when asked about her neighbors in Plantation Homes, responded: “It’s not much of a difference. Because a lot of, you know, a lot of the people are coming from Ponce and Riverview Terrace⁵¹ and College Hill and, you know” and stated that they were the primary reason that she was not satisfied with her living

⁵¹ Another Tampa public housing complex redeveloped through a HOPE VI grant.

situation. However, another woman in the same complex implied that the behavior of her neighbors was a significant improvement: “I don’t have to put up with the loud music.”

Location

In the literature on programs aimed at improving social mobility through relocation, it is assumed that lower poverty neighborhoods are “better” neighborhoods for relocatees. However, issues like “convenience” are relative—and neighborhoods with high poverty rates often have important services that cater to their low-income residents. For HOPE VI relocatees in Greenwood, “convenience” is largely defined by the number and quality of services within walking distance, including access to public transportation. Overall, HOPE VI relocatees interviewed in the Greenwood neighborhood were satisfied with their new location. Eight reported that the location was better than College Hill/Ponce de Leon, and five considered it about the same. One relocatee elaborated:

Because everything is not too far. The grocery stores, clothing stores, shoe store all of that’s maybe like ten, fifteen minutes away. Probably not even that long. But if you’re on a good bus route- Bus Six is like the main bus, it’ll take you downtown all the way back over to University Mall. Yeah I would say yeah I’m in a good area. I like the area I’m staying in.

However, seven considered the location of Greenwood to be worse than their former location in public housing. For elderly residents living in Plantation Homes, the location was somewhat less convenient. When asked how convenient shopping was in Greenwood, one elderly relocatee responded:

It’s bad. If you ain’t got no car how you going to walk fourteen blocks and you old...and can’t get around. It’s fourteen blocks. You walk seven up and seven back. That’s fourteen blocks. Ain’t got no store nowhere. That’s why the children come here and buy little cookies and candies from me because those children can’t get to the store.

As one relocatee recalled, when living at Ponce, shopping was much more convenient if you

did not have a car:

Cause like when we like Ponce, store was right up the street. If you lookout the door you see the store. Two stores, the first store and the second store. Then another store was on 22nd. So we had like three stores around there. ...It was kind of more convenient there but you know if you have transportation they about the same.

Problems with transportation increased for many relocatees when they left College Hill/Ponce de Leon. Nine out of nineteen reported that their access to transportation had decreased since relocating. A woman who moved to Plantation Homes related the following:

I didn't want to move. It was the packing and then when I moved to Plantation Homes it was terrible for me. I didn't have no transportation and the bus ran every hour and the nearest store was seven blocks.

Seven relocatees found transportation about the same in their new neighborhood as it was in public housing; and three did find transportation to be better in Greenwood.

Apartments

While homeowners perceived all low-income housing as contributing to social disorder, relocatees distinguished among complexes. Of the twenty relocatees interviewed, seven lived in Harbor Pointe⁵², one in Ashton Heights, one in the town home complex Riverview Estates, and eleven in Plantation Homes.⁵³ Most of those interviewed at Plantation Homes were elderly, while only two in Harbor Pointe would be considered elderly. The relocatee who lived in Riverview Estates was an elderly woman, and the one Ashton Heights relocatee interviewed was in her early twenties and had only lived in this complex for a month when she was interviewed.

⁵² An additional interviewee who lived in another Greenwood apartment complex later moved to Harbor Pointe.

⁵³ Two of these relocatees (the one in Riverview Estates and one in Plantation Homes) had actually moved to Belmont Heights Estates by the time they were interviewed; another had moved to the other neighborhood of interest and then later moved to Harbor Pointe.

Unlike homeowners' concerns with exterior aesthetics such as well-kept yards, relocatees were more concerned with the interiors of the apartments in which they lived. For instance, when asked about how she made her housing decisions, one relocatee responded: "I've got to see how the apartment looks first and all of that. Sometimes it really just don't matter but I want to know how it looks on the inside. Not the outside, the inside." Relocatees also seemed concerned more with the apartment itself than with living in a particular area.

While homeowners viewed the neighborhood's apartment complexes in negative terms, overall, Greenwood HOPE VI relocatees were quite satisfied with the quality of their housing. In Greenwood, the housing quality after relocation was considered better by sixteen out of nineteen⁵⁴ interviewees and the same by three; none considered the quality of their housing worse after their relocation to the Greenwood neighborhood. Although this finding might seem obvious—that housing in the private rental market would be better than public housing—in the other neighborhood of study, Riverbend, 52% of interviewed relocatees stated that their housing after relocation was actually of worse quality than the public housing units they had lived in before HOPE VI relocations.

At Harbor Pointe, all seven residents were pleased with their apartments and several emphasized the improvement over public housing—namely, that their new apartments had central heat and air, wall-to-wall carpet (although one resident commented that she preferred the "tile" in public housing), and no stairs to climb to get to the bedroom/s—which was a real problem for one of the older residents in public housing. The size of the apartments was also a major draw. One resident had considered moving from Harbor Pointe to Belmont Heights

⁵⁴ One interviewee did not provide a response to this question.

Estates but found the apartments much too small when compared to her Harbor Pointe apartment.

Those who relocated to Plantation Homes, which is located a considerable distance south of Harbor Pointe, did not seem quite as satisfied with the quality of their housing. They too named spaciousness as the main attraction of the apartments. One woman said she would rather live in the physical apartment provided at Plantation Homes but located in the former public housing location. However, many described the complex as declining, which I will discuss in greater depth later in this chapter.

The woman who relocated from public housing to Riverview Estates, located next to Plantation Homes, said that she loved her town home there, although the landlord was somewhat remiss in addressing a mildew issue. However, she was glad to later move to the HOPE VI development, Belmont Heights Estates, largely because of transportation problems she experienced while living in Riverview Estates. The one relocatee we interviewed at Ashton Heights Apartments was very pleased with her apartment even though she had initially not wanted to move to the complex. She, too, liked its roominess, had brand new carpeting, and although she perceived the general atmosphere as a bit “wild,” she had confidence in the PSS officers who patrolled the property.

Overall, however, unaddressed maintenance problems seem to have been more prevalent in the Greenwood complexes than in College Hill/Ponce. One woman recalled that often when there was a maintenance problem in College Hill, a maintenance worker would come right away. This not the case where she lives at Harbor Pointe; although a maintenance worker will come, it sometimes takes a little while.

Family

Living in Greenwood is also a way for HOPE VI relocatees to live near family members. For the most part, this was not an experience shared by homeowners.

Living close to family members was something that seems to have been an important quality of life issue for relocatees. Most relocatees had relatives living in College Hill or Ponce de Leon before relocation—and sustaining these close relationships was a high priority. Many were able to reestablish this close proximity to family members after relocation to Greenwood. This was in significant contrast to middle-class homeowners who rarely had friends or family living in the Greenwood neighborhood—and often had few relatives in the local area.

Miss Diane, the HOPE VI relocatee with whom I worked, originally moved in with her mother in a house owned by Miss Diane's uncle in Riverbend,⁵⁵ but ended up getting her own apartment at Harbor Pointe after beginning to work there. Her daughter Sheila already lived at Harbor Pointe with her husband and two sons, and she also worked at the complex. Miss Diane's daughter Jennifer also lived at Harbor Pointe and sometimes worked there cleaning apartments, and her son Trevor also sporadically lived and worked at the complex.

All seven of the relocatees interviewed in Harbor Pointe lived close to family members in public housing and now live close to family in Harbor Pointe apartments. Several mentioned this as a factor in their housing selection. An excerpt from an interview I conducted with a woman in her twenties exemplifies this:

AS: And did any of your relatives live in Ponce too?

Relocatee: Yes, my sister. She stayed right down the sidewalk where- Not right down the sidewalk but like five minutes away from us. And my older sister she

⁵⁵ The other neighborhood of interest to our research team.

stayed on College Hill side. But she stayed like five, ten minutes away from us too. So. But driving it was like maybe a few minutes. So walking it was like five, ten minutes. (laughs) But all of us stayed right together there. And all of us, everybody was always at my mom's house everyday...Right now all of us still stay kind of close to each other.

Living at Harbor Pointe, one of her brothers and his fiancé were across the street in Ashton Heights. Her mother and sister both moved into Belmont Heights Estates, the HOPE VI community, but visit frequently; her mother still takes care of her children on the weekends and also helps out with transportation.

Miss Patricia Clark, an elderly woman whom we interviewed, had a middle-aged daughter, Joyce Clark, who was also relocated through HOPE VI, living in the complex. Joyce's brother (Miss Patricia's son) then also moved to the complex. Joyce's daughter Lisa, who previously lived in another complex in the neighborhood, moved to Ashton Heights across the street with her two daughters. Tammy mentioned that Miss Patricia's health had been a major factor in the family living so close to each other.

Miss Sandra Miller, an elderly woman with poor health, moved to Harbor Pointe, where her daughter, Erin Reese, was also living. Erin shared in an interview that she had originally moved to College Hill from Sanford, Florida (about 100 miles away from Tampa) to be near her mother whose health was failing. Not long after she was interviewed, Erin ended up moving from Harbor Pointe. However, her son lived with Miss Miller—and Miss Patricia Clark became her fictive "Grandma." Miss Miller eventually moved from Harbor Pointe as well.

There were also examples of family members moving near each other in Plantation Homes. A mother and daughter who were interviewed together had moved to Plantation

Homes from Ponce de Leon together. Similarly, Latasha Walker moved to Plantation Homes because she had a cousin who already lived there.

The opportunity for families to move very close to each other was likely not as available in neighborhoods with fewer apartment complexes, although there were some examples in Riverbend as well.

Neighborhood Spaces

HOPE VI relocatees use and perceive neighborhood spaces in very different ways than Greenwood homeowners. While homeowners tend to perceive the park, corner stores, and apartment complexes as negative or even dangerous spaces, relocatees' perspectives are often different.

The Greenwood Park and Recreation Center is actually the only public space in Greenwood. While many HOPE VI relocatees do not utilize this space, homeowners almost never use the park—although many mentioned that they used to, years ago. However, since GCC meetings were moved to this location a couple of years ago, homeowners do utilize this space for GCC meetings—and also public meetings, for instance regarding the installation of speed humps in a high traffic area. In this case, HOPE VI relocatees and homeowners actually do at times utilize the same space (and perhaps even at the same time) but for separate reasons.

Although some HOPE VI relocatees share the homeowners' negative feelings about the area's corner stores, many do utilize these stores. The primary reason that relocatees view the stores negatively is that the merchandise is overpriced (rather than feeling uncomfortable because of the crowd that often gathers outside the stores). Only one relocatee mentioned it as a "high crime area" and another said she did not feel safe walking

to the store. In terms of the apartment complexes, relocatees and other renters often distinguish the apartment in which they live from others in the neighborhood. Their negative depictions of other neighborhood complexes might sound a lot like homeowners' perceptions of all of the neighborhood's apartment complexes.

Social Order

Like homeowners, HOPE VI relocatees were also concerned with social disorder in Greenwood. However, relocatees' definitions of social order and disorder and their strategies for achieving social order differed from that of the homeowners in important ways.

Rejection of "Broken Windows"

HOPE VI relocatees and other renters in Greenwood can be seen to challenge the "broken windows" approach to social order. Unlike homeowners, they do not emphasize "visible signs of disorder" that are interpreted by homeowners as signaling neighborhood decline. Instead, relocatees are concerned with immediate impositions on their quality of life.

The relocatees we interviewed did not seem particularly concerned with exterior aesthetics. At the time that several relocatees who lived in Harbor Pointe were interviewed, the exterior of the apartment complex had been in very poor shape and renovations were beginning. Relocatees did not comment on these issues—other than one resident who was inconvenienced by these changes. While she was at work, a landscaping crew hired by the new owner began laying sod. When her car was determined to be in the way, the property manager allowed a maintenance worker to jimmy her car door open and roll it out of the way. The woman was so upset she called the police, but they determined that it was a civil matter between her and the complex management:

Ooh that made me mad! And then my daughter's dad came over because he know how upset I was. And he asked them just yesterday, why didn't they move the car back if they knew they were gonna move it? "Oh but Janice told us we didn't have to move it back." Janice is the lady in the rental office. I said, "OK, I'm not fittin' to let the devil work me up—I'm already tired. I'm not even fittin' to." I just said, "Just go!"...And I thought the police should have said something more than, "Talk to management." I mean, isn't that illegal for them to do that?

Similarly, as mentioned in a previous chapter, another Harbor Pointe resident (who was not a HOPE VI relocatee), was very upset when the construction work on the exterior of the apartment ended up damaging a wallpaper border she had laboriously selected and installed with the help of her mother.

As described in Chapter Five, relocatees are very concerned with the interiors of their apartments. Rather than see improvements to the exterior of the complex, it would seem that residents would prefer upgrades to the interiors of their apartments.

While the insides of their apartments were the most important to residents, exterior aesthetic improvements were certainly noted by a number of residents. One of the candy ladies asked me to type up a sign for her to put in her front window that if she saw a person walk on the grass, she would not serve him/her. Miss Lottie, a woman I described in Chapter Five because of her pride in apartment and her own "decorating ideas," actually paid close attention to external aesthetics. She once called the leasing office to report that her neighbor was repairing his "junky car," which was causing fluids from the car to soil the newly paved parking lot (she herself did not own a car). She also reported to me that the landscaping service was not mowing as meticulously as it previously had—that she had noticed certain patches that were not mowed as closely as others. She let me know that these were the kinds of details that she believed were important for a property manager to address.

Perhaps the clearest rejection of the broken windows approach is the response of residents to PSS, the private security company that patrolled Harbor Pointe. As discussed in Chapter Six, PSS enacted its neoliberal, homeowner sanctioned vision of social order in both Harbor Pointe and Ashton Heights. Overall, residents appreciated the presence of a security company on the property but disagreed with the approach to social order taken by PSS and other security companies.

In particular, residents protested the PSS-enforced curfew. PSS officers consider clearing residents and others from public spaces in the evening to be a central part of enforcing social order in the complex. To residents, the area outside of their front doors is a “porch.” To PSS officers, the patio/balcony areas behind the apartments are porches, and occupying the area outside the front door is loitering or a “fire hazard.” One relocatee at Harbor Point, Miss Joyce, had the following to say: “I often wonder, well I guess they got the people [PSS] to help you out. But when they first come they were doing people so wrong.” She explained: “I was sitting out there on the stairs and they told me I couldn’t sit on the stairs. What they say, a fire. Ain’t no fire. You think I’m going to be sitting out if there was a fire? I’d be a fool to sit out there if there a fire. I’m getting out of the door just like everybody else.”

Another relocatee to Harbor Point discussed this issue at length:

Well the only thing I didn’t like about that is that, OK I’m grown, I’m paying rent, I pay my bills or whatever and for my unit where I stay at. I don’t think that it’s fair that they can tell me what time that I can be in my house or what time that I can get out on my porch...This was like when the PSS was here before they like tried to enforce a time limit that you could be outside or a time limit that your kids could be outside playing. If it’s the weekend and my kids want to get out there in their backyard and run around and play I’m going to let them go outside and play, whether it’s daylight or dark. I don’t feel like, OK, you should be able to come and tell me, ‘OK it’s 9:00 it’s time- It’s curfew. You’re supposed to be in the house.’ Don’t give

me no curfew, I'm not a child. I paid my rent, you know what I'm saying, I paid my rent. I'm not at home and you are not my daddy or my mother. Don't give me no curfew. Would you like a curfew if your husband or your wife tell you you have to be in the house at 9:00? What if I just want to sit outside on my porch and relax? I can't do that because I've got to be in the house at 9:00. So that was one of the bigger problems that they had back then, like curfew wise. I could understand for the smaller kids or the little 13, 14, 15 year olds that was always out running around and this and that. OK. That's good for them but I'm a grown woman, don't give me no curfew. So that's, I felt like they got a little out of hand with that, with the curfew thing.

One elderly woman told me that she felt like a prisoner and was outraged.

To residents, sitting outside one's apartment did not signal social disorder, and they challenged the curfew. When Pete and Sam re-introduced PSS to the property,⁵⁶ there were constant complaints from residents echoing those quoted above. Pete and Sam finally addressed these complaints by requesting that PSS not enforce this rule. He said that he did not want them bothering "little old ladies" sitting outside their apartments (that was the least of his worries). However, this was not the only issue that residents had with PSS. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Five, residents viewed PSS as a service to protect them while PSS considered itself a service to protect the "property." Residents were then understandably upset when their cars were broken into, for instance, while PSS was patrolling the property.

Similarly, while homeowners viewed the installation of fences around the low-income apartment complexes as part of an effort to establish social order in the neighborhood, residents did not perceive fences and gates in this way.

HOPE VI relocatees had previous experiences with fences in College Hill and Ponce de Leon when, reportedly in the early 1990s, fences were installed around both complexes.

⁵⁶ They had provided services to the property when Felix was the owner, but after he acquired an exorbitant unpaid bill, PSS terminated their services.

While residents understood that the purpose of the fences was to keep out drug dealers—or to aid police in being able to capture them when they ran away—none of the relocatees interviewed felt that the fences actually assisted with these efforts. People still managed to climb over them, dig holes underneath, or damage the fences in order to bypass them. The fences were actually very inconvenient for some of the residents of College Hill and Ponce de Leon, requiring them to walk a much longer distance to stores and bus stops because they now had to go through the entrance/exit rather than simply across the street. A couple of relocatees remember feeling extremely confined, as if they were in prison. One woman said that she did not sleep well for months because she felt like she was locked in. However, one woman liked the fact that the fence made the area outside of her apartment seem more private (in that it was demarcated from the sidewalk and street).

Similarly, in Greenwood, numerous relocatees living in the fenced and sometimes guarded Plantation Homes reported major inconveniences caused by the fences—although someone had torn a hole in the fence to facilitate mobility. Overall, the relocatees did not see fences as promoting safety and order. One woman did believe that the fence at Ashton Heights prevented children from running into the street. A Harbor Pointe resident whose brother lived in Ashton Heights told me that the gates were always “screwed up.” She and most other Harbor Pointe residents found the white PVC fence aesthetically appealing, although one relocatee said that she would rather be able to see the road while sitting outside.

The aesthetics of Harbor Pointe’s fence were a constant problem for complex management. The fence’s slats were consistently getting kicked out by area youth. Once when the property manager saw a young boy rumored to live in Bradford Park kicking out a slat, she sent her husband (who worked on the property managing its renovations) to chase

after him so that he could be charged with the damage. I do not know whether or not complex residents perceived the appearance of the fence as a sign of social disorder. I do know that I did not receive any complaints from residents about this issue while I worked there.

However, some apartment complex residents are aware of how the fences can represent order or disorder (if vandalized) to others in the neighborhood. An elderly woman I have kept in touch with is now quite bothered by how the vandalized fence is perceived by others in the neighborhood. She was told by someone in another apartment complex that the perception is that Harbor Pointe residents do not bother to stop the kids from kicking out the slats. Similarly, one relocatee related her understanding of the most recent fence installed at Bradford Park: to keep kids from the apartment complexes from sneaking in the back gate of Bradford Park so that they could use the swimming pool.

Crime and Safety

As discussed in Chapter Six, although homeowners were primarily concerned with quality of life issues, crime was also a concern and focus of GCC meetings. Homeowners often characterized the neighborhood as having some problems with drugs and also prostitution—and several homeowners interviewed described serious theft incidents and even a murder. While GCC meeting attendees listened intently when the Sheriff's office reported statistics about crime in Greenwood, no one was interested in forming a neighborhood watch. John asked for interested participants again and again and I did not encounter anyone who wanted to commit to participating. While there were numerous instances of burglaries in the neighborhood, this lack of interest in the neighborhood watch—and consistent concern with victimless crimes—would seem to suggest that overall, homeowners do not fear becoming

victims of crime. It is also possible that the time commitment required for neighborhood watch played a role in homeowners' reluctance to participate.

On the other hand, when Pete and Sam bought Harbor Pointe Apartments, they initially hoped to start a community watch program. Around ten residents signed up to participate, but after a poorly organized first meeting, the idea was dropped. Like homeowners, HOPE VI relocatees are very concerned with crime in Greenwood. However, it seems that their concern with drugs likely has a more immediate impact on the families that live in the low-income apartments. To a certain extent, relocatees spoke of drugs as having been largely left behind in College Hill and Ponce de Leon. Relocatees also expressed concern with violent crimes (though not in Greenwood)—which were not expressed as much of a concern for homeowners. In addition, relocatees were not concerned with such “victimless crimes” as prostitution.

Relocatees seemed to see the solution to the disorder as increased private security and police protection. This overlaps with homeowners' plans for neighborhood improvement to a certain extent. However, as discussed previously, relocatees do not share homeowners' spatial goals—and do not see the role of private security and the Sheriff's department as an instrument for organizing space in a manner consistent with the notion of spatial governmentality.

Apartment Complex Ownership and Management

While homeowners largely viewed the disorder of apartment complexes as caused by the owner, management, and those inhabiting the buildings—and evidenced by poor exterior aesthetics—relocatees and other renters experienced disorder imposed by property owners and management in a very different way. Relocatees experience in their daily lives the actual

disorder created by the cycles of investment and disinvestment in the properties. From the perspective of renters, low-income housing in and of itself was not causing the disorder—instead it was the landlords’ disinvestment behaviors that create many problems in their lives. These issues include a reduction of services, the constant turnover of staff and also owners, and, in some cases, corruption.

At the time of the relocatee interviews, Plantation Homes was in a period of rapid disinvestment. Shortly after the first relocatees moved in, management reportedly closed the pool and community room. Relocatees reported that there had been a lot of turnover with management and certain vital services had been terminated. In particular, there was no electricity in the laundry rooms—and when there was electricity many of the machines did not work. Also, residents had heard that the security company that guarded the gate had not been paid and therefore had quit working. One resident reported a reduction in waste removal services; she now had to walk a considerable distance to the complex’s only dumpster. Numerous relocatees interviewed also spoke of suspected corruption. According to these residents, one of the managers had been stealing much of the money they paid for water and cable; she was eventually fired. Serious maintenance issues were also not attended to because at times the complex had only one maintenance person on staff. In an interview, when an elderly relocatee was asked whether or not she had talked to the complex management about some of her maintenance issues, she responded:

Relocatee: Yes. That’s just like talking to that fan. Because, since you mention that. Water bill. You know how much my water bill is? \$1,382 and I can show you the bill.

Interviewer: Is there a leak?

Relocatee: Yes and it wasn't my fault. It's a major water leak in that first bathroom. The lady they fired, which was Maria at the time, she knew it. You could hear water running down the wall, inside of the wall. And next thing you know you see a big puddle of water on the floor. Like if someone upstairs is taking a bath, you go in there like you're going to use the commode... You could hear the water running on the walls. And then one day I went in there and looked up. You could see where the water was seeping in. I guess it got soaking wet and that water circle was in there. I called her, I talked to her. Then the tile started puckering. They took all that out and did that twice. But you still could hear the water running.

Interviewer: So they didn't fix the leak?

Relocatee: The guy that was here during the time, the maintenance guy his name was Chris. He heard the thing himself. He even cut a hole right up in here to find out, to see if it would come up that a way. It never came out. But you heard running... But when he found out what was really going on, the water that was in there holding up the thing... it was totally rotten... She wouldn't allow him to go and buy plywood and stuff you know to fix that up. So there's two other guys, the painters, they got some for him... He told her what was going on... You know, he could only do so much because they wouldn't allow him to buy anything to fix it... Next thing I know I'm getting sixty, seventy, eighty-dollar water bills. Like I told her and I still tell them, "Can you all straighten this out?" I will not pay it. Because then later on I found out we weren't even supposed to pay a water bill.⁵⁷

As described in Chapter Six, Harbor Pointe also has experienced these cycles.

Around the time I stopped working in the leasing office, the property underwent a further period of disinvestment. The women I had worked with—Miss Diane and her daughter—recently told me that because the owner had not paid most of the companies required to maintain the property, quality of life in the complex diminished considerably. No new appliances or carpeting could be installed in apartments. Perhaps worst of all, there was no waste removal because of unpaid bills. This meant that the dumpsters were so piled high with trash that residents left their trash on the ground. While this happened once while I was working in the complex, apparently this time it was much worse. Reportedly, the entire

⁵⁷ Several residents we interviewed at Plantation Homes mentioned this, in reference to the complex's corrupt activities.

complex smelled like garbage. When Miss Diane and her daughter expressed their concerns to the property representative, he told them it was their responsibility to resolve the problem. They knew a relative with a truck, so they had him drive around to collect residents' trash and discard it. A resident described to me how odd it seemed, that a man with a truck came to her door to ask if she had any garbage. It is likely that area homeowners attributed the overflowing dumpsters to evidence of bad housekeeping by tenants.⁵⁸

Apartment complex ownership and management in Greenwood are clearly examples of neoliberalism. The privatization of public housing expects the market—in this case the private housing market—to provide for the needs of the poor better than the government could. However, the cycles of investment and disinvestment I have described occur over and over again. When owners cannot make a profit, they cut services back until they finally sell to another owner and the cycle of investment and then disinvestment begins again.

Respectability

Like homeowners, relocatees see their quality of life as being affected by those with whom they share space. While overall homeowners are concerned with aesthetics and low-income renters, low-income renters are concerned with disreputable people such as those who do not attend to their children or maintain their apartments. In many ways relocatees encouraged a distinction between respectable and not respectable low-income residents, which was in some ways similar to homeowners' strict divisions between orderly and disorderly.

Some residents made distinctions between people who lived in their complex and outsiders who visited the complex (and caused problems). A Harbor Pointe resident that I

⁵⁸ Because this happened after my research in the neighborhood ended, I did not actually hear what homeowners had to say about this occurrence.

have kept in touch with has recently described the complex as “getting bad.” She related her frustration with hearing people outside of Harbor Pointe remarking that Harbor Pointe residents don’t prevent the kids from knocking out the slats of the white PVC fence. She insists that it is not the kids in the complex—or something that anyone living in the complex can prevent—it is people walking or riding their bikes by at night. Similarly, one relocatee made a distinction between those who actually lived in College Hill and those who were outsiders to distinguish between social order and disorder:

Relocatee: See, the things that was going on in College Hill that was BAD, it wasn’t the people that lived there. It was the outsiders they allowed to come in.

Interviewer: And they used that space because it was, easy?

Relocatee: Yeah, drug infested. It was, it was drug infested real bad. But then like I said, they KNEW what was going on, but they [management] never tried per se to really stop it.

The social construction of “respectability” tends to have gender—and also racial/ethnic—implications. It is a common theme in the African Diasporic literature (Greenbaum 2002a:180). In Greenwood, these ideas centered around African American women being good mothers and housekeepers who set themselves apart by being very selective in their associations with others.

Like homeowners, several relocatees described “wild” or unattended youth as part of the social disorder sometimes present in College Hill/Ponce and also Greenwood and associated with unrespectable people. A woman’s care of her children is consistently used as an indicator of whether or not she is respectable. This issue came up frequently while I worked in the leasing office. For instance, the property manager commented on how she was surprised when a resident was arrested for welfare fraud because she was always seen

interacting with her kids in such a positive way. The same manager also commented about another mother's parenting when she challenged her on some issue, saying something to the effect of her kids were always hanging off the stairs by their apartment.

The issue of maintaining a clean and orderly home was also a way that residents distinguished the respectable from the unrespectable. Again, working in the leasing office provided me an opportunity to hear certain conversations of this nature. The property manager especially commented on the "housekeeping" of various residents whose apartments she visited. One woman continuously called the office complaining about a roach infestation. The property manager met her at her apartment and reportedly pointed out to her that she had "cookies and ground up chicken bones in her carpet," which was likely the source of the problem (rather than the neglect of the complex). Similarly, this manager told me once that she had heard that one of the cleaning women's apartments was "nasty." Although these specific examples are from a particular property manager, these issues were raised consistently by residents in various ways. Often residents spoke about how neat and clean they kept their apartments. Sometimes this was in relation to a maintenance request. For instance, one resident insisted that she cannot tolerate her apartment in less than ideal condition.

Another way that relocatees clearly distinguish themselves as respectable is by describing themselves as a person who "keeps to herself." These statements took several different forms but were expressed by many relocatees I interviewed. For instance, when I asked a relocatee in her twenties whether or not she knows a lot of people at Ashton Heights (the complex she had moved to) she responded: "I really don't know nobody over there...I ain't trying to get to know nobody either. Yeah. Uh-huh. I speak and keep going. 'How

you doing.’ Because they seem like they’re wild around here.” Similarly, I asked another relocatee, a Harbor Pointe resident in her forties, to tell me more about the friends she had mentioned she had in Ponce and she replied:

Relocatee: I don’t know. I don’t hardly go out the door.

Ashley: Did you have close friends there?

Relocatee: I speak to them and I go back in the house. I ain’t no outgoing person. Most time, I mostly like to be by myself. I don’t like a lot of company. If I have a lot of company, it’s my kinfolk, my friends. To maintain, I’m going to stay to myself. I’ll speak and go back in the house. Maybe a little conversation every blue moon. I don’t be wanting no trouble.

As another example, a woman in her early thirties was asked about her neighbors and she related:

But I mean my neighbor here is OK. Like some Spanish people was living next door but they really didn’t you know too much say nothing because I, like I said I come in, speak, and just, you know, that’s how I do my thing. I really don’t sit on the porch, I don’t even buy those little chairs to sit on the porch, because I rather be in the house.

Susan Clampett-Lundquist (2004) noticed similar statements in her ethnographic research on HOPE VI in Philadelphia. She interpreted these types of statements as having to do with social control—residents attempting to protect themselves from problems with neighbors. However, I think these statements may suggest residents’ expressions of respectability—as a way of distinguishing themselves from others who spend their time socializing rather than attending to more serious matters.

Spatial Practices

In contrast to Foucault, who examines how space can be manipulated to control people, Michel de Certeau (1984) aims to show how individuals actually use space—often

reappropriating it and resisting the discipline enacted upon them.⁵⁹ He examines the practices of everyday life and discusses “tactics” used by individuals and groups already caught up in the disciplinary mechanisms Foucault describes. According to de Certeau, everyday practices—like reading and walking—can be considered forms of resistance when they “elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised” (1984:96). According to de Certeau, every story about a space “plays a decisive role. It ‘describes,’ to be sure. But ‘every description is more than a fixation,’ it is ‘a culturally creative act’” (de Certeau 1984:123). In this way, those that tell stories about particular spaces gain control over these spaces by participating in their definition.

Despite the imposition of neoliberal social policies and versions of social order, Greenwood’s low-income renters continue to enact meaningful lives within the neighborhood’s boundaries. In this way, they are subtly challenging homeowners’ definition of their neighborhood as a threatened middle-class space. HOPE VI relocatees and other renters instead create their own understandings of the neighborhood that include alternative uses and meanings associated with particular spaces as well as a contrasting version of social order.

Although spatial (and social) segregation is largely achieved, it is not simply the result of homeowners’ desire to differentiate themselves from certain aspects of the neighborhood. Rather it is much like the situation described by Merry in her classic ethnography *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighborhood of Strangers* (1981) In “Dover Square,” her neighborhood of study, different ethnic groups—Blacks, Whites, and Chinese—perceive

⁵⁹ There is a extensive anthropological literature that examines the agency possessed by those oppressed by multiple systems of domination (cf. Goldstein 2003). Despite their poverty and other social inequalities, low-income renters in Greenwood must be understood as having agency.

all ethnic groups other than the one to which they belong as dangerous and this translates directly to space. Although they live in very close proximity to each other, residents of different ethnic groups avoid certain spaces and at particular times based on which spaces are used by particular groups. In this way, Greenwood residents—both homeowners and renters—engage the neighborhood space in very different ways, resulting in segregation.

This chapter explored the experiences and understandings of Greenwood relocatees and other renters. Greenwood renters can be seen to construct and utilize space in ways that challenge the spatial practices of homeowners. While this chapter treated space as analytically important, the following chapter examines language—in terms of how homeowners and relocatees create discourses that both echo and challenge dominant neoliberal discourses on poverty and housing.

Chapter Eight

Discourses of Consent and Contestation

Most academic analyses of neoliberalism, including anthropological ones, make use of the concept of “discourse”. However, the term is rarely theorized or even qualified.⁶⁰ Its usage takes much for granted.

In this chapter, I draw on the theory and methodology of ethnographic discourse analysis (cf. Messing 2007) in order to attend to micro level discourses on poverty and neoliberal policies. I consider the discourses produced by Greenwood residents (both homeowners and HOPE VI relocatees) in order to examine how homeowners and relocatees support and contest hegemonic neoliberal discourses on poverty and low-income housing—as well as creating their own discourses on these issues. Exploring these micro discourses enables a better understanding of how neoliberalism is experienced locally.

Why Discourse?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, examining linguistic practices provides a unique vantage point for understanding political economic situations. Paul Kroskrity emphasizes, for instance, that language is “a primary site of political process and of the discursive mediation of those very activities and events we recognize as political” (2000:1). Linguistic practices can then be seen to reflect, shape, and confront social inequalities.

⁶⁰ Foucault (1980) is an exception; he clearly explains what he means by discourse.

While discourse analysis is increasingly recognized as important to the study of social policy and change, not all fields approach discourse in the same way. “Discourse” is a difficult term to define, and few scholars who use the term include a definition. I use the term here to refer to both the earlier linguistic use of “discourse” or “speech acts” (Dell Hymes 1988 [1972]), which I refer to as micro level discourses, and broader societal and institutional discourses (Foucault 1980), which I refer to as macro level discourses.

Scholars of social policy and urban studies have embraced Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)—an approach that recognizes a clear connection between discourse and political and economic processes (cf. Fairclough and Graham 2002). For instance, in the Introduction to a special issue of *Urban Studies* that focuses on discourse and urban change, Annette Hastings (1999) writes that discourse:

is examined to help to identify what kind of knowledge about policy problems and solutions is produced in the policy process and to highlight the contingency of this knowledge; to identify gaps between the rhetoric and practice of policy and to explore how linguistic practice and, crucially, linguistic change are key components of policy change (1999:11).

Marieke de Goede’s (1996) analysis of discourses on US welfare reform, based on articles published in *Newsweek* magazine, utilizes CDA for similar purposes. She is interested in determining, within the debate over welfare and poverty in the US, which images and arguments have become accepted as common sense (even by relatively liberal publications) and the role of the media in promoting these discourses. Although CDA rigorously theorizes the connections between socioeconomic situations and discourse—and has provided important contributions to understanding policy discourses—this

approach does not acknowledge the importance of ethnographic context to understanding discourse.

Anthropologists who study neoliberal social policies and urban situations tend to recognize the significance of “discourse” to their research, although they do not theorize the concept or typically practice discourse analysis as a methodology (Lyon-Callo 2001, 2004, Goldstein 2001, Goode 2001, Morgen 2003, Chesluk 2004). They often characterize macro discourses to provide a context for their ethnographic research (see for instance, Morgen 2003). Others describe local level discourses but do not attempt linguistic analysis (see Goode 2001 and Goldstein 2001).

There are, however, a couple of exceptions to these anthropological treatments of policy discourses. In *The Anthropology of Policy* (1997), Cris Shore and Susan Wright see a Foucauldian concern with macro discourses as central to an “anthropology of policy,” although they do not acknowledge contributions made in the field of linguistic anthropology. Catherine Kingfisher (1996), on the other hand, importantly connects the micro discourses of welfare recipients and welfare caseworkers to macro discourses related to poverty and welfare reform. Although she does not specifically use the term “discourse” or “discourse analysis,” Kingfisher’s work draws on both cultural and linguistic anthropological approaches to examine policy issues.

Within the field of linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis has emerged as an important theory and methodology for understanding power, social inequality, and ideology (cf. Hill 1995, Mendoza-Denton 1996, Philips 1998, Messing 2002, 2007). Although the subject of urban social policy has not thus far been a central concern in

linguistic anthropology, the productive application of the theory and methodology of ethnographic discourse analysis to this topic seems appropriate.

In this chapter, I examine the micro neighborhood discourses produced by homeowners and HOPE VI relocatees and consider how they relate to macro discourses on poverty and low-income housing issues. I attempt to bridge these various literatures by drawing on the theory and method of ethnographic discourse analysis to explore the local, micro level discourses related to neoliberal poverty policies and their macro level discourses.

In terms of what specifically is involved in analyzing discourse in the tradition of ethnographic discourse analysis, micro analysis of speech can involve examining an unlimited number of linguistic occurrences—for instance, pauses, pitch, laughter, word choice, and topic shifts. As it is impossible to transcribe all of these aspects of speech, choosing which to transcribe and analyze is a subjective and also theoretical choice (Ochs 1979). After reviewing the interview tapes repeatedly and carefully transcribing the selected excerpts, I have selected particular linguistic occurrences on which to focus in each excerpt—primarily word choice, repetition, and intonation. Appendix A provides a key to the transcription conventions I utilize throughout this chapter.

(Macro) Neoliberal Discourses on Poverty and Low-Income Housing

As discussed in Chapter Two, macro level neoliberal discourses produced by policymakers, the media, and imbedded in the policies, themselves, tend to frame the problem of poverty in such a way so as to locate the cause and solution of poverty in individual responsibility. Such discourses emphasize the pathological behavior of the poor and de-emphasize (and usually ignore) social structural reasons for social inequality.

These ideas support a distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, position “dependency” rather than “poverty” as the social problem, and promote self-sufficiency, self-empowerment, and homeownership as a solution. As discussed in Chapter Two, these discourses are raced, classed, and gendered—drawing primarily on social stereotypes of poor African American single mothers.

De Goede’s (1996) analysis of representations of poverty in *Newsweek* serves as an important point of departure for understanding how these ideas manifest themselves in concrete public discourses. Based on a sample of eleven relevant articles, de Goede finds the following depictions of the poor to be consistent: the poor as passive, the poor as “other” (meaning the poor are constructed as an out group), the poor as morally deviant, the poor as stereotypes, and the poor portrayed negatively as supported by statistical evidence and numbers juggling. De Goede concludes that such depictions of the poor were common among conservatives in the 1980s but now dominate mainstream (even somewhat liberal) publications like *Newsweek*.

I now turn to Greenwood residents’ representations of these issues—and show how they intersect with the macro level discourses depicted above.

Greenwood Homeowner Discourses

The Greenwood neighborhood provides an example of discourse on-the-ground, where the idea of mixed income housing has actually been implemented. For the most part, Greenwood residents explicitly support the general idea of mixed income housing policy and related neoliberal ideology. However, most implicitly contest these ideas by opposing the presence of low-income renters in their own neighborhood.

In this section of the chapter, I examine how homeowners create discourses that clearly reflect macro neoliberal discourses on poverty and housing—and also discourses that challenge these ideas. Although there is certainly diversity among homeowners’ responses in interviews, there are several common themes. I present and discuss selections of discourse from six out of the twenty interviews conducted. I chose to include these particular examples because they reflect everyday instances of neoliberal discourse in the neighborhood and represent the diverse range of sources of these discourses (as well as their complexity). I will examine six themes in the interviews: neoliberal understandings of poverty; a pathologized depiction of the poor; personalized observations about poverty (or “taking it personally”); the agency (or lack of agency) of the poor; the construction of distinctions based on race, class, and gender; and the presence of ideological contestation in discussions of neoliberal policies.

Neoliberal Understandings of Poverty

All of the homeowners interviewed—regardless of their race/ethnicity, class, gender, or age—expressed neoliberal understandings of poverty in one way or another. These discourses reflect the reframing of the problem of poverty as instead a problem of government in the 1980s, beginning with the publication of two influential books written by social scientists—Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground* (1984) and Lawrence Mead’s *Beyond Entitlement* (1986). As described by Hyatt:

According to this line of argument, an overly interventionist state, now glossed as “big government,” had provided *too much* aid to the poor, thereby stripping them of their capacities for self-reliance and rendering them incapable of taking responsibility for their own actions. One remedy for this supposed plight has been the diminution of public support for those governmental programs, such as welfare, that had once provided direct assistance in the form of cash benefits to the poor (2001:202).

Framing their understandings of poverty in a similar way, Greenwood homeowners discussed their views of the Greenwood neighborhood and poverty and low-income housing policies, poverty was primarily described as a problem of dependency on social services. In doing so a strict division was made between the deserving and undeserving poor—for instance, the elderly who were no longer able to work would be considered to be “deserving” of assistance, while an able-bodied person with children would be deemed largely “undeserving.” Programs to aid with self-sufficiency were also mentioned.

Ms. Bradley is a middle-aged African American homeowner and small business owner who lives with her adult niece in a townhouse on the river in the Orchard subdivision of the Greenwood neighborhood. She bought her home nineteen years ago, and describes the neighborhood as a “true neighborhood”: “You know, people looking out—although there are people moving in and out, people really look out for each other.”

When asked about her ideas on what the best solution would be for housing low-income families, Ms. Bradley responded:

You know, I just think that when we accept people into low-income housing they need to know that it’s temporary. And I think when we put them there, we don’t explain to them that this is supposed to be temporary, because if they knew that it was temporary, then their minds would start to think on day one, you know, “I have to be out of here, by day number whatever that day is.” And I know- I remember a long time ago when people had more children they gave you more food stamps, more money, and all that. I just think from the day that that person moves into subsidized housing that they need to know that this is your rollback, and you know, we’re going to give you the vocational skills, the educational skills, whatever, you’re on a five-year plan, whatever that plan is, and that at the end of that plan, you should be able to progress and move someplace else and not look at this as a permanent situation, but certainly a temporary situation. And when people move into public assisted housing, they look at it as a permanent thing, so they don’t have any dreams of moving on, because you haven’t told them that they need to move on. So I- If there is any type, you have to change the way people think. So if there was anything that I would think, I would think

that the day they sign the paper that there is a counselor saying, “OK, this is your road map. And this is your track, and we’re going to make sure that you stay on this track, and then at the end of five years we want to be able to say “Ms. Bradley can now buy her own place.”

Here she clearly frames the problem of poverty in terms of dependency on subsidized housing, by focusing on the idea that subsidized housing should not be permanent. In fact, she repeats the word “temporary” several times. Her idea of a solution is to promote self-sufficiency (although she does not use this word) through time limits, counseling, and homeownership. These strategies are all touched on in the above quote but are further discussed throughout the interview. Ms. Bradley also mentions training programs elsewhere in her interview.

Ms. Bradley is making a very clear distinction here between the deserving and undeserving poor by emphasizing who does not deserve to receive public assistance—someone with five adults living in her house, someone who has people living in her house who should not be there. In fact, Ms. Bradley repeats these ideas several times—articulating them in only a slightly different way—in this short interview excerpt: 1) “One of the biggest problems that I did have. I haven’t had it recently but I did have a big issue with it- Are people who move here and let’s say (pauses) you’re the person who’s supposed to be on Section 8. But then you got all these other folks staying with you. And none of them are working and they’re just hanging.” 2) “I mean, if you got. If you’re someone and you have sons who are eighteen, nineteen, and twenty, I don’t think you would have qualified to live on public assisted housing.” 3) “It wasn’t that I didn’t want the people here but if they’re not- If YOU’RE on public assistance, then you don’t

need five adults living in your house because these people can WORK.” Ms. Bradley’s repetition of these ideas seems to reflect their centrality to her understanding of poverty.

Ms. Black, an African American senior citizen, has lived in her house in the Orchard for twenty-six years. Throughout the interview, she expressed concerns about neighborhood decline. Her discussion of Section 8 draws on neoliberal ideas about dependency.

When asked her opinion of the Section 8 program, Ms. Black responded:

I think that’s a- I think that’s a good program but I don’t think it’s meant to be a way of life...I think it should be there to ASSIST you. And to help you to move forward. Not to become totally DEPENDENT on Section 8. You know. And there are families that they’ve been on Section 8. You know. Then the child- The children grow up and they become Section 8. You know it’s like uh history repeating itself. And I don’t feel that’s that’s the way it should be. I don’t think that’s what Section 8 was designed to be. Like a stepping stone that’s you know that’s what it should be.

Like public discourses on welfare reform, the problem of poverty becomes defined in terms of “dependency” rather than poverty. It is significant to note that by stating welfare should not be a “way of life,” Ms. Bradley uses a phrase popularized by former President Bill Clinton while he was in office (Clinton 2006). Ms. Black’s discussion of “history repeating itself” is similarly reminiscent of culture of poverty ideas (discussed in Chapter 2) still prevalent in public discourses on welfare reform and low-income housing. This understanding of poverty views the solution in terms of individual responsibility—i.e., treating Section 8 as a “stepping stone” presumably to self-sufficiency (although she does not use this term).

Pathological Depictions of the Poor

All homeowners also depicted the poor as pathological in some way. However, while some homeowners were somewhat subtle, others drew on extreme stereotypes.

Ms. Perez, a middle-aged white/Hispanic woman, has lived alone in a modest house on Greenwood's busy 20th Street for more than twenty years. Employed as a car insurance agent while also acting as a notary public and holding numerous other certifications, she has worked hard to own her house and car outright. Unlike many of her neighbors, she is not very concerned with the appearance of yards in Greenwood as she is so busy that her lawn is often a little overdue for a mow.

While we were discussing the vacant lot that used to hold the Tracy Dix apartments, Ms. Perez portrayed poor people as clearly pathological:

Ms. Perez: If they could build single-family homes that are rentals it would be a lot better. But of course you have to put some money in there.

AS: I think the city- I guess the Housing Authority will probably [determine what is built there].

Ms. Perez: Yeah. But they're going to put apartments up there and there goes the trash.

AS: The trash?

I: You know, you know I mean they're Section 8 people, whatever. They don't take care of it, you know. Maybe they'll build them a little better this time.

She sees Section 8 voucher holders as "trash" who destroy property—although she then mentions the poor construction of the complex, which has been well-documented as the reason that the buildings were condemned. When asked if there were changes she would like to see take place in the neighborhood, Ms. Perez responded: "Homeowners. As opposed to renters. Like the land in front of me, if they made like a little housing development it would be nice because it would be HOMEOWNERS, not crack heads.

You have to make- You have to work to you know make your mortgage payment.” Here she conflates renters with crack heads and venerates the single-family lifestyle.

Mr. and Mrs. King also live on 20th Street, in a small house across the street from Harbor Pointe Apartments. An African American couple in their 40s, they have lived in their house for two years with their three children. They shared in the interview that they are both “recovering addicts.” Mr. King related that he had “lived on the streets,” had lived in public housing projects, and had “also done bad dealings in housing projects.” In other words, he and his wife had certainly struggled financially (and in other ways) in their lives and could likely relate to the experiences of HOPE VI relocatees. It was interesting then to note their attitudes toward low-income renters in the neighborhood.

When asked what he thought of mixed income housing programs, Mr. King responded:

If it's a rational I guess I could say- Say if it's one house Section 8 and twelve houses working people it will work. But if you put, if you even it out, then half the people sitting at home while the other are going to work! (laughs) You know then those people sitting at home going to break into your house while you at work. (laughter from Mrs. King and interviewer)...So you know you have to- You have to- You know what I mean. Hey- Hey if they sitting home, and probably got illegal cable, and probably got a car with some RIMS on it, right? Why would you go to work?...Now it could work. Like I say. But it's got to be like Teddy Pendergrass said, a 70/30.⁶¹ It got to be 70% working people and 30% other people that don't work because you know we've got to. And then you've got to space it. Because if you live- You have got two houses that don't work and live off Section 8 right next to each other, then I'm going to come to your house every day and we gonna drink beer and smoke weed. “Because we gonna get a check and our rent is paid.” Then you know when and then THEY going to see what YOU do so they going to do /raise/ the same way.

Like Ms. Perez, Mr. King associated Section 8 renters with pathological behaviors— illegal cable, drugs, petty theft, irresponsible financial decisions, and choosing not to

⁶¹ Referring to lyrics from a Teddy Pendegrass song.

work. Mr. King's statements about the particular proportion (70/30) necessary in order for mixed income housing to work is telling. This idea that the pathological behavior of one Section 8 household will rub off on another reflects an understanding of poverty that aligns itself with Wilson's underclass ideas discussed in Chapter 2.

Ms. Crane is a white woman in her 60s who has lived in her house on a street lined with good-sized homes and manicured yards for over forty years. Her interview pathologizes the poor as careless and even destructive. When asked about her views on mixed income housing, Ms. Crane related:

Well that was probably be better than just projects...And it would be better for their self-esteem to have a you know home-like environment instead of you know projects...Of course, people are not going to take care of them. They even tore down a wrought-iron fence. They don't care. I don't know how people can be so uh destructive...But if it doesn't belong to them they don't care.

Ms. Crane's focus on "self-esteem" and the destructive behavior of the poor clearly reflects neoliberal ideology.

Taking It Personally

Rather than the "numbers juggling" de Goede (1996) describes in *Newsweek* articles on welfare reform, quite a few homeowners related personal anecdotes about a poor person or family that they knew in order to support their views of poverty. I will consider three specific examples here.

Throughout her interview Ms. Bradley, whom I discussed previously, had much to say about Section 8 renters who live in her townhouse community; she initiated this topic on her own. Ms. Bradley estimates that about half of the thirty-five townhouses in her community are rented by Section 8 voucher holders and views this as a major problem in the neighborhood:

One of the biggest problems that I did have- I haven't had it recently but I did have a big issue with it- Are people who move here and let's say (pauses) you're the person who's supposed to be on Section 8. But then you got all these other folks staying with you. And none of them are working and they're just hanging. And that used to be a BIG issue for me. And it was so much so that I you know wrote letters to the Tampa Housing Authority about it...Saying that there are people living there who I didn't think that, you know, were supposed to be living there. I mean, if you got. If you're someone and you have sons who are eighteen, nineteen, and twenty, I don't think you would have qualified to live on public assisted housing...They were selling drugs. And you know, you saw the kids running up and down the road here. We just didn't need that in the neighborhood. So you know I wrote a letter to the Tampa Housing Authority saying how I knew this lady's sons were selling drugs and you know I didn't understand how she could be on public assistance, and if they ever do check, what's their procedure for people who live on public assistance. Do they come out and check to make sure that the people who are supposed to be living in the house are the people who are actually living in the house...It wasn't that I didn't want the people here but if they're not- If YOU'RE on public assistance, then you don't need five adults living in your house because these people can WORK. And if you're not paying rent that's no incentive for them to work. And that was my whole, my whole issue was that, OK, you got all these adults living here, most of them are men. And when I leave in the morning, they're sitting there, and when I come back in the evening, they're sitting there. (raises voice significantly) "And I'm going to work every day for you to sit there?!" Because guess who's paying for THEIR public assistance? The people who ARE working. And I did not appreciate it.

These statements about poverty further reflect Ms. Bradley's neoliberal understanding of the causes of poverty. She seems to see the problem as a rejection of work by the poor. Particularly telling is her use of the term "incentive" toward the end of the interview excerpt—suggesting that if Section 8 voucher holders had to pay rent, they would have an "incentive" to work. This is a term associated with welfare reform discourses.

It is significant that Ms. Bradley begins to raise her voice toward the end of the interview excerpt, when discussing how personally she takes what she perceives as a rejection of work by Section 8 voucher holders. She feels that as a taxpayer, she has a right to ask that voucher holders be regulated—and to feel wronged that they are not working. It is Ms. Bradley's personal experiences with Section 8 voucher holders that

hardened her understandings of voucher holders and the poor—something that is a common theme in many of the homeowner interviews. To her, as with many homeowners, these experiences seem to prove neoliberal discourses on dependency (and related issues) correct.

Ms. Perez also related personal observations about poverty:

Yeah, but if you don't have the education, you know. I feel sorry that these people are having kids, I sell auto insurance and you get these young girls they're not married and they have three or four kids and you go (gestures). Who's paying for them? M:e, Yo:u.

Like Ms. Bradley, Ms. Perez views the dependency of voucher holders as personally damaging to her as a taxpayer.

Mr. King too bases much of his perspective on a personal experience he has had with a voucher holder:

I got a sister and and I love her to DEATH. My oldest sister is (pauses) I'm 44 she's probably 47. She's been with a man THIRTY-FIVE years...and she's been living that Section 8 thing for a period of time. When her lights go out and he move in with another girlfriend, right...And she she came here one time and asked. "I ain't I can't help you." Now she done a few, my wife tried to tell her about a program that would assist her. Now I'm a firm believer, my dad said "you can do anything in this world you want to do," but if you let somebody continue to do- Like I used to have a grudge against that guy. Today he's my best friend. "You're the one with the problem. Why you let him do that?" You know my sister's been living off of, AND SHE'S ABLE TO DO WORK...And her daughter done grewed up and had two children and SHE'S living the same way. So you know I haven't seen a whole bunch of stuff in my life and I feel like I tell my wife, "it's not my problem."...I got these here to raise and I want them to live and grow up to live a good life you know so.

Mr. King cites his personal experience with his sister to support stereotypes about poverty promoted through neoliberal discourses. She abuses the system by allowing her boyfriend to live with her even though she receives public assistance. His comments

above reflect a neoliberal understanding of dependency (“living off of”) and undeserving poor (“SHE’S ABLE TO DO WORK”).

Agency

Examining agency in homeowners’ discussions of poverty and affordable housing is an important way of understanding their views. Although dominant discourses may emphasize the passivity of the poor (de Goede 1999), homeowner discourses provide a more complex understanding.

For instance, Mr. King, in the interview excerpt quoted above, seems to imply that his sister has agency—that she chooses to remain in this situation—and this is why he feels he can no longer help her. However, he presents his sister’s daughter as being the passive victim of her mother’s choices.

Issues of agency emerged in the interview with Ms. Bradley, as she discussed issues related to Section 8 voucher holders in Greenwood a second time in the interview, when talking about changes in the neighborhood over the past five years:

I would fight with you know the Housing Authority, the county, trying to find out how are you regulating these people, and what are you doing to make sure that they are looking for JOBS? And someone said there was a program where eventually you, it’s a program and eventually you get off it. So, you know, some of these people it should have expired by now. (laughs) They are certainly able to go to work everyday. But um the last five years have been probably the most difficult for me because when I first moved in it was a WONDERFUL neighborhood and I loved the diversity. And now, it’s not that I DON’T like it. It’s not that I dislike the diversity. I dislike what I see happening to the neighborhood. You know, I dislike the- You really can’t be mad at the children as more as being mad at the parents, because they’re only really doing what the parents allow them to do. You know, if the mother- You know, these parents know when their children are selling drugs. You know, they know they’re not going to school every day. You know, they- They know if they’re out there throwing paper around and all of those things. So, I think I’m just very disgusted probably with the parents’ situation more than the children.

Ms. Bradley seems to view voucher holders as possessing a considerable amount of agency—while she represents herself as a victim of what is “happening to the neighborhood.” For instance, her neighbors *choosing* not to work even though they are “able.” In addition, Ms. Bradley’s repetition of the phrase “they know” (or in one case “these parents know”) illustrates her perception of voucher holders as having agency (choosing poverty and poor parenting).

However, previously in the interview—in an interview excerpt quoted above as an example of neoliberal understandings of poverty—Ms. Bradley portrays the poor as very passive. For instance, she states:

You know, I just think that when we accept people into low-income housing they need to know that it’s temporary. And I think when we put them there, we don’t explain to them that this is supposed to be temporary, because if they knew that it was temporary, then their minds would start to think on day one, you know, “I have to be out of here, by day number whatever that day is.”

Here “we” (presumably homeowners or the general public) is the group represented as having agency or taking action: “accept people” and “put them.” Even Ms. Bradley’s description of the change in mentality that she would expect from voucher holders depicts “them” passively. For instance, she states that “their minds would start to think”—almost as if the mind was separate from the person (who is not seen as changing or taking action). This representation is furthered later in the excerpt, when Ms. Bradley states: “And when people move into public assisted housing, they look at it as a permanent thing, so they don’t have any dreams of moving on, because you haven’t told them that they need to move on. So if there is any type, you have to change the way people think.” She believes that voucher holders have to be told to have dreams; she also gives “us” (in this case “you”) the agency to change the way voucher holders think.

Ms. Crane's interview also expressed conflicting perspectives on the issue of agency. When asked what she sees as the best solution for housing very low-income families, she responded:

Well, the individual homes would be nice if they could be you know like government assisted. But it definitely should be some classes in how to take care of property. And rules that they could not stay there if they did not take care of the property. There should be inspections I think. And then they'll take care of it. When you look a little in the projects they had inspections. They had to keep them up. But I don't know if they do that now or not.

This is yet another example of Ms. Crane's emphasis on regulating the pathological poor. However, while in her previous discussion of the destructive behavior of voucher holders she suggests that "they don't care" about property that they do not own, in this interview excerpt Ms. Crane suggests that in addition to regulation, voucher holders need to be taught how to take care of property (and in this way are actually not choosing to be destructive).

Distinctions

Throughout their interviews, Greenwood homeowners made very clear distinctions between themselves ("us") and low-income renters ("them"). These discourses of making distinctions often appear especially strong in cases where such a clear division might not be obvious—for instance, if the homeowner is struggling to maintain his/her middle-class status, which these days is becoming increasingly difficult. These statements of distinction seem related to homeowners asserting and therein maintaining their social identities (Barth 1969).

Ms. Perez's interview was full of statements of distinction. For instance, when asked if she was acquainted with anyone who moved out of the College Hill or Ponce de

Leon public housing complexes, she responded: “NO. No no no no. I work for a living.” In this way, Ms. Perez suggests that former residents of public housing do not work—and would therefore not fall within her social circle. Similarly, when asked what she thought about role modeling in mixed income neighborhoods, Ms. Perez stated:

I think the more middle-class people are so busy doing their job that they don't have time to be a role model. You know, I get up early I go to work and sometimes I'm not home until 8:00 so what kind of role model am I? I'm never there. I'm working, you know as opposed to hanging around watching Jerry Springer. At 4:00 in the afternoon. I'm not making an example because I'm not there. But I'm working...And some people got two jobs just to make their home payment or their car payment, whatever. They're working.

Here she supports a firm binary of “us” versus “them”—associating homeowners with work and Section 8 voucher holders with “hanging around watching Jerry Springer.”

Like Ms. Perez, Mr. and Mrs. King live in a very modest home on 20th Street. This couple openly admitted to having been “addicts” and having experienced economic instability in the past—which makes their statements of distinction particularly interesting. When the couple was asked what they thought was the best solution for housing low-income people, Mrs. King responded:

I don't know what to tell- Well...right now I say to continue to help them with the vouchers, with the vouchers so they can try to move in to sufficient housing to take care of their kids and stuff like that, but whether what community to put them in I really can't say because you know it looks like the city is going to pretty much do what they want to do anyway. Regardless. And we're just going to put our opinion in on it. But I don't know, I really wouldn't know what to say or how to handle that besides just keep helping them the people with the vouchers and placing them in places. I would be I'm okay with them being able to move here, because I remember when I had to have that help. And so I would love to have been able to put my kids in a decent community. And I did, I got a chance to do that put them in a decent community, and uh use a voucher. And I was okay with that because I was one of those parents that was CONCERNED. But I mean, like I was saying you get parents now that don't care. They move somewhere and it doesn't matter, they still going to act the same way they acted when they was living over there they going to act that way when they go somewhere else.

Through her discussion, Mrs. King clearly distinguishes between the deserving and undeserving poor. She implies that when she was a voucher holder, she had been of the deserving variety, along with other “mothers who care and those without background problems.”

Mrs. King went on to relate these issues to the presence of voucher holders in Greenwood:

But as far as them coming in my neighborhood I am okay with it as long as they stay on their grounds and we stay on our grounds and we just continue, and- And the city helps us keep this as safe as possible by putting the lighting up. The police keep doing the area like, like they do. They go around and monitor the area, just continue to monitor the areas where you all put them. You know and as far as code enforcement, I don't think that's a lot necessary unless people call in and complain, that “hey these people next door got like five or six cars just sitting in their yard and they ALL BROKE DOWN.” Then at that point I think code enforcement does need to kick in and help out. But just going around and tapping on people for little things like they do I don't think its necessary. Over here. It's not that bad over here. And I don't see a lot of houses on this street. Do you? With cars parked in their yard?...And the mailman believe me he complain about whatever he want to complain about. Because he right now he's upset cause our mailbox is right here on this wall and it's not out there by that road. And if he was code enforcement he'd probably give us a big ticket. (laughs) Yeah. But otherwise I don't think it's there's no big need for the code enforcement.

As far as for the people that they're helping I think the best thing is to continue doing the vouchers like they're doing, and try to help them to the best that they can. And just don't put them out and not give them ANYWHERE to go...And also mixing them with with people who are paying rent and not paying rent, I think they have to monitor, not monitor but screen. They need to do a more specific screening. Maybe on the people's background where they was moving them from and moving them to, maybe check their background and see how they kept their apartment or HOW they paid their rent. And that kind of thing. And if they want then those people they would maybe do a census inside the Section 8 office and say these people were always good with doing what they had for Section 8, we'll place them over here with these type of people. And then set those apartments up for only those type of people.

In this interview excerpt, Mrs. King continues to make very specific distinctions—between low-income renters and homeowners, between real neighborhood problems (“like five or six cars just sitting in their yard and they ALL BROKE DOWN”) and those that should be overlooked (the placement of a mailbox), and between the deserving and undeserving poor. It is interesting that she suggests that there is a spatial separation between homeowners and Section 8 renters even though she does not live in a fenced and gated area of the neighborhood. In addition, the complex is immediately across the street, and Mrs. King even mentions elsewhere in the interview that sometimes her child plays with children who live in the complex. She seems to be describing a distinction that she recognizes but that others may not.

It is interesting that Mrs. King shifts from a discussion of the neighborhood being monitored to protect homeowners from low-income renters—to the topic of code enforcement, which she feels should be less active in the neighborhood. She is clear that there have been some complaints about her own home (in particular the mailbox), and she is making a distinction that she and her husband should not fall into the category of people who are regulated. I find Mrs. King’s shift here very significant, given the context that she and her husband would likely not fall into the category of “middle-class” homeowners and find it necessary to consistently make distinctions between themselves and others.

Toward the end of the excerpt, Mrs. King discusses distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor. She is in favor of mixed income housing if only the deserving (which she refers to as “these/those type of people”) would be moved into these neighborhoods—those who pass background checks, pay their rent on time, and

take care of their apartments. Again, this relates back to Mrs. King's own identification with the category of deserving poor in her past.

Ms. Black was also a renter in recent memory. She relates her views on the distinctions between renters and owners in the following interview excerpt:

OK it goes right back to what I wanted to say what I said before. If they're going to do that, they just don't bring those people out of low-income housing just place them there without putting them through some kind of training and program and telling them, "this is what this area is like and in order for you to stay here, these are the rules and regulations that you must you know abide by...Because they ARE coming out of an environment wherein you know almost anything was acceptable and now you're going into a totally, totally different environment. So they need to be TAUGHT....They need to be educated. That's it. That's the word that I need to say. They really do. Because it it really bothers me. It does. It affects me. When I see this happening. They don't take- PEOPLE DON'T TAKE PRIDE in themselves. Or in the places that they live. Because I remember when I was renting. You know I rented an apartment. (tone becomes more emotional) I kept that apartment just like I keep my house. Because that was my APARTMENT. And I lived there. And I took pride in it. I think it has a lot to do with your foundation your upbringing too. I think that has a lot to do with it. When the when the- In the home when a foundation is laid, whatever that environment is in your home, you become a part of that. I truly believe that.

Ms. Black too makes a clear distinction between voucher holders and homeowners, focusing on the deplorable behavior of the poor, saying that in public housing "almost anything was acceptable." Like a couple of previous homeowner interviewees discussed in this chapter, she sees the need for voucher holders to be trained in how to function in neighborhoods like Greenwood. She sees voucher holders as being a product of their "environments" or "upbringings" rather than having agency. It is interesting that for Ms. Black, the distinction between renter and owner begins to break down as in her recent memory she has been both.

It is important to note how Ms. Black sees these issues as relating to her. She says that when she sees poor renters not adhering to neighborhood expectations: "...It really bothers me. It does. It affects me. When I see this happening. They don't take- PEOPLE DON'T TAKE PRIDE in themselves." This is when the tone of the interview intensifies and when she discusses her own experiences as a renter, her tone is quite emotional. This is similar to several of the previous interviewees interviewed who take the dependency or behavior of others very personally.

Ms. Bradley's use of "we" and "them" in a previously discussed interview excerpt is another example of these distinctions. She says "when *we* accept *them* into low-income housing" and "when *we* put *them* there" (my emphasis). Like many of the interviewees previously discussed, Ms. Bradley lives in a modest home—and even discussed in the interview the exceptionally low price for which she was able to buy the townhouse. As a small business owner, it is likely that Ms. Bradley was not comfortably middle-class.

Although it is not the case for every homeowner interviewee, it seems that many of the strongest discourses of distinction came from African American and Hispanic homeowners. These discourses are likely prevalent in situations of insecurity in the social hierarchy. In the current economic context this includes most who consider themselves to be "middle-class"—and, in the present climate, this means many whites.

Although the above discussion of discourses relating to distinctions focused primarily on class, racial and gendered distinctions are also present in the Greenwood homeowner interviews. While most do not explicitly discuss race (but rather class instead), considering the context of the change in neighborhood racial composition as

well as the neoliberal cultural construction of personhood discussed in Chapter Two, discussions of poverty tend to implicitly reference the stereotype of the poor, African American, single mother. There were several times, however, when homeowners did mention gender explicitly. Ms. Bradley's depiction of the poor and bad parenting focuses specifically on bad mothers as a cause of neighborhood problems. Ms. Perez's comments also reflect a very gendered stereotype about poverty—poor single mothers having too many children. Although neoliberal discourses tend to refer to poor African American women, Greenwood homeowners do often discuss (presumably African American) men specifically. This was certainly the case with some of the discourses on neighborhood social order in Chapter Six. In addition, Ms. Bradley specifically mentions the ability of able-bodied adults (in particular men) to work.

Ideological Contestations

Through an examination of homeowner discourses it becomes apparent that neoliberal ideology is both embraced and contested by Greenwood homeowners. In many cases, homeowners espouse neoliberal ideology except when it applies to their neighborhood. Neoliberal ideology may be hegemonic but, through the micro-discourses of Greenwood homeowners, contestations can be observed.

A strong example of both a subscription to and rejection of neoliberal ideology is that despite Ms. Bradley's previous negative discourses on low-income renters in Greenwood, when asked specifically about HOPE VI, she clearly espoused neoliberal rhetoric. Ms. Bradley related:

Ms. Bradley: I think HOPE VI is a great (pauses) project. What happens is when you put these people out into, into the regular neighborhoods, I think that's a good

thing too. Although I don't like some of the things that I see here. I see how THESE people are LEARNING from being submerged, or integrated into these type of neighborhoods, you know, they understand that they can't

Interviewer: You think that they get role models?

Ms. Bradley: RIGHT. They see people going to work every day. They see families, you know, being together. They see two-parent families. They see you know single mothers who are really trying to make their lives better. You know, they, they see these things. You can't live in these types of neighborhoods and not see these things. So over a period of a time, and hopefully over a period of time, they're saying to themselves, "OK, I need to get a job. I need to do better for family." You know, mentally in their mind, hopefully they're saying all of these things. So, um. I just, hopefully I think HOPE VI many years down the road will do exactly what they want it to do. Uh right now I think it's just planting the seed.

Despite her previous negative statements concerning the imposition of Section 8 renters in Greenwood, here Ms. Bradley supports neoliberal ideology as she discusses HOPE VI. She views the solution to upward mobility in terms of self-esteem or self-empowerment—or in her words, "...hopefully over a period of time, they're saying to themselves, "OK, I need to get a job. I need to do better for my family."

However, she clearly contradicts herself in this discussion of how "these people" are learning for being "submerged, or integrated" into neighborhoods like Greenwood. This contrasts with her personal experiences with Section 8 voucher holders. Also, she advocates changing peoples' minds through role modeling here rather than providing incentives through regulation (as in a previous excerpt).

These disjunctures within Ms. Bradley's interview speak to the contested nature of these ideas. In addition to simply embracing neoliberal ideology, she also draws on liberal ideas such as multiculturalism ("diversity") (Goede 2001:374-375). Similarly, her emphasis on the role of the Housing Authority in regulating Section 8 voucher holders (in

an interview excerpt presented previously in the chapter) would not seem to be in line with neoliberal ideology, which instead promotes *self*-regulation.

While Ms. Perez supports neoliberal ideology in many ways, unlike Ms. Bradley she is critical of mixed income housing programs like HOPE VI:

Ms. Perez: The only thing you know...it's the whole thing. The poor we'll have always. No matter where you put them, if they're not going to try to better themselves then it's going to mean the same wretched situation no matter what you do. To put them in New Tampa...into \$200,000 homes.

Ashley: Why wouldn't that work?

Ms. Perez: Because. They wouldn't relate. I think they'd just go back to doing their own thing or, you know, they're renting so they don't care if the place gets whatever. But I'm not God maybe there's a way to do that, you know.

In addition, as mentioned previously, Ms. Perez rejected the idea of role modeling in mixed income communities because the homeowners would be busy working while the Section 8 renters stayed at home (watching television). Similarly, Ms. Crane remarked that vouchers seemed like a good idea, but she didn't think that role modeling was realistic as people are so concerned with taking care of themselves.

Ms. Smith is a white high school guidance counselor in her 40s who has lived alone in the gated Bradford Park Condominiums for more than twenty years. For much of that time, she worked at Robinson High School. Recently she has become involved in the board at her condominium complex, and has opposed some of the decisions that James, a previous board member and initiator of the installation of gates among other significant expenditures—has made. Ms. Smith's interview contained tensions between an embracing of liberal “multiculturalism” and neoliberal ideology.

Regarding the neighborhood's changes, Ms. Smith reflected:

That change also would not have affected me as much because I work in schools. I've- I've been twenty-five years in multicultural populations. I mean it isn't like all of the sudden one day I'm- I'm you know with Black and Hispanic people... I've been a Hillsborough County public school teacher for twenty-five years. The schools have been integrated. I went to schools as an integrated student you know...So I mean to be you know mixed or you know it's it's just- I mean to see multi-racial situations it is just a given for me. That's just a very comfortable daily occurrence. Um. You know so. I guess the neighborhood changed. I didn't really have a full feel for that.

Ms. Smith repeated her comfort with “multiculturalism” several times during the interview. She discussed how multiculturalism works in the schools in which she has worked. She talked about kids that have problems but these problems are not racial:

They do something and they're a behavioral problem. You know they don't integrate easily or you know- Then you have kids like they say, “I hate the kids at this school.” Its not like a kid ever says to me, “I hate black people.” I never hear that. Or “I hate Hispanic people.” I never hear anybody say that. They'll just say “I hate people.” It's general behavior, it's not racially directed. “I hate what people are doing.” I don't think they really see the color, because all the kids in Hillsborough County schools have gone to school multiculturally since day one. I mean you can't go up to any kid and say, “Have you ever met a white person, ever seen a black person, a Spanish person,” and ask them “Have you ever seen an Islamic person.” The answer to that, is “Yes,” “yes,” and “yes.”

Here Ms. Smith espouses the liberal idea of colorblindness and racial harmony. While there have been no news reports of racially motivated violent acts at Robinson High School, one local newspaper article written by “TeensLife correspondents” reported that a number of students feel that certain teachers at the school play into racial stereotyping—for instance, that there are higher expectations for achievement for certain groups than others (Chase and Hafeez 2000).

Although the previous interview excerpt clearly reflected liberalism, when asked what she thought the best solution to housing low-income families was, Ms. Smith's response clearly reflects neoliberal ideology:

I think some home care classes or a program um some kind of like even like a co-op program or something where we don't just put people in a home that have never had a home. Um. It sounds very nice to give people a home. There are many programs that do that. And Habitat for Humanity and all that. But you're putting people in a scenario they've never been in so unless they're given some support and you learn uh you don't have a concept of what to take care of and what to maintain. A LOT of house care is maintenance. Regular routine maintenance to PREVENT major catastrophes or things wearing out or um how to be uh economical in your use of things so that they LAST and things like that. So I think that it's it's not just putting people in a neighborhood or in a house if they've never been in house but they need to have some kind of classes or training or support or lessons or (pauses) a BUDDY a mentor, somebody that either checks in with them or is kind of like a big brother Home Depot person. (laughs)

Like several other interviewees, Ms. Smith is advocating not only homeownership but education—and even role modeling (“a big brother Home Depot person”) on how to take care of a home. Ms. Smith does, however, go on to address some of the economic reasons a poor person might have difficulty maintaining his/her property—in contrast to the neoliberal focus on behavior and individual responsibility:

You can give them the house and allowance but do they also have the income and the cash flow for the day to day stuff that goes with that. You know. I mean it's lovely to have a better place to live. But do you have the other financial means to buy garbage bags and proper garbage facilities or a garbage disposal or cleaning supplies you know. And do you know to do that? And is that a lifestyle that you know your willing to do. If you've never mowed grass...I'm not a low-income example of that but you know going from a condo to a house that is a significant piece I have to think about. OR I need to have the financial means to hire a service to maintain property as that community expects it to be maintained. That has not been my lifestyle EVER. Because I've been a condominium liver and I went from my dad's home where I was taken of...Now BECAUSE I came from that environment and I have a good intelligence I know to ask or read books or turn on Bob Villa on the TV and do something about it and not just sit there and watch my you know. And I have a community sense because I have skills elsewhere. But this is not necessarily the lifestyle that a person has. They may not have other skills to transfer over. So I think that it's not just a matter of putting people in a home. They need the training or the support on how to maintain it.

And then what you're really doing is for the next generation. And the children also see that because where are they going to- This is why it's very hard to break these cycles. Because the next generation doesn't see anything different or

improved. They don't know anything different. If you've been a child and always lived in Section 8 where is your concept of saving for a mortgage? How would you know ever to do that. Where would you learn that? And those are the things I'm saying I think happen more in the in the home. It's fine to say OK I see my neighbors and they have this home. But what you're not seeing is how those neighbors saved their money how they got their job to get that home. That maybe they lived in an apartment with nothing. You know. This is my third home. This is the only home that's had furniture. You know. I owned a home with nothing. Well you know when you're twenty you can do that...It's not a simple matter of "Yeah just here's more money go live in a nice neighborhood." If you don't know how to function in that neighborhood (pauses) you will not rise up. You will succumb to what you know best.

In this last part of the excerpt, Ms. Smith returns to neoliberal explanations of poverty—in terms of the cycle of poverty (a different “lifestyle,” “break these cycles” and the tendency to “succumb to what you know best”). However, she is also critical of the idea of role modeling through living in a mixed income neighborhood.

Intersections (and Disjunctures) Among Discourses

Greenwood homeowner interviews do echo macro level neoliberal discourses on poverty and low-income housing in many ways. In fact, all of the homeowner interviews included some instances of neoliberal discourses. Examples include explanations of poverty as having to do with pathological behavior and “dependency” and solutions for poverty than involve education, homeownership, and building self-esteem. Homeowners often supported their claims about neoliberal understandings of poverty by citing personal experiences with poor individuals.

Also in support of neoliberal ideology, out of the twenty homeowner interviews, only a few mentioned structural issues. For instance, while embracing the rhetoric of homeownership, Greenwood homeowners do not acknowledge the problems created by sub-prime schemes that have placed many low-income persons and families in precarious

positions while meanwhile making hedge funds incredibly profitable. In terms of those who did discuss structural issues, one interviewee not previously discussed in this chapter mentioned the poor housing market as a barrier to affordable housing. Another mentioned how easy it is to lose one's housing and how important a safety net of social services is. This interviewee also made reference to the poor state of the economy. In addition, Ms. Smith, whose interview was discussed in-depth above, indicated that in addition to training in how to care for a house, another barrier to home maintenance is the "cash flow" such maintenance requires. In a sense further detracting from structural issues, homeowners make clear distinctions between themselves and those who are poor—especially when this distinction might be called into question (for instance, when a homeowner would not be considered solidly middle-income)).

While neoliberalism is hegemonic, examining micro level discourses reveals that neoliberalism is far from totalizing and homogeneous. Despite their discourses so clearly reflecting neoliberal ideology, Greenwood homeowners can also be seen to challenge neoliberalism in certain ways. However, many homeowners also challenged neoliberal ideas by deploying liberal ideology or rejecting neoliberal policies based on NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard). For instance, a couple of the interviewees' discussed above drew on liberal ideas of multiculturalism. Several criticized the policy of mixed income housing. A few thought the role modeling in particular was unrealistic—or that the policy was not practical in other ways. Similarly, while dominant discourses represent the poor as passive, homeowners vary (even within one interview) in their depictions of the poor as possessing or lacking agency.

Greenwood HOPE VI Relocatee Discourses

Greenwood HOPE VI relocatees also both embraced and contested neoliberal discourses. However, their discussions of HOPE VI and related policies in interviews were not as lengthy as those of homeowners. I will examine the six themes present in the homeowner interviews in six of the relocatee interviews: neoliberal understandings of poverty; a pathologized depiction of the poor; personalized observations about poverty (or “taking it personally”); the agency (or lack of agency) of the poor; the construction of distinctions based on race, class, and gender; and the presence of ideological contestation in discussions of neoliberal policies. These selected interviews represent a range of age groups and relocation sites within Greenwood.

Examining relocatee discourses is especially complex because Section 8 voucher holders are treated as the objects of scorn by homeowners (and in the mainstream media) and can be seen to reflect these same evaluations of the poor. Relocatees therefore support neoliberal ideology in many ways in order to distance themselves from the poor. However, it should not then be assumed that they wholeheartedly agree with neoliberal ideas.

Ms. Baker

Ms. Baker, a mother of two in her mid-twenties, who lives at Harbor Pointe Apartments, gave a very mixed review of her experience with HOPE VI. However, she clearly supports neoliberal ideology in numerous ways in the interview.

Ms. Baker had lived in Ponce de Leon for just two years before being relocated and rates her new living situation overall as being about the same as in Ponce. However, when asked about living in a mixed income community, Ms. Baker asserted that it was

positive: “Yeah because it it really gives me something to to thrive for to know where I WAS living compared to now. It’s like- (laughs) I don’t know it’s like- It’s not really like luxury luxury but it is better. You know what I’m saying.” When she was asked if HOPE VI had changed her life for the better, she responded: “Yeah. Because I probably would still be living in the projects.” When asked if her employment situation had improved, she answered affirmatively: “Well, instead of taking a five dollar job. A five dollar an hour job. Even though this [her job at a daycare] don’t pay THAT much more. But, I still would probably be working in [the seafood restaurant]. You know. Barely making it. I mean, I am barely making it now but you know.” Ms. Baker’s ambivalence about the HOPE VI program is clear—and her life has clearly not changed dramatically. However, she continues to promote her HOPE VI experience (leaving the projects) as positive. Despite her experiences, Ms. Baker supports the program’s rhetoric.

Ms. Baker’s unyielding support of neoliberal ideology becomes even clearer when one of the researchers interviewing Ms. Baker asked if perhaps she herself was also responsible for the changes she described (in addition to the HOPE VI program) and Ms. Baker, even though she worked when she lived in public housing, responded:

Well it could be. It could be. It could be. But it’s the environment too. Because if you don’t work, if you have a history down your generation of getting SSI, you know what I’m saying. Then that kinds of like rub on me, not to work not to do this and. But if it’s a better environment where everybody works and everybody helps then that kind of like motivate me to motivate you to do- Do you know what I’m saying?

Here Ms. Baker describes public housing in terms of dependency—and to a certain extent pathological behavior. Elsewhere in the interview, Ms. Baker clearly states that her family never lived in public housing—which makes her comments about having “a

history down your generation of getting SSI” particularly interesting. She seems to be supporting this rhetoric even though it does not apply to her. Similarly, she suggests that her new environment has motivated her to do more—even though she was working consistently while living in public housing.

When asked where she would prefer to live if she could live anywhere in the county, Ms. Baker emphasized her desire to live in a house—either renting with a Section 8 voucher or through a homeownership program. She also hoped to one day own her own floral shop, although she was currently working in a day care. In the meantime, she planned to take night classes to pursue her Child Development Associates Credential (CDA) in childcare. These goals are very much in line with neoliberal self-sufficiency programs that encourage women to pursue training for jobs that will likely not pay high enough for them to make ends meet—particularly if they want to own a home.

Ms. Baker said that she thought her children had better opportunities since relocating: “Because when you live in the projects you have to stay there until you move to another a different one. But with Section 8 you can go anywhere. It’s like freedom of choice.” Ms. Baker’s emphasis on choice here reflects an important connection to macro level neoliberal discourses that construct social service recipients as consumers with “choice.” While she did not describe herself as having agency in public housing (“you have to stay there until you move to a different one”), as a Section 8 voucher holder she views herself as possessing the agency to “go anywhere.” This is a term found in several relocatee interviews—yet not in the interviews with homeowners even though macro discourses on these issues often frame the solution to poverty and affordable housing in

this way. While low-income renters certainly do have agency, this particular discourse of choice also reflects Ms. Baker's view of herself as a neoliberal subject.

Ms. Baker distances herself (or makes a distinction) from others receiving housing assistance and other social services in several portions of the interview. For instance, in her participation in the "keep to myself" discourse discussed in Chapter Seven; she related that in Ponce, "The neighbors, I didn't really talk to them. Like every now and then but I was like- I didn't want to get too personal with people. You know?" She further distances herself from being associated with public housing in her discussion of why she did not utilize Lee Davis, the medical center located across the street from Ponce de Leon and College Hill:

It's just- I don't know it's just I can't I can't go to Lee Davis knowing that "You got gonorrhea and you got syphilis" it's just- You know what I'm saying? I just- I can't label it but to me that was just nasty. (laughs)

I: So it's an all-purpose clinic? ...

Ms. Baker: Yeah. Yeah. It's all-purpose.

I: And you know lots of people who use it for STD treatment?

Ms. Baker: Yeah. Or pregnancy and it's just- I don't want to be categorized as "people living in the projects." Basically. You know what I'm saying? Because I wasn't- I wasn't raised in the projects so. The majority of everybody that's raised there is like confined there because that's all they know. You know what I'm saying? I just I refuse to be that.

Ms. Baker's statements echo dominant neoliberal discourses that demonize public housing for perpetuating a culture of poverty and lauding any alternative living situation. Ms. Baker also supports the neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility and homeownership and the neoliberal construction of the poor as self-empowered consumers. In addition, she rejects an association with public housing or social services. Her representation of herself as someone who did not socialize with most of her public housing neighbors seems to serve this function as well. However, in her discussion of

her own experiences with HOPE VI, Ms. Baker does seem somewhat conflicted in terms of the outcome.

Ms. Clark

Ms. Joyce Clark is a grandmother in her 40s who lives at Harbor Pointe Apartments. Like many other relocatees, in her interview, she provided a mixed evaluation of HOPE VI and participated in the discourse of “keeping to one’s self.” She said she was glad they tore down Ponce, which had been her home for seventeen years, because she wanted something “better.” However, she did find Ponce to be a more convenient location. Ms. Clark’s brief response is characteristic of several HOPE VI relocatees interviewed. Here she can be seen to support neoliberal ideas about the benefits of moving out of public housing—while also expressing some of the benefits of public housing.

Ms. Berry

Ms. Berry, who is in her 30s, is a mother of three. Before moving to the Apartments at Plantation Homes, she had lived in Ponce almost all of her life. Like most of the HOPE VI relocatees we interviewed, Ms. Berry had a conflicting response to questions about HOPE VI. While she implied that living at Plantation Homes is not much of a difference from living in Ponce, she then stated that she would recommend the HOPE VI program to others.

When asked if she wanted to add anything she thought would be important for others to know about HOPE VI, Ms. Berry responded, “To really be careful where you know the environment you choose to live in. To be cautious of that.” One of the

interviewers followed up this statement by asking her if she felt she had had a choice about moving to Plantation Homes and Ms. Berry responded:

Yes I had a CHOICE. I had a CHOICE. And like I stated before, it's because of my pregnancy I- I don't want to say I HAD to come here but- I chose to come here because I was- You know the pregnancy was giving me a lot of problems. And so I had to be close to my family. You know. But I didn't want to move here. I didn't want to move here! I really wanted to go further- I really wanted to go into Brandon. From the start. But you know by the complications in the pregnancy I just just came on here. The time was running out.

Ms. Berry's discussion of "choice" here is important. She introduces the concept by in the first statement about "the environment you choose to live in." However, when asked if she did have a choice in where to live, Ms. Berry seems unsure—even though she repeats twice the phrase "I had a CHOICE," with emphasis on the word "choice." Her "choice" was in part constrained by her difficult pregnancy but also because she had to relocate in a certain amount of time. Ms. Berry made the most beneficial choice possible given the circumstances. However, her statements also seem to be connected to neoliberal subjectivities.

Like Ms. Baker, Ms. Berry also distinguishes herself from others in similar situations. For instance, in expressing her skepticism about moving to Belmont Heights Estates, the new HOPE VI development, because of what she has seen driving by: "You know when you pass through there you see some of the neighbors hanging out. ALREADY. And I don't know if that's a good thing or not." Ms. Berry explains to two of my research colleagues who were interviewing her, both African American women: "I'm trying to get away from- It's its bad to say this. Us or Black people. You know some of those Black people don't know how to act." This is a fascinating and meaningful exchange. Here she seems to use "race" as a way of associating herself with

a higher socioeconomic class. While the African American women interviewing her share the racial identity that she claims she wants to dissociate herself, she seems to assume that the interviewers are middle-class and therefore “Black people” who know “how to act.” Through this statement she seems to align herself with the middle-class interviewers while playing into pathologized representations of poor African Americans.

In these narratives, Ms. Berry embraces the neoliberal ideology of choice—even though her responses suggest that her choices were limited. In addition, her concern with people “hanging out” outside of Belmont Heights Estates is very similar to homeowners’ ideas about social order and disorder discussed in Chapter Six. She seems to be distinguishing between a deserving and undeserving poor—and associating herself with the deserving. This may also account for her statement that she wants to get away from “Black people.”

Ms. Harris

Ms. Harris, a grandmother in her 50s, also lives at Plantation Homes. She is a patient sitter at the hospital and may also begin cleaning houses soon for \$12 an hour. While she firmly maintained that College Hill, her home for twenty-four years, should have been renovated rather than torn down, when asked if HOPE VI had improved her life, she responded that it did:

Ye:ah, in a way it would be [better] but sometime when you go other places, it’s no better than where you just left from. You know what I’m saying. So that’s why I TRIED to find a a place where you know there would be no kids fighting and you know the kids going to have an environment where they could feel comfortable and get a good education and you know ain’t got no drugs and stuff or whatever you know?...That’s what type of neighborhood REALLY you know. Because a lot of times when we was where we was at, sometime the kids couldn’t go out, unless other kids taking what they had, or they want to fight you because

you won't let them, the kids won't let them, won't let you play with what you know. They tear up their stuff, you know. And it was like OK.

SG: Did you think this is a better place for kids than College Hill was?

Ms. Harris: Yeah. I say yeah. And then you know. I feel like it is. It is.

...

SG: Do you think HOPE VI has brought you closer to that goal [of moving to a better neighborhood]?

Ms. Harris: For wanting better better? Mmhm. Yeah to better. But I always wanted 'betterness', but I wasn't ABLE to, you know with the, fees that they want for staying in this place you know these places. So you- I just you know- This is good. This is good. Real good. (laughs) REAL GOOD.

Ms. Harris provides a conflicted depiction of HOPE VI. Even though Ms. Harris finally remarks that Plantation Homes is "good," even "real good," her previous comments suggest that she did not end up in the neighborhood she was hoping for. Her statement that "sometime when you go other places, it's no better than where you just left" and her emphasis on "TRIED," in discussing her goals are telling. However, in her discussion of wanting "betterness," Ms. Harris emphasizes that although she had the vision of a different life, she had not previously had the agency to make such a change.

Like with the previous two interviews discussed, Ms. Harris seems conflicted about her living situation after HOPE VI. While she states that she is happy where she is, Ms. Harris also implies that her living situation is less than ideal. Ms. Harris also seems unsure about how much agency she possesses in these choices. However, she truly challenges neoliberal ideology by suggesting that College Hill and Ponce could have been renovated rather than torn down.

Ms. Sears

Ms. Sears, an elderly woman who lived in College Hill for 37 years and after living in Riverview Estates, a condominium complex in Greenwood, moved into Belmont

Heights Estates. Ms. Sears likes her new living situation in her old neighborhood. For the most part, she clearly supports neoliberal ideology in her interview.

Ms. Sears perceives that a different type of people are living in the mixed income Belmont Heights Estates than before when it was public housing:

Working peoples, not standing out on the porches you know. And much cleaner looking so far like I said. Yeah I would say it's a different environment with some of them. Yeah because, like I said I think my neighbors work you know. They're working peoples. Back then you know you had a lot of people who weren't working for some reason. It just seems like a different environment for some of them.

Ms. Sears clearly makes a distinction between a deserving and undeserving poor in this passage. Those who have moved to the new development are deserving—"not standing on the porches," clean, and working. Ms. Sears's characterization of herself as not very "visit friendly" when she lived in College Hill (she would speak to people but did not socialize much) may also relate to this distinction.

Although Ms. Sears's experience was probably the most positive we encountered, she did provide a critical comment when asked if she had any thoughts on how HOPE VI could be made better or could have been implemented differently:

I don't know because you know I was thinking you know reading over there too and the peoples were saying- I'm sure it happened here in College Hill. They won't be able to come back or you know have nowhere to stay or to live. And some of those people are very old. They don't have no income or whatever to move back. So that part would be kind of difficult and down to me you know. Like I say I was just lucky to be one of the ones that kept things up but everybody not that fortunate, so, I think it should be that they can come back. To SOMEWHERE. Move them somewhere nice or they can come back or something yeah.

Even though the program lived up to her expectations, Ms. Sears knows that to a certain extent she is an exception. Although she upholds notions about a deserving and

undeserving poor, here she questions the HOPE VI development's particular definition of deserving poor—that excludes some who are elderly and without income.

Ms. Walker

Ms. Latasha Walker is in her early 30s and has two children. She formerly lived in Plantation Homes and currently lives with family (she no longer has a Section 8 voucher). She had lived in College Hill for nearly six years and was employed through the HOPE VI program during relocations. Like most relocatees, her perspective on the HOPE VI program was mixed.

When asked if she looked forward to leaving public housing when the HOPE VI program became a reality, Ms. Walker responded:

At that time, I felt like I was getting too comfortable with the situation, so I felt like I needed a change. So I was happy about it but at the same time I was scared about it because I didn't know what to expect.

Ms. Walker's statement that she was "getting too comfortable" living in public housing seems to support neoliberal discourses of dependency. However, elsewhere in the interview Ms. Walker maintained that College Hill and Ponce could have been fixed up rather than torn down. She also rejected the concept of mixed income housing:

It don't work. IT DON'T WORK! Because those that are motivated to work will. And those that aren't, won't. Either you will or you won't and the majority that don't want to work are not gonna work and those that want to work, will.

In these statements, Ms. Walker is offering a different understanding of poverty and work than the ideas that dominated homeowner discourses on these issues. While perhaps supporting a deserving/undeserving poor binary, she alternatively explains that people don't need to be motivated to work—either they will or they won't. In other words, no

self-esteem, self-sufficiency, or role modeling program will successfully address the issue.

Ms. Walker then provided a very nuanced understanding of why some might not work:

I have seen both sides of it, I look at everybody and try to evaluate the situation and see ok, why is she not going to work? Cause like, the girl that lived up under me, I think she had like five kids. And she didn't work. And I was trying to figure out, you know, I only have one and I am struggling to make it. How are you making it with all of those kids? And that led me to wonder, how many checks is she getting? Because believe it or not, it's more younger people are getting those checks. And then on top of that you know, some of them, don't have kids that qualify for SSI⁶² so give me AFDC, and they are getting food stamps on top of that. So, you've got both ends covered. You don't have to worry about food, you don't have to worry about clothes, you don't have to worry about none of that because you've got Section 8. You know what I am saying?

In this interview excerpt, Ms. Walker suggests that for some women, it is more beneficial not to work because of the public aid for which they qualify. While this is an explanation Greenwood homeowners would likely consider to be “dependency,” Ms. Walker does not discuss it in these terms. Instead, she discusses how problematic the social service provisioning system can be, by contrasting the above situation with her own experience:

I didn't have none of that. And then when I stopped working, I was getting unemployment. Well they cut my food stamps down from \$259 down to \$45 because when they checked me my available credit said like \$1900 and some odd dollars but I was like, I didn't receive all of that at once! That's what I had available to me, but that is not what I received. “Well, your household is only allowed to get up to a certain amount a month.” And I was like, “I didn't get all of that! This is what I get a month! I receive child support and unemployment.” And that wasn't including my food stamps. So I asked her, “Well, explain to me how the system works?” Well, they always round everything up so instead of counting—some weeks have four weeks and some might have, well, they got 4.5, well, what if his dad don't make a payment one week? You are thinking that I am getting all of this money all of the time? Well, what if he don't? What if he decides, now I'm not going to make a payment for a month? Now you already counted that against me but I am not receiving that. And then with

⁶² Supplemental Security Income.

unemployment, I wasn't getting that weekly, I was getting that bi-weekly. And you add that together and that only came out to be like, \$640. And then, with my child support, that came up to like—well, all together, my monthly income might have been \$800. So imagine, every penny that I was getting was going towards a bill. And then you cut my food down to \$45 and I was like, “What am I supposed to do?”

Rather than providing a critique of the woman receiving multiple “checks,” in this interview excerpt Ms. Walker describes how the system did not adequately provide assistance for her. This contrasts with the stereotype held by some homeowners that those “dependent” on aid are living very comfortably. It is also significant that she makes a point to say she looks at these issues on a case-by-case basis—something very different from how Greenwood homeowners tended to interpret their personal knowledge of one or two people receiving public assistance.

In addition to challenging mixed income housing policy, the above narrative reveals an alternative understanding of poverty, work, and public assistance. However, at certain points, Ms. Walker does support neoliberal understandings of poverty.

Intersections (and Disjunctures) Among Discourses

Greenwood HOPE VI relocatee discourses had much in common with dominant discourses on poverty and affordable housing. In addition, there are significant commonalities with Greenwood homeowner discourses. However, there are several important ways that relocatee discourses provide alternative perspectives. One important contrast is that although HOPE VI relocatee discourses can be seen to support neoliberal ideology, they do not speak so extensively about these issues.

Like homeowners, relocatee discourses very clearly reflected neoliberal ideology in various ways (for instance, framing poverty in terms of the deserving/undeserving poor

distinction and in one case dependency). As with dominant discourses (and those shared by homeowners), a common theme in all of the relocatee interviews was a silence around structural economic issues. Relocatees discussed the promise of training programs and homeownership programs and do not seem to question whether or not these programs will be sufficient for them to make ends meet. Similarly, despite the fact that their economic situations had not changed through HOPE VI, relocatees overwhelmingly reported that it was a good program that had improved their lives. Much like homeowners' distinctions between themselves and the poor, several relocatees participated in making distinctions between themselves and others who lived in public housing.

Although relocatees did rate HOPE VI highly, they also reported some problems with their relocations. While, like homeowners, relocatees provided conflicted/contested discourses on HOPE VI, overall, relocatees were less critical of HOPE VI than homeowners. However, relocatees did problematize HOPE VI in original ways. In particular, several suggested that the public housing complexes should have been renovated rather than demolished.

For the most part, relocatees seemed to see themselves as agents. Several relocatees in particular embraced the neoliberal discourse of "choice." This contrasts with homeowners' often passive depictions of the poor.

HOPE VI relocatee discourses also challenge homeowners' understandings of poverty. Although relocatees do subscribe to neoliberal ideology, they very rarely fall into pathological depictions or understanding poverty in terms of dependency. In the case of Ms. Baker's statements that reflect culture of poverty ideas, she does not seem to

view dependency as relating to housing vouchers. Similarly, Ms. Walker discusses a personal experience with a woman receiving multiple forms of assistance but does not generalize her experience to others (as Greenwood homeowners did). In addition, through their discourses about how hard they work to maintain their families and, in many cases, jobs, relocatees challenge homeowners' stereotypical depictions.

Homeowner Activist Discourses

In this section of the chapter, I examine a third variety of discourses—those produced by homeowner activists in Greenwood. While these discourses have much in common with homeowners' neoliberal discourses, the homeowner activist discourses seem to be more produced by homeowners—rather than simply echoing dominant discourses on poverty and low-income housing. In many ways these discourses actually work against mixed income housing policy.

I examine here interviews with two Greenwood homeowner activists, James and John—which draw on the common metaphors of war and disease. In their classic book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson describe how metaphors often structure our experiences. To give an example from the book, if an argument is metaphorically understood as war, then “ARGUMENT is partially structured, understood, performed, and talked about in terms of WAR” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5). In this way, James's militaristic understanding of his activism against low-income renters—and John's view of neighborhood changes as indicative of disease—partially structure how they and many of their fellow homeowners experience these issues.

War

War is a very common metaphor in everyday life—particularly in terms of framing social issues. For instance, the “War on Poverty,” “War on Drugs,” and recently a couple of journalists (Dobbs 2006, Hartman 2006) have announced that a “War on the Middle-Class” has been waged.

As discussed in previous chapters (in particular, Chapter Six), James headed up many of the activist activities targeting low-income renters in Greenwood. For instance, the nuisance abatement efforts (including the video surveillance) and the gating of Bradford Park Condominiums. In the interview conducted with James by a colleague and me, James drew on a metaphor of war in discussing his activism against low-income renters. He seems to see himself as defending the middle-class identity of the neighborhood by waging a war on the poor living in Greenwood.

An example of this is how James described his attempts to improve the neighborhood (and his concern with social and spatial boundaries) in very militaristic terms:

If you're going to control your neighborhood the first thing you've got to do is control the perimeter. You **HAVE** to **CONTROL** the people coming onto your property because they'll come in and create problems. So you **HAVE** to **STOP THAT**. The next thing you do is weed out from within and then you **SCREEN** to get, you know, things back in. And, you know, see in our documents, our condominium documents, some of them require very intensive screening. Some of them don't. So. In the process of turning (the condos) around we've really pushed to get everybody to screen who's moving in here and who's not.

After describing the problems within the condominium complex, James repeated, “If you're going to control the neighborhood the first thing you have to do is control the perimeter and the access to your property.” In these interview excerpts, James uses the

word “control” several times (at one point placing emphasis on it)—as well as the word screen. His concern with the “perimeter” seems especially militaristic.

James’s interview was similarly filled with descriptions of invasion. In the following interview excerpt, James discusses how things were before the gates and fences were installed:

James: You would sit here and, on a sunny afternoon, and you would see a mob of about forty people. Some adults, kids, just come out here, and they would line, they would line the entire shoreline...Fishing. And they would throw their garbage down and it was just disgusting and so we just got to where I’d see them, I’d call the police and we’d (lowers voice) haul their ass out of here.

Interviewer: So how did they get in? They were

James: Over the walls...They would climb over the walls. I mean you can’t stop them. They’re going to get in. All you can do is when you do catch them is have them, you know, trespassed and if they come back you can have them arrested.

Here James describes his struggle against the low-income renters outside the gates who transgress the physical (and social) boundaries he worked so hard to put in place.

By describing his activism in militaristic terms, James provides insight into his view of the neighborhood. Structured in terms of war, James clearly views a clear distinction between allies and enemies (or us versus them) and the stakes at risk (winning or losing territory). James seems to see the situation as one of class warfare—with Greenwood a middle-class neighborhood under siege by low-income renters.

Disease

Like war, disease too is a common metaphor used in everyday life. It is particularly common in describing social policies—for instance, having to do with urban decay (which policies propose can be resolved through excision) (Schon 1995). Certain

theories of poverty also draw on a metaphor of disease—for instance the ideas upon which poverty deconcentration is based, in which the poor are seen as potential transmitters of pathological behavior (Crane 1991).

John's activist activities have also been discussed in previous chapters. As president of the Greenwood Community Council (GCC), John was also active in the nuisance abatement but particularly with zoning issues. John seems to see himself (alongside other homeowners) as fighting disease from taking over the neighborhood—or in other words, fighting the neighborhood's changing class and race identity.

When my colleague and I asked John to discuss and point out different areas of the neighborhood on a map, he pointed to the intersection of Denton Avenue and 20th Street and stated, "This is a cancer." He also used the term "cancer" to refer to the entire neighborhood at another point in the interview, in discussing why Greenwood had begun receiving so much attention from the county Sheriff's Department and code enforcement:

If enough of the neighborhood is concerned and asking or demanding service, then at some point, especially if you've got the guy in charge gonna be up for election, you've got to pay attention to this group. And, this was I would assume, that county wide this whole area here was becoming a notorious cancer. And with us being involved, documenting everything, taking these minutes, trying to get things taken care of, if it doesn't get taken care of it certainly won't reflect well on the Sheriff's Department, or the county code enforcement, things like that.

Here he suggests that local government agencies will fear that the so-called disease may spread beyond the neighborhood boundaries if issues are not addressed.

Similarly, in a lengthy discussion of low-income housing policy, John draws on a metaphor of disease (at one point cancer specifically) as he explains his views:

My opinion is, if you're going to have highly subsidized public housing, it is a giant mistake, it doesn't benefit society whatsoever to put them all in one place. I think there should be a very minimal percentage, like if somebody is going to build a new apartment complex (and this might even need to be legislated), they're gonna build a big new apartment complex, a hundred units, five percent of them have to be subsidized. And the reason I say that, it's not a big enough number to turn into a cancer and infect everything else because, it's gonna place somebody that's not used to living in that environment, in that environment, at a level they can afford and see how other people do live. Realize that of course you don't have to mow the lawn in an apartment building but, if they had lawns, the lawn isn't where you park your car, it's not where you change the oil. It needs to be mowed, watered and fertilized. You know, and just see how other live and where they put their priorities. You know, it's just like learning from your environment and then, I think something can be accomplished. It's just like, you take all the crappy kids, lousy students, the people that are hard to deal with, and you them all in one room or one building, one school and then you're not going to expect anything out of that group. Those are the losers, you know, losers breed losers and who are they gonna learn from? But, if you take a few of those losers and put them in with the rest the successfuls then they see these people and they say well, maybe I don't have to live at the bottom of the food chain here forever and this what these guys are doing. "Maybe if I can do some of this stuff, maybe I can get out of here."

While this discourse excerpt reveals a support of neoliberal ideology, it also reflects John's ideas (shared by many others in the neighborhood) of the potential contagion associated with the presence of too many low-income renters in the neighborhood. This is similar to the concerns of homeowners quoted elsewhere in this chapter expressing their concerns over the specific proportion of low-income renters to middle-income homeowners that would be present in a mixed income development.

Like James's militaristic discourse, John's discussion of the neighborhood as diseased has to do with Greenwood's threatened middle-class identity. These metaphors involve homeowners attempting to establish a middle-class identity for the Greenwood neighborhood amidst a mixed/ambiguous socioeconomic context. These discourses obviously work against the goals of mixed-income housing.

Connections to Neoliberalism

As Greenwood homeowners wage war on—or fight the disease of—the poor in their neighborhood, the larger political economic context remains unquestioned. These battles have emerged at a time when the middle-class is facing many of the same uncertainties as the poor. Despite real economic threats to the middle-class nationwide and an increasing awareness about middle-class downward mobility, the belief in the American Dream is firmly in place and seems to play a significant role in homeowners' motivations.

A recent email to homeowners in a Tampa neighborhood sent by John regarding an upcoming meeting of the county commissioners to make a final decision about the rezoning closed with the following statement:

We have affordable housing in our neighborhood if we can keep the apartments from running off quality, single-family homes for hard-working citizens to show their pride in ownership of securing the American Dream. It's right here in Greenwood. Help to protect it!

In this email, John frames the problem of affordable housing for the middle-class in terms of renters threatening this American Dream. The middle-class homeowners seem to be maintaining the hegemonic ideology of the American Dream even though this dream is increasingly out of reach for most Americans largely as a result of neoliberal economic changes. By reestablishing the neighborhood they live in as middle-class, homeowners' place in the social order will be symbolically reinstated, although their former economic stability and potential for upward mobility will not.

By examining the micro-discourses produced by Greenwood homeowners, HOPE VI relocatees, and homeowner activists, the complexities of hegemonic neoliberal

ideology are elucidated. Homeowners and relocatees can be seen to both subscribe to neoliberalism and challenge it. Similarly, homeowner activist discourses actually work against neoliberal mixed income housing policy. In the following chapter, I explore some of the central findings of the dissertation.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

Neoliberalism is associated with such profound and complex social and economic changes, and scholars are still attempting to get a handle on the implications of what has occurred. Studies of local level articulations of neoliberalism are especially important for understanding how neoliberalism shapes race, class, and gender identities, as well as how these processes may vary by city or neighborhood. These local level examinations can also provide insights into how neoliberalism is contested as well as embraced. This dissertation has provided an in-depth study of a Tampa neighborhood in an attempt to illuminate some of these issues.

When examined on the ground, neoliberal solutions to poverty and low-income housing can be problematized in new ways. In addition to the clear failure of HOPE VI to provide economic opportunities for Greenwood HOPE VI relocatees, the neighborhood's homeowners can be seen to draw on neoliberal mechanisms of social control to oppose the implementation of the policy in Greenwood. By imposing fences and gates on the landscape—and reproducing neoliberal discourses that pathologize the poor—homeowners reify race and class distinctions in ways that suggest that HOPE VI relocations may in fact lead to increased social tensions in neighborhoods rather than role modeling and social networking across class lines.

Social space and discourse are important sites for examining neoliberal processes, as sites of both consent and contestation. By examining homeowners' exercise of mechanisms

of spatial governmentality, they can be seen to both subscribe to neoliberal ideas about social order and reject HOPE VI, a neoliberal solution to poverty and affordable housing.

Similarly, homeowner discourses parrot dominant neoliberal discourses on social issues—while also contesting these ideas in various ways. Meanwhile, HOPE VI relocatees resist the neoliberal ordering of space through their spatial practices (de Certeau 1984) and simultaneously subscribe to neoliberal understandings of poverty and challenge these ideas.

I have largely organized my discussion for the duration of this chapter around the initial questions that guided my research: 1) What are the social dynamics of a mixed race, mixed income suburban neighborhood in Tampa, Florida? 2) How has the HOPE VI program affected this neighborhood? 3) How do these changes in housing policy intersect with other neoliberal practices (i.e., spatial arrangements and discourses)?

Social Dynamics of a Mixed Income Neighborhood

This dissertation has explored the social dynamics of a mixed race, mixed income neighborhood—an important topic, considering the lack of actual information on such neighborhoods (other than in cases of gentrification) and the continued housing policy focus on mixed income housing. By examining social, spatial, and linguistic processes in Greenwood, the dissertation shed light on how social segregation can occur within a seemingly “mixed” community.

Although homeowners and Section 8 voucher holders live in the same neighborhood, Section 8 renters live primarily in several low-income apartment complexes while homeowners tend to reside in nearby subdivisions. These spatial distinctions are compounded by how homeowners and renters differently perceive and use neighborhood space. For instance, those who live in apartment complexes tend to view the community in

which they live in terms of their immediate environment (i.e., the apartment complex), while homeowners define the neighborhood largely in terms of the census tract boundaries. Many low-income renters do not have cars and therefore experience the neighborhood in very different ways than homeowners. In addition, there are very few public spaces where homeowners and low-income renters might have meaningful exchanges. Given this terrain, it is perhaps not surprising that there are very few cases of low-income renters and homeowners in Greenwood being acquainted with each other.

Homeowners tend to view low-income renters as a source of neighborhood decline. and a group of homeowners has organized to reduce and mitigate their presence in Greenwood. In order to fight this decline—largely defined as an increase in criminal activity, a decrease in property upkeep, and low property values—homeowners have followed the neoliberal community policing model of broken windows—attempting to re-establish Greenwood as an orderly middle-class neighborhood by controlling neighborhood spaces through fencing, gating, nuisance abatement, and code enforcement. This is far from the mixed income housing program model in which homeowners are assumed to be role models for low-income renters.

Impact of HOPE VI

In addition to having an effect on relocatees' lives, the influx of former residents of public housing into Greenwood has also dramatically altered the entire neighborhood. To a certain extent, HOPE VI can be seen as increasing race and class based tensions in the neighborhood—although this must be understood within a context of other neoliberal trends having an impact on residents. Middle-class homeowners are likely particularly sensitive about the downward mobility of the middle-class in the current political economic context.

Many homeowners view the influx of low-income renters as threatening to their middle-class social identities as well as their economic investments in their homes.

While relocatees are pleased with their housing in Greenwood, their economic and employment opportunities do not seem to have improved. In addition, there are more similarities between their Greenwood apartments and their former homes in public housing than might be expected. However, relocatees also described certain aspects of public housing that they missed. For instance, the sense of community that existed for many in College Hill and Ponce de Leon.

Understanding Neoliberalism

While the theoretical literature on neoliberalism emphasizes its locally contingent/contested nature, more ethnographic accounts need to be produced in order to understand these processes. This dissertation has shown that such contestations in Greenwood occur through spatial practices and discourses. While homeowners overwhelmingly embrace neoliberal ideology, they contest mixed income housing policy by attempting to remove and/or reduce the impact of low-income housing in Greenwood through various spatial practices. At the same time, homeowners' discourses espouse neoliberal ideology—while also providing some challenges to it. For instance, subscribing to the neoliberal framing of poverty in terms of dependency but rejecting the plausibility of mixed income housing policy. HOPE VI relocatees also have a contested relationship to neoliberal ideology.

Despite the divisions enforced through neoliberalism, there are potential spaces of organization across class lines, in part because neoliberalism is not complete and homogenous when examined at the local level. Within the political economic context of

neoliberalism, both low-income renters and middle-income homeowners face economic instability (although homeowners blame low-income renters for it). If homeowners gained a broader and more in-depth understanding of the issues affecting the neighborhood, they might be more likely to form alliances with low-income renters to address neighborhood problems. However, property values are very particular and economically significant concerns for homeowners—and unless the system of real estate valuation changes dramatically, this will likely continue to be a source of conflict in Greenwood.

Policy Implications

The above research findings provide a clear critique of a central assumption of mixed income housing programs—that middle-class homeowners will mentor low-income renters. However, there are several other ways that my research has important policy implications.

Perhaps most significantly, the dissertation explores the inner workings of an apartment complex in the private rental market. Here it becomes clear that utilizing a voucher and making a “choice” about one’s housing (while using a voucher) is a very complex process involving a number of both public and private policies and practices. Of particular relevance to mixed income housing policy is a voucher holder’s potential difficulty in passing background and credit checks determined by private landlords in order to calculate risk. Although a recent study examines the problems some HOPE VI families (termed “the hard to house”) (Popkin et al. 2005) may face in retaining housing, the issue of applicant screening criteria has not been emphasized in the literature. The conflict between relocatees’ constructions of their apartments as homes and landlords’ perceptions of their rental properties as investments has important implications for a relocatee’s satisfaction with housing. In addition, understanding the role of public and private “street-level bureaucrats”

in the provision of housing through the Section 8 voucher program is a significant contribution to the housing policy literature.

Broader implications for mixed income housing policy are that simply moving former residents of public housing to a different neighborhood is not an effective solution to issues of poverty and affordable housing. Even if HOPE VI relocatees to Greenwood did have meaningful relationships with middle-class homeowners, their job prospects would not have been significantly better. Although several HOPE VI relocatees did describe their lives as being somewhat improved through HOPE VI, none had achieved economic mobility. Only policies that address the political and economic causes of poverty will be effective.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription Key:

/?/	inaudible
//	unclear
CAPS	speaker's emphasis
()	contextual information
...	omitted words
,	short pause
-	self-interruption
:	lengthened segment

About the Author

Ashley Spalding received a Bachelor's Degree in English from Samford University in 1998 and a Master's Degree in Anthropology from the University of South Carolina in 2000. In 2001, she entered the Ph.D. program in Applied Anthropology at the University of South Florida.

While working toward her Ph.D., Ms. Spalding has taught numerous anthropology courses at both the University of South Florida and Eckerd College. She has been very active professionally—presenting papers at national conferences, serving on the board of the Society for the Anthropology of North America, and holding positions in the Anthropology Graduate Student Organization at the University of South Florida.