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Chicago Housing: Understanding How Local Organizations Mobilize to Preserve Public and Affordable Housing

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

CHICAGO HOUSING:

UNDERSTANDING HOW LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS MOBILIZE

TO PRESERVE PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Public housing is a significant policy issue for cities across the nation. Chicago has a complex recent history with public housing. The transformation of public housing developments into mixed-income developments and the displacement of residents as a result of gentrification and urban renewal has produced upheaval in low-income communities (Hirsch 1983, Hunt 2009, and DeLuca et al 2010, Stack 1975). Several public housing residents state that their human right to secure housing in the city of Chicago is under attack. These claims can be heard at Chicago City Council meetings, public rallies, and resident meetings with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Residents and activists are concerned that City Council continually approves housing plans that do not include one-for-one replacements for demolished public housing units, allowing for the continued deregulation of CHA, and not holding CHA accountable for local and federal funds it receives. CHA also is not funding thousands of Housing Choice Vouchers funded by the federal government.

The research focuses on Lathrop Homes a public housing community located on Near North West side Chicago, with the neighboring communities of Logan Square and Roscoe Village. The Plan for Transformation led to the demolition of several public housing developments. Several mixed-income developments are now in the place of the demolished communities, while the land of others remains vacant, or is in

transition. CHA vacated the entire north section of Lathrop Homes for safety purposes under the plan. Several residents and activists claim the buildings in the section are structurally sound according to reports by engineers. In 2014, only about 150 units are occupied; 925 are vacant and could be occupied by residents. This project explores the residents' and advocacy efforts to maintain as many public housing units as possible at Lathrop Homes.

Lathrop is one of the last public housing developments on the North Side of Chicago and it's surrounded by middle and upper-middle income neighborhoods listed in the previous section. At the same time there is an unmet need for more affordable housing in the city. According to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, approximately 93,779 people are homeless in the city of Chicago in 2011, 15,580 those are CPS students (Sloss 2011). There are currently over 40,000 families on CHA waitlists. The wait time for a voucher or unit of housing can stretch for as long as 10 years.

According to a 2014 report by the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, CHA is currently withholding about 13,000 vouchers that have been funded by the federal government and as a result has an annual surplus of \$90 million each year between fiscal years of 2004 and 2012. The report states that as of September 30, 2013, a total of 55,318 households are waiting for affordable housing from CHA. In July 2006, CHA announced plans to demolish Lathrop Homes and replace the development with a mixed-income community. Approximately eight years after this announcement, Lathrop Homes is still completely subsidized housing, although some changes have

occurred. This project explores the strategic efforts of several organizations and residents to prevent the demolition of Lathrop Homes and challenge the efforts to make it a mixed-income development.

CHA is creating mixed-income developments from formally all-subsidized developments throughout their city under the Plan for Transformation. Several notable CHA properties such as Robert Taylor Homes, Prairie Courts, Henry Horner Homes, and LeClaire Courts were demolished, while other developments were replaced with mixed-income developments. Authors of the plan argued that this would provide better conditions and opportunities for public housing residents. Lathrop has withstood the mass demolitions, with time to see if the mixed-income developments live up to the promises espoused by CHA. Current studies do not find any empirical benefits of mixed-income developments (Davies and Imbroscio 2010, Chaskin et al. 2012, Wilen and Nayak 2004, and Popkin et al. 2004). Resident input for this study reveals their strong views against the mixed-income development that they could become. Lathrop provides a unique study because of the different groups opposing the redevelopment plans, which include residents, environmentalists, aldermen, and allies. The interests behind opposition might diverge, but the collective action is having a powerful impact on CHA's decision to move forward with the redevelopment. The residents at Lathrop are fighting for what they view as their right, and their efforts are indicative of other public housing residents throughout the city, and across the nation.

Ethnographic participant observations and interviews are main data analysis for this project. Data collection is done in collaboration with the Logan Square

Neighborhood Association (LSNA) and the Lathrop Leadership Team (LLT), as well as with help from leaders from the Lathrop Advisory Council and the Chicago Housing Initiative (CHI). Observations and interviews for the project began in the summer of 2013. I conducted interviews with current and former Lathrop residents, organizers, preservationists and developers

The following project will analyze the efforts of local organizations trying to preserve affordable housing. This project takes a critical approach, meaning the groups analyzed view the decline of public and affordable housing as problematic. Urban studies and race studies are used in the analysis of the findings in this project. Race and class are dynamically interwoven in redevelopment process happening at Lathrop Homes. Therefore, works from both of these bodies of knowledge can help provide a better understanding of the issues happening within the campaign. This project seeks to understand; 1) what Lathrop is doing to achieve its goals; 2) what the city is doing to preserve housing that has an impact on Lathrop; 3) understand the historical constraints that impact the Lathrop Homes.

Literature on race and ethnicity, urban theories, critical urban theory, and studies of urban housing policy from various disciplines inform the conceptual background of this project. The literature gives the theoretical, historical, and practical context to understand how race and class dynamics and changes in urban space create challenges for Lathrop Homes. Critical urban theory and studies could supplement race theory in that it argues that all people have a right to the city and challenge claims that gentrification and growth are positive. Intersections between race and ethnicity

theories/studies and critical urban theory/studies could help sociologists better understand the public housing crisis happening in America. Information from these different areas are used as reference points in the analysis of the data for this project.

Early urban scholars point to a “culture of poverty” to explain the inequality existing within poor inner-city communities Moynihan 1965, Park 1967, and Lewis 1966). According to Moynihan, slavery diminished the ability of Black families to have a traditional order in which men have authority. He states that the matriarchal structure of the Black family causes their social ills. Further he believes this leads to increased welfare dependency. Moynihan argues Black pathology creates their poverty. Therefore, the culture of poverty is self-perpetuating and self-sustaining. Park (1967), Burgess (1926), and others from the Chicago School come with similar arguments, but from an ecological standpoint. This ecological view describes a natural or organic development of the city that creates differentiated neighborhoods. Park and Burgess argue growth is natural to cities and that it impacts the entire city. Areas that are deteriorated are reserved for the poor. They go on to claim that social selection and segregation create natural groupings.

According to Park, the segregation of people takes place first because of language and culture and then on the basis of race. He claims various processes of selection take place bringing about segregation based on vocational interests, intelligence, and personal ambition. He also believes hard workers are more likely to leave the ghetto. Oscar Lewis (1966) holds similar beliefs as Moynihan and Park. He states that a culture of poverty develops a life of its own and has a list of indicators showing where a culture of poverty

will flourish. They include the following: 1) a cash economy, 2) wage labor and production for profit, 3) a persistently high rate of unemployment and underemployment for unskilled labor, 4) low wages, 5) the failure to provide social, political, and economic organization 6) the existence of bilateral kinship, rather than a unilateral one 7) the existence of a set of values in the dominant class that stress the accumulation of wealth and property. Another set of scholars use a culture of poverty argument to explain assimilation and specific questions they were seeking to answer about the about Black and immigrant youths. Ogbu and Fordham (1986), allude to an oppositional culture in their work. They state behaviors like speaking standard English and doing well in school are seen as being white and therefore are discouraged. As a result, people monitor the behavior of others and sanction those who act “too white.” Low school performance is an adaptive response to the requirements of cultural pressures from peers.

Second generation immigrant children were also given an “oppositional” label in the work of Zhou and Bankston (1993). Children are placed in a delinquent group if they exhibit behaviors relating to Black and rap culture. Vietnamese children are seen as having a deviant subculture by listening to American style music and hanging out too much in public spaces instead of staying home. Close proximity to African Americans is also reported as a cause of deviant behavior among immigrant children. The work of Portes and Rumbaut (2001) also mentioned peer culture in urban contexts as a barrier for the second generations’ upward mobility. Many of these scholars neglect to probe if there could be a deeper reason for poverty in urban, and other contexts, which go beyond individual behavior. Race studies bring insight to help bring another perspective

on some of the topics just covered. Many of the culture of poverty studies have been debunked, but their tenants still permeate current discourse about minorities, issues of poverty, and urban space.

Many urban theories do not take into account institutionalized and systemic racism as the contributing factors to continued inequality in urban areas. Various scholars look at how race and ethnicity directly impact the experiences and life chances of U.S. citizens in political, economic, and educational institutions. Race scholars Bonilla-Silva (2006), Feagin (2006), Omi and Winant (1994) see racism as the central factor contributing to the inequalities that exist in America today. While they have diverging views on various aspects of the racialized system, they all state that it changes with time, enabling it to function in the context of the current moment. Feagin sees racism as unique to the United States because of the establishment of slavery and the constitution is used to justify the racial order. He states the same mechanisms are at work because the constitution and politics are used today to privilege whites.

Bonilla-Silva sees racism as a global phenomenon with a racial structure that encompasses the social relations and practices that reinforce white privilege. He states that frameworks such as racial ideologies are in use by actors to explain and justify the status of the dominant groups and the subjugation of marginalized groups. Omi and Winant point to the state as the main proprietor of racism. They argue racial projects throughout history and today perpetuate racism. Omi and Winant define racial projects as connected interpretations, representations, or explanations of racial dynamics, with the aim of reorganizing and redistributing resources along racial lines. The meaning of

race and the content of racial identities changes and is politically contested throughout time (Howard 2000). The theoretical approaches just mentioned are used to explain and help people understand the significance of race in conceptualizing inequality in the United States. The scholars in the following paragraphs look empirically at some of the specific racial inequalities existing in America.

Many disparities exist for Black Americans in employment, incarceration, educational, and wealth (Alexander 2011, Harper 2012, Mincy 2006). In the sphere of education, schools with more students of color tend to perform at the lowest levels. In fact, according to Jonathan Kozol (2012), more money is spent to incarcerate people than to educate youth in inner-city schools. Occupational, educational, and residential segregation combined work together to subordinate Black people in several ways. A lack of interaction allows common misconceptions and stereotypes about Black people to remain. According to Beasley (2011) Black people lose out on many social and cultural capital advantages of living in integrated settings. Unemployment is another factor in that joblessness is associated with higher crime rates (Freeman 1987, 1996).

Mass incarceration of Black men is seen as a negative outcome of residential segregation. Several authors claim that mass incarceration is major issue facing the Black community today (Alexander 2011 and Wacquant 2001). Although, they do not study housing or segregation specifically, they claim that segregation has enabled the surveillance by police to be carried out more in inner-city neighborhoods. Drug usage among Black and white people is similar, but Black people are arrested and prosecuted more harshly. Having a large number of Black people concentrated in an area because

of housing segregation makes it easier for police to carry out practices of racial profiling. This is extremely detrimental to the Black community because a felony conviction negates the ability to vote, find decent employment, get an apartment, and to receive public assistance (Pager 2007).

The media is evidenced as a significant source of misconceptions about race (Collins 2005). Politics and social justice policy have been used as an explanation for the plight of the urban poor, largely through political campaigns in the media. Affirmative action and welfare are two important measures for equality that began to be painted as “Black assistance programs and policies” in the media. In reality, affirmative action benefits middle-class white women more than any group (Roediger 2010). Welfare assistance also benefits white women more than any group (Hays 2004). Affirmative action and welfare are often used in rhetoric about race to justify racism and inequality (Bonilla-Silva 2006 and Moore 2008). The media portrays the urban poor and African Americans in stereotypical ways, for example as criminals, welfare dependent, and morally and intellectually inferior (Collins 2005 and 2009, Rose 2008, and Jackson 2011). The issues explored in this section expose the causes of inequality and highlight the need of further research on how housing contributes or reinforces inequality.

Residential segregation is a significant factor in shaping cities and social relationships within urban communities. Several authors find American communities are significantly segregated by race (Massey and Denton 1993, Hirsh 1983, and Lewis and Forman 2006). Hirsh claims that segregation happened deliberately as the result of

white fears of Black people leading to dangerous measures to ensure their communities were not integrated. Numerous studies find that white people are uncomfortable with the idea of living in neighborhoods with Black people (Doane and Bonilla-Silva 2003 and Lewis 2003). False perceptions that they are criminal and have a different culture are reasons for this discomfort, which in turn leads to exclusion. Current housing trends give insight into the attitudes some white people have about living around African Americans remain prejudiced. As the percentage of Blacks in a neighborhood goes up so does the perception of higher crime rates and neighborhood decay (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004 and Quillian and Pager 2001).

Many African Americans in public housing developments experience high rates of crime, joblessness, and poor educational opportunities (Popkin, S et al. 1999). As a result, various programs are underway to improve the life chances of people in public housing. These include programs like Moving to Opportunity, Gautreaux, and Hope VI that either seek to improve the projects themselves or to disperse residents (Edin, DeLuca, and Owens 2012 and Sampson 2012). Efforts to improve them are needed, but when the initiatives fail they can have a disparate impact on African Americans since they make up the largest percentage of public housing residents (Goetz 2010).

Various programs try to disperse public housing residents to other communities to deconcentrate poverty. These programs have mixed results, but most studies on their effectiveness conclude they do not significantly improve the overall life chances of public housing residents. For example, initiatives have been made to send people to more affluent neighborhoods with more opportunities because of the bad conditions in

some urban communities (DeLuca, Ducan, and Mendenhall 2010). Many of these programs are ineffective because poor of management, like when landlords take advantage of tenets or do not respond to their requests (Edin, DeLuca, and Owens 2012). Robert Sampson (2012), finds that the Moving to Opportunity Program only moved people to neighborhoods that were marginally better. Sampson states the participants' subjective and physical well-being improved, but there were not many economic improvements. Conversely, some researchers found that relocation might not be better for health because well-established connections are lost (Keene and Geronimus 2011).

Studies also explore the displacement that results from of urban renewal and gentrification and the programs aimed to help people in public housing. Displacement is an issue because various factors make it difficult for residents to return to redeveloped sites. The redeveloped sites typically have fewer public housing units than before, stricter leasing requirements for returning residents and the significant amount of time between the start and completion of new developments (Wilén and Nayak 2004, Popkin et al. 2004). According to Marquis and Ghosh (2008), usually only 14 to 25 percent of former residents are allowed to return when the mixed- income developments are completed. A racial dynamic exists in that African Americans are the most likely to be impacted by redevelopment because they are largest racial group in public housing. Nationwide of the 87,251 displaced households for which demographic information is known, 71,373 or 82 percent are African American (Goetz 2011). Issues also arise in gentrified and mix-income communities because of racial and class differences. Public

housing residents believe the owner's desires are given more consideration in these communities (Chaskin and Joseph 2012 and Patillo 2007).

According to Cummings (1998), people who are forced to relocate experience psychological loss of home. Urban renewal programs also pose a threat to poor communities because people lose social and religious organizations, businesses, and neighbors they can depend on in times of need (Fullilove 2001). Psychiatrist Mindy Fullilove highlights the issues of displacement,

By estimate, 1,600 Black neighborhoods were demolished by urban renewal. This massive destruction caused root shock on two levels. First, residents of each neighborhood experienced the traumatic stress of the loss of their life world. Second, because of the interconnections among all Black people in the United States, the whole of Black America experienced. Root shock, post urban renewal, disabled powerful mechanisms of community functioning, leaving the Black world at an enormous disadvantage for meeting the challenges of globalization (2005 p 20).

These studies show that empirical efforts help public housing residents might need a renewed conceptual framework. As one can see, there are many challenges that exist for public housing residents. Researchers under the umbrella of critical urban theory make the critique of alienation, displacement, dispossession, and social dysfunction, and the problem of commodifying the urban as objective of critique. For example, Slater (2012) states that all forms of gentrification like urban renewal, revitalization, rejuvenation, and redevelopment are problematic because they displace people from their homes. Marcuse (2012) makes the claim that the housing problem is a result of commodification of almost all housing, the restriction of government involvement that might restrict private profits, and seeing housing ownership as an investment entitled

to speculative profit. Schmid (2012) discusses that everyone has a right to the city and that public and private strategies promoting gentrification and the displacement of marginalized groups go against that principle.

The argument has been made that growth in cities improves employment opportunities. However, Logan and Molotch (1987) point out that new jobs are not created when industries changed from manufacturing to service occupations. Rather, jobs move to areas experiencing growth, particularly the suburbs, and away from older city centers. Harvey (1973), states that low-income housing needs to be constructed near suburban areas because of better employment opportunities in those areas. According to Lefebvre (2003), all of society has become urbanized. He claims that urbanization has taken the place of industrialization as driving force of capitalism. Lefebvre claims that the state works to maximize the commodification of space and works to extract the maximum profit that is possible. As a result, the state functions almost like a corporation. This can be seen in how the state works to support the interests of certain groups of people. For example, following the plans of private developers, financiers, and other elites and not protecting affordable and public housing is a way in which the state facilitates gentrification.

Several critical studies challenge researchers on housing policy arguing that housing reform policies sometimes address the wrong problems. For example, DeFilippis and Fraser (2010), explain how there was a widespread agreement among housing reformers in the past 15 to 20 years that mixed-income developments and neighborhoods were the solution for people living in subsidized housing. DeFilippis and Fraser claim

that the failure of mixed-income developments and dispersal policies might not be the result of faulty practice, but instead of misguided theoretical foundations. The two authors argue that moving poor people to “better” neighborhoods or turning segregated low-income communities mixed-income do not provide the benefits claimed by proponents of these programs. These policies in their current form aim to fix individual circumstances, while placing less of an emphasis on changing structural forms of discrimination.

CHAPTER ONE

ORGANIZING: THE 15-YEAR STRUGGLE

LSNA Housing and Land Use Director John McDermott outlines the following timeline for Lathrop and the city in regards to subsidized housing. In 1999, the Plan for Transformation is implemented by CHA. Mayor Richard M. Daley lead the initiative the goal of rehabilitating or redeveloping all of the public housing stock in Chicago. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would fund the massive effort to revitalize Chicago's public housing units. Many mixed-income developments were argued as a policy solution because they would break down social barriers that segregated public housing residents from most of Chicago (Chicago Housing Authority 2011).

In 2000, the Chicago Housing Initiative claimed that CHA would misuse funds under the plan because of their past history. In 2002, without any significant changes CHA lists Lathrop as "undecided" meaning the community could be demolished or turned into a mixed-income community. CHA notifies Lathrop of its plans to demolish the development and redevelop the community as mixed-income in 2006. In 2004, the Lathrop Campaign begins and LSNA develops LLT. Starting in 2004-2010 there's a standstill by organizations. In 2010, the citywide coalition begins and the Chicago Housing Initiative calls for the preservation of public housing.

At this point, CHI starts focusing on the facts about funds received and spent by CHA. In 2013, LSNA and LTT start significant mobilization efforts to preserve Lathrop Homes. CHI gains momentum again with various organizations working to get a city ordinance to hold CHA more fiscally accountable.

CHA and Lathrop Community Partners, the five development groups over the project, unveiled the redevelopment plans for Lathrop at a public meeting in the summer of 2013. The Draft Master Plan: called for 37% public housing (400 units), 18% of (212) units of affordable housing, and 45% (504) units of market rate. The Master Plan did not include a commitment to replace remaining 525 units on the north side of Lathrop that were vacated in 2008. This is extremely important for the LLT because so many public housing units have been demolished across the city over the years. Because the plan did not call for replacement of the vacated units there is a fear by residents who were forced to leave that they would not be able to return to the redeveloped site. Several efforts by LSNA and the LAC were already underway to stay in contact with residents who have the right to return to Lathrop, such as events for former residents and legal representation

Residents and some organizers do not see a need for any market-rate units because the surrounding neighborhoods are providing large numbers of existing and new market-rate housing. Affordable and public housing are on decline in the city therefore negating the need for any market-rate units. A developer from Heartland stated that based on past projects, 45 percent market-rate within the development is necessary for a successful mixed-income development. The plan calls for a lot retail, which might

be the result of Lathrop's placement along Clybourn, a growing retail corridor. The city and CHA see development as an opportunity to increase the tax base and boost sales and real estate tax. The plan also aims to provide amenities such as an abundance of parking, access to the riverfront with water activities and a boat to downtown. Residents feel that these amenities are for the wealthier residents who will move in the development and those in the surrounding areas as indicated by resident Bobby Watkins.

No, because they want to put the yuppies back here because all the people want to come back from the suburbs to the city, because there is so much going on in the city. With the flooding and all of that, a lot of people just don't want to be out there anymore.

A major goal of LSNA is to mobilize residents in Lathrop through LLT. Public speaking skills, writing documents, and strategies for getting points across are stressed for residents. Collaboration with other coalitions, residents, and advocates who want to preserve public housing in Chicago is central to the campaign. Getting others involved is important according to John McDermott because then they can take leadership roles in LLT. This enables the current LLT resident leaders to become apart of the larger coalition to preserve housing. This also keeps more residents aware of the redevelopment process and could help prevent burnout. The following statement by Roderick Wislon Executive Director of the Lugenia Burns Hope Center highlights how organizers feel about the process:

Again, going back to being an organizer the Keeping the Promise Ordinance is another tool and the tool is to engage residents around what they deserve. It is really to politicize them on the process and other working with other folks so they can begin to do more. So the ordinance itself is just a tool anything that passes in city council is going to be watered down until we get to the point to where we get the power to where it doesn't have to be, but we're not at that point. The enforcement is going to be what it is the city is going to come back and say you can't do this you can't do that we are going to push back and say yes we can. So if it passes it is definitely going to be watered down we probably will get more

of the reporting aspects of it those are going to be the key things that come out of it. But again the purpose of it from my perspective it ain't the bill it's the people and helping them understand what's the process of passing the ordinance.

Roderick states the goal of organizing is not necessarily to get the specific measures passed, but to empower residents. Active participation in the meetings, in which some are resident led, is encouraged. Each meeting observed consisted of residents, organizers, alumni, and volunteers. People from different racial and ethnic groups are also usually in attendance.

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Gaining the support of local aldermen and the mayor have been the center of efforts of LLT and LSNA. The LLT wants both aldermen presiding over the wards to publicly oppose the master plan put forth by CHA. Initially alderman Joe Moreno, whose ward covers most of Lathrop Homes, did not agree with the residents. Moreno

refused to make a firm stance against market-rate units at several public meetings. Through significant efforts such as meetings and rallies Lathrop gained Moreno's support. Scott Waguespack's ward includes about 1,000 neighbors of Lathrop. LLT wants to them to acknowledge the influence they have over CHA through City Council, which can reach the mayor.

LLT and LSNA also joined a larger effort put forth by the Chicago Housing Coalition consisting of eight other organizations to preserve affordable and public housing throughout the city. The group holds monthly meetings to work on the "Keeping the Promise" ordinance to hold CHA more accountable. This includes funding vouchers that are paid for by the city, one-for-one replacement of housing, and reporting on finances. This larger coalition is also effective at gaining support from aldermen, city hall, the mayor, and the press. Several news organizations have referenced the research put forth by CHI to question the practices of CHA. Currently, 20 aldermen sponsor the ordinance and meetings with aldermen are underway to gain more support. The goal is to get as many aldermen to sign on as possible because if 35 aldermen vote to pass the ordinance then the mayor cannot veto its passage.

Residents also fight for involvement in the planning process. Throughout the transformation process public meetings happened without the knowledge of residents. Developers constantly state that residents are involved in the process, but residents rarely meet with developers. Developers often state they meet with residents to get input at City Council and CHA meetings. Residents can often be heard verbally challenging these claims at the meetings. Mary Heiss, one developer of many for the project admits that CHA, Lathrop Community Partners, and neighbors of Lathrop living

in market-rate housing meet regularly. For instance, residents were constantly shocked at the few meetings that the developers did have with them because decisions were made without their input as indicated by resident Miguel Suarez:

They claim that their planning involves residents, alumni, and other concerned agencies and ironically that is not true. They have come down here and what they did was, what I call as an informational session, and they told us what they were going to do. They said we are going to bring this plan to you. What we will do is bring you three plans and you will choose two that you will most like, then from there you will choose from the two that you like. That never happened. What they did was disappear for 11 months and came back and said this is the plan that we have, which of course we don't like.

Residents are fighting for inclusion on a process with direct influence over their life circumstances in the near future.

The most common organizing strategy is attending press conferences at city hall. This enables residents and organizers to keep the public up to date on various housing initiatives and issues. This strategy is important because it enables residents and organizers to meet with other groups, which create solidarity, and to inform alderman about particular actions. The efforts would start early in the morning with volunteer drivers or everyone on the bus if funds were available. At the press conferences various public housing resident leaders would speak about the housing needs across the city. These are brief meetings that happen before the main City Council meetings. Usually the different organizations would leave after the meetings although there are cases where groups stay. During one instance where groups stayed for the City Council meeting, observations reveal that developers have plans that are often approved without the input Chicagoans about their efforts after major actions.

Mass public meetings are also held to inform large audiences about campaign efforts. On Dec. 10, 2013, Lathrop residents held a large action at church in which 400 community members attended. The main goal of this meeting is to get aldermen to publicly oppose market-rate units and to spread awareness about the redevelopment plans for Lathrop. Several residents, alumni, and neighbors spoke to the crowd about the impact the developments could have on Lathrop residents. Several smaller planning meetings were held leading up to this larger action. A major collaborative rally with CHI and the Jane Adams Senior Caucus (JASC) occurred on October 7, 2014. CHI presented the “Keeping the Promise” ordinance JASC informed the public about their campaign to raise Chicago’s minimum to \$15-per hour.

Several steps led up to larger actions. Volunteers are solicited to call people who are on the contact list and expressed interest in future actions. Door knocking in Lathrop Homes is used to inform residents of larger actions involved. Media, message framing, and meetings to work on talking points are also held. The campaign also works with freelance reporters and photographers who are able to share the stories of Lathrop residents, supporters, and events. Social media campaigns are also used to raise awareness about the preservation efforts and upcoming events. For instance, a social media campaign using Facebook and Twitter happened on the 15th anniversary of the Plan for Transformation. Residents, organizers, and supporters posted messages about the Chicago Housing Authority’s ineffective history.

CHAPTER TWO

COLOR-BLIND IDEOLOGY AND THE ORGANIZING PROCESS

Efforts are taken to include residents in the organizing and decision-making process about the development plans. While the organizers try to have a democratic process, material resources negatively limit residents' ability to participate and lead in some cases. For instance, distance creates problems for residents who want to attend CHA, city hall, and coalition meetings. Some meetings are held in locations that are not easily accessible by public transportation. This problem is most apparent for residents living on the far South Side, for example Altgeld Gardens, which is located below 130th Street and over eight miles south of the Loop. Efforts are made to have meetings in different locations, but this tends to benefit people with access to transportation more than others. Holding the meetings on the South Side would benefit those who do not have access to public transit and those lacking the monetary means to take public transit or a cab.

Many of the procedures with CHA, City Council, and the general organizing process requires previous experience or research in some form. Analysis of financial documents, reports, and HUD guidelines are constantly used in the campaign. The Chicago Housing Initiative holds some training to help people in the organizing process, such as on how to get an ordinance passed through City Council. However, becoming familiar with many of the procedures and processes of City Council, CHA, as well as

understanding the most effective strategies to reach politicians are skills that take years to acquire. At several meetings organizers were well versed about various issues related to public and affordable housing while residents and others were unaware. This is indicative of broader structural of segregation placing minorities in low-opportunity areas. As a result, many residents lack the skills and resources needed to research and acquire information that people in elite positions will deem adequate to make arguments (Beasley 2011, Hirsh 1983, Feagin 2006, Bonilla-Silva 2006, Wacquant 2008, and Massey and Denton 1993). The main form of communication is through email and phone service. Phone service is more readily available, but Internet service is not available for many public housing residents. There can be a lapse in regards to information and happenings between organizers and residents because email is widely used. Meetings and word of mouth are the most effective means to share information, however LSNA often knows more about policy developments than the LAC because of LSNA's networks. Better communication between the LAC and LSNA might help since more residents attend the meetings of the former group. Residents who do not attend LSNA meetings miss out on some information. For instance, this happened at a LAC meeting where a developer presented updated redevelopment plans to Lathrop residents. LSNA knew the information, but the residents were unclear because the developer assumed they already saw the plans. This is mainly the result of excluding residents from meetings with CHA, developers, and market-rate neighbors, and the disconnect between LSNA and LAC. Resident burnout is another potential barrier to organizing efforts. The Plan for Transformation was implemented in 1999, so this year marks the

15th anniversary. A common response from residents about getting more support is that people have been organizing for so long that it become discouraging to continue. People who decide to keep with the efforts often mention how they have been fighting for 10 to 15 years to save Lathrop Homes. The closing down of the north section of the development and the continued decline in resident occupation creates more fears and reduces the number of people who are able to help. Resident Sandra Cornwell responded as follows when asked if she ever wants to give up on the efforts to preserve Lathrop:

Yes! I do everyday. Sometimes feel like throwing up my hands and say fuck it. I don't want to say the word. Why do I do this, it's aggravating, it's stressful. People have passed away over here. Going through stress, just stress. Aneurisms.

Sandra feels the delay is an intentional effort to “wear them out” so they give up. She even blames the poor health and death of some people in Lathrop on the stress caused from the redevelopment process.

The campaign to preserve Lathrop has been going on for many years. Many residents have dedicated time to various efforts at one point or another during the process. Observations reveal many resident organizers are older and retired, thus enabling them to dedicate time to this cause. For example, before one meeting a resident expressed their frustration about not being paid for his efforts. Former CHI organizer Michaeljit Sandhu understands the tension nonpayment of residents helping with the coalition and LSNA is problematic as indicated below. Oh, I also wanted to say that the dynamic of like residents like Miguel not getting paid where like, not to call out John to specifically, but John getting paid. Miguel, or Titus not getting, I mean like Ms. Taylor,

I mean there are all these people who are putting in just as much time and arguably more effective time as doing actual organizing like organizing jobs. There is something very strange about them not getting paid. I feel my own position I feel okay about it because I made like

\$15,000, barely enough that I could pay rent. And Leah makes barely nothing for the amount of work she does, she makes like \$30,000, she might make slightly more. I feel okay about my own position about, but I do think that, and something that Leah and I have talked about is transitioning the coalition to not just being resident run, but like employing residents because it is strange to yeah it is a strange dynamic to where you are asking residents to devote 20 or 30 hours a week to something, but not paying them.

Despite these obstacles collectively residents, organizers, and volunteers have made concrete gains that have preventing demolition, increasing the circulation of section 8 vouchers, and holding CHA and politicians accountable when it comes to housing in Chicago. Residents want to be more involved but the lack of material resources, jobs, and other responsibilities prevent them from organizing in many ways. Many challenges exist within the organizing side of the efforts to preserve Lathrop, but various groups try to work together as effectively as possible. Many past and present constraints outside of organizing create problems for the process.

Various negative views exist about public housing residents and their communities according to resident Sandra.

This is our community, not yours, I don't care if it is CHA's, I don't care if it's not our money. All you do is come over here and say they're bad, those people don't clean up, they're drugs. And maybe some people do whatever they do, but they're are still trying to take care of the community. Nobodys perfect, everybody does their little dirt, everybody sins.

As a result, many challenges exist for public housing residents who want to prevent their communities from being demolished or turned into mixed-income developments. The presentation of challenges can significantly alter how the issues are perceived. Understanding how studies can reify negative views is a line of thought requiring more attention. Studying crime, poverty, and dismal life chances in public housing is not ineffective. The challenge centers on how various topics are explored. Constant questioning is needed on whether it is enough to study problems without contextualizing them within broader structures. Although this process is continual and taxing, the implications of how information is disseminated can be drastic.

For instance, crime in public housing is often attributed to a deviant culture. However, research shows that crime is more the result of joblessness (Freeman 1995). As a result of deindustrialization, many African Americans are situated in areas with low economic opportunity (Wilson 1996). The makeup of space can also impact the interactions in public housing developments. Popkin (2000 et al.), states that high-rise developments are not conducive to raising young children or for a sense of community. CHA built many public housing developments as high-rises to save money even though recommendations argued for lower density options (Popkin et al. 2000). High rates of teenage pregnancy are also seen as significant problems in public housing developments and among poor women (Reed 1999). The pathological focus on pregnancy is the result of historical portrayals of minority women as hypersexual (Collins 2000). High pregnancy rates are more likely the result of economic reasons in

that youth in developments are less likely to have the access to preventative resources and abortions (Reed 1999).

A central part of the organizing process for public housing residents and their supporters is the idea that their communities have positive attributes. Every resident interviewed states how they feel closeness and support in their community. Deeply embedded within these statements is how residents understand that cultural deficiencies and moral decline are invalid reasons for the challenges they face on a daily basis. Hearing this can be difficult as a researcher and outsider, even someone with years of knowledge, because crime, poverty, and low-opportunity override any sense of normalcy for many people. While the issues mentioned in the previous paragraph certainly are problems, within context they are the indicators of larger structural problems. The developments are often thought of as the problems, instead of neoliberal policies, institutionalized racism, and discriminatory practices working today.

Harding (2004), states that elite groups get to determine what is considered valid knowledge. Power and ideology shape discourse commonly used in reference to public housing. DeFilippis and Fraser 2000, claim dominant ideologies among many researchers, policymakers, politicians, and academics is that pathology creates the problems, therefore creating mixed-income developments will combat this by bringing more educated and wealthier people in. People in privileged positions are able to determine how public housing is conceptualized. Organizer Roderick Wilson explains his position on this reality:

I think that is thread of racism again when you look at development in our community's development means replacing the existing population with a new population. That this how people view development. Lets get rid of the oh it bring the more affluent. Affluent means more, first wave is the low-income to middle- income blacks because a lot of times we think we are middle-income but we are low-income but that is another class thing that we have to deal with. It's like oh you make \$43,000 you are not middle-income. Middle-income is about \$75,000- \$100,000, but we where we at. So that's the first wave and that is like a buffer, then for the more affluent feel a little more comfortable coming in.

Research on neighborhood and school choice reveals that whites have negative views about neighborhoods that are predominantly black (Saporito and Lareau 1999). This is a reality in that most whites are segregated in neighborhoods having few numbers of Black people (Briggs 2005 and Sampson and Sharkey 2008). As the percentage of blacks in a neighborhood goes up so does the perception of higher crime rates and neighborhood decay (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004 and Quillian and Pager 2001).

Interviewees view their communities as having many positive qualities, stating that many residents are retired, veterans, or were previously employed and no longer work because of disability. Resident and veteran Brian Smith expands discusses this below:

What makes me stay you become accustomed to be people. One I like the diversity and the second reason was because people accepted me and I accepted them and it gave me a chance to somewhat come out of myself. Hold on let me elaborate on myself and expound on why I still stay here. Yeah, sense of community and I love the area. It has good transit, good bus and rail transit, timely. It is convenient for shopping because there are several shopping centers around us. The site itself being on the Chicago River is king of calming for me and it is not a prototypical like (struggles to find the terms).

Brian does not feel he will have the same comfort living in another community. He likes the diversity and feel comfortable in the Lathrop community. Late resident Mildred Pagan, states that if she has troubling sleeping she still feels comfortable walking outside at night. Several residents' discuss contradictions they believe are used to justify redevelopment. They include concentrated poverty, safety, and the need for diversity.

The complexity in organizing is evident in the various planning meetings. Residents, organizers, and supporters spend entire meetings brainstorming how to frame a topic. Certain words are not used because they reinforce the stigma on public housing. Other times, words are avoided because they would reinforce the idea that public housing is just a Black issue, even though Black people are the largest racial group in public housing (Goetz 2011). Arguments about race are acknowledged but redirected toward discourses centered on housing being a citywide issue, affecting everyone. Observing this is interesting because all of the efforts directly influence public housing residents and those in other forms of subsidized housing. In the end, the coalition decided to name the ordinance "Keeping the Promise" that would reiterate the constant neglect of past promises by CHA. The work of Bonilla-Silva gives insight to why racism is overlooked today in discourse about inequality.

Bonilla-Silva (2006) states, Color-blind racism emerged as a new racial ideology in the late 1960's concomitantly with the crystallization of the "new racism" as America's new racial structure. Because the social practices and mechanisms to reproduce racial privilege acquired a new, subtle, and apparently nonracial character, new rationalizations emerged to justify the new racial order. (p.16).

The importance of class can be acknowledged without neglecting race. Historical instances have created the necessity for various groups to have housing that is affordable. Several residents mention that Lathrop was affordable for them in times of divorce, domestic violence, disability, single parenthood, and after military service. Many residents take comfort in the protection Lathrop provides from some of the uncertainties that exist in the private market. Their class position means that even a slight increase in rent can have a detrimental impact to their budget. This is extremely important today in that many safety nets for the poor are being cut out of the national budget.

However, avoiding racial arguments is an indicator that color-blind ideologies are at work in the organizing process. Attending meetings reveals how power dynamics related to class influence the current situation in Lathrop and housing issues throughout the city. Most decision-makers in relation to the redevelopment are middle and upper class people. Decision-makers include developers, politicians, Chicago Housing Authority, neighbors in the surrounding community and even organizers. Most are white, and might have trouble accepting the role of race in public housing decision making because they obscure topics of race in meetings or state that housing issues impact everyone. Interviews revealed an awareness of the role of race, especially from the racial minorities who were interviewed. Observations of the larger coalition group an organizer created a document with ideas of framing the ordinance. Racial discrimination was acknowledged, but quickly removed from the list. Yet constantly,

racism and prejudice would often be brought up after meetings, during private conversation, and in interviews.

Another argument made in meetings is that housing is a citywide issue. Understandably, housing does impact all people because it is needed for all. However, power and privilege also play a role in that some people have the resources to maneuver with great agency to meet their housing needs. Racial minorities and the poor have less mobility when it comes to housing choice because of a variety of reasons from discrimination in the housing and rental market to the lack of employment that would enable more housing choice (Quillian 2006 and Kalleberg 2011). So while housing impacts all people, the disparate impact of discrimination against black needs considerable attention.

Color-blind racism explains why policies and practices related to economics can be scrutinized, but topics that deal with racism are seen as valid avenues to discuss racial justice. For example, there is ample research revealing that only about 25 percent of residents are able to return when public housing is redeveloped into mixed-income communities (Goetz 2011). Evidence also shows that most people impacted about redevelopment and demolitions are African American. For example, Fullilove (2001) states that social and religious organizations and businesses and networks are threatened as a result of urban renewal. Most of the people in Lathrop are Black and Puerto Rican, and redevelopment has racial dynamics that are acknowledged by residents. Housing issues do impact all people, but avoiding topics of race can make

residents feel like the struggles that result from their racial and ethnic background are not acknowledged.

Color-blind frameworks that minimize racism drive the lack of focus on race in the organizing process. Class arguments or strategies that focus only on economic parity fall into color-blind frameworks because they downplay the role of racial discrimination in the housing market. Social scientists, organizers, and supporters of housing equity must ask if making only economic arguments will also solve the deep racial inequalities that exist in the housing and rental market. A deeper and possibly unintended situation develops for those fighting for housing as a result of this reality. Just one aspect of the problem is resolved if only economic means are pursued. Residents will still have to deal with racial discrimination in the rental market even if CHA releases all of the vouchers it is withholding (Quillian 2006). If public and affordable housing continue to be isolated from good schools, jobs, and other necessary resources on racial lines then just providing more housing is only part of the solution. Race and class are inextricably linked and thus both will close examination in reference to how they develop and act on each other.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPACT OF NEOLIBERALISM ON LATHROP HOMES

Historical context is important to understanding the difficulty in preserving public and affordable housing. Many of the issues residents at Lathrop currently fight are the result of larger historical processes. Even the development of Lathrop can be said to be the result of historical processes in that it provided an affordable place for people who were unable to make a decent wage. Current Lathrop resident Cynthia Scott and former Lathrop resident Linda Garrison worked in low-paid service work. Both women state that living in Lathrop provided them with a nice place to live on the income they were making. Research indicates that women of color are disproportionately represented in low-paid service sector work (Kalleberg 2011). Much of this work developed after the decline industrial jobs as the economy restructured (Wilson 1996).

Davies and Imbroscio, state, “Structural change continues to shape poverty in place. At its root is economic restructuring and globalization, which have replaced many manufacturing and other blue-collar jobs with employment in the service and information sectors (2010: 159).” Other factors such as the changing of space currently under gentrification play a role. The process of gentrification impacts cities nationally and internationally. Several neighborhoods throughout Chicago are experiencing gentrification. Gentrification is often the development that makes financiers and elites money in the US context and abroad (Zukin 1982 and Perry 2013). Logan and Molotch

(1987) argue that people are active participants in shaping place. They claim that human activists use great effort to influence markets and that the commodification of place is fundamental to urban life. People at the local level are able to act on the benefits of particular spaces because of their economic power.

At Lathrop where the decisions made about the fate of the development are made by the developers and CHA. The ability of residents to have a voice in development is complicated because of the deep interconnectedness of financiers and people in government. These development companies are staffed and financed developed by people who are completely detached from the realities of Lathrop residents. When CHA hands development over to private for-profit developers essentially they are giving the primary decision-making power over to people who work to make the most profits for wealthy elites financing these projects. The desire to make money overrides any moral or value driven arguments for rehabilitating Lathrop Homes as all public housing.

The desires to build “world-class” cities as a result of globalization also impact the organizing efforts at Lathrop Homes. A major emphasis has been placed on creating more retail in the development plans. Creating retail will create jobs according the developers, however most of the jobs created will be low-wage service jobs. Speculators, politicians, and entrepreneurs all jockey for growth because of the profitability it can render. Disrupting the lives of others is not their main goal, but it does happen. For example, Logan and Molotch (1987) state that more opportunities are

not created with growth, but in reality resources are redistributed, often to people with more privilege.

Residents are also organizing against exclusion that would happen as result of the redevelopment. Economic, political, and cultural forms of social exclusion impact people in cities (Marcuse 1996). This reality is apparent in that market-rate units will comprise of the highest percent of units in the Lathrop redevelopment. Additionally, many residents could be dislocated and unable to return during the redevelopment process. Typically, only 14 to 25 percent of residents are able to return when a development becomes mixed-income (Marquis and Ghosh 2008). Based on interviews and observations, this is the fear of all residents and organizers campaigning for Lathrop. The desire to have zero market-rate units in the redevelopment pushed because of the fear that people will be displaced if the current 40 percent market-rate allocation remains.

Deregulation under the neoliberalism creates challenges for groups in Chicago trying to hold CHA accountable because they are unregulated. David Harvey states:

There has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970's. Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been all too common. The process of neoliberalism has, however, entailed much 'creative freedom', not only of prior institutional frameworks and powers (even challenging traditional forms of state sovereignty) but also of divisions of labor, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life and thought, reproductive activities, attachments to the land and habits of heart. (2005, p. 2-3).

Harvey (1972), focuses on the spatial aspect of cities and how urban spaces become sites for the accumulation of surplus value. Only a few are able to benefit from surplus

value because deregulation in which owners set prices in the market. Lathrop residents Brian Smith and Miguel Suarez state that Lathrop is a “gold mine” and that is why the mixed- income redevelopment is happening. CHA is operating under neoliberal practices in two ways. First, the decision of turning the development into a mixed- income community because it generates profit for the development entity that completes the process neglects the needs of residents. Second, by turning the redevelopment process over to for profit private developers the amenities that are placed in the development are geared to attract business and a wealthier class of people.

According to Davies and Imbroscio (2000), the way we conceptualize problems impacts how various groups develop and implement policy. The way public housing and its residents are conceptualized needs evaluation. They argue that current policies are geared to fix individual pathologies, which explains why they have been ineffective. Instead, conceptualizing concentrated poverty as a systemic structural problem might lead to policies that are geared to create material resources to end that poverty enabling people to get jobs, education, and participation in social relations and the democratic process. Empirical evidence reveals that housing programs such as HOPE VI, and Moving to Opportunity, and Guatreaux have not yielded the benefits that enabled them to be viewed positively in the areas of academia, policy, and politics (Jacobs 2004 and Sampson 2012). If empirical support is giving insight to the ineffectiveness of these practices, then the question becomes who is driving these practices to continue?

Perceptions of the development being just like all other public housing developments are challenged advocates for Lathrop. Late resident Mildred Pagan states:

For me it's been good and safe for me. Let say I don't sleep the whole night, I can go from here to there and I'm safe. I feel safe over here because I have been living over here for so long. I cannot speak for everyone else, but I know that some others feel the same way. I cannot go to some other place and feel safe, but over here I feel safe.

Mildred feels safe in her community and does not understand why Lathrop is perceived as dangerous. Lathrop dealt with gang related activity in the past, but the reason behind this activity is historical in nature. Much of the gang activity results from the frequent shifting of different groups of people throughout developments, often as the result of demolition (Feldman and Stall 2004). Crime does exist, but according to residents it does not happen on a continual basis. However, the perception of Black and Latino people being criminal in nature reinforced by public housing being framed as a being a den of criminals because of stereotypes of black men and women (Collins 2004).

Brain Smith mentioned that gang activity was a problem in the past, but that the development is safe today.

That's easy. When I moved into Lathrop, Lathrop was literally the "Wild, Wild, West." And by that I mean there was shootings constantly and there was gang warfare constantly and there have been killings in broad daylight. One at the bus stop at Diversey another at Levitt. I mean so it was just totally out of control. Uh, management didn't have a handle on it and never had. The whole time I've been here management never really had a handle on what was going on.

They understand the impact perception has on the possibility of redevelopment. Lisa DiChiera a preservationist and developer Mary Heiss who spoke community members living in market-rate housing found that many of them want to enjoy the green space and riverfront, but are afraid to go through the development. They want to create an environment where people from the surrounding community feel community walking to the riverfront and are able to enjoy the green spaces. The riverfront is open now and the green space is available for public use. People living in market-rate housing fear to walk through Lathrop is based on dominant then ideologies they have gathered about public housing through friends, family, and the media.

Conversely, resident's fears about market-rate people moving into the development have more merit. Several residents foresee issues with the market-rate owners based on information they gathered from public housing residents who live in mixed-income developments. Deborah Smith lives in a mixed-income development and works at Lathrop. She thinks the ultimate goal is to move all of the public housing residents out of her development and make it completely market-rate. The fears of residents do have some merit based on qualitative research about the experiences of residents living in gentrified areas and mixed-income developments. For instance, residents living in a gentrified area of North Kenwood-Oakland in Chicago feel the interests of the middle-class homeowners' take precedence (Patillo 2007). Residents in mixed-income developments also feel the interests of owners are more influential (Chaskin et al. 2012).

Fortunately, one form of regulation by the state plays a significant role in preventing the demolition of Lathrop Homes. Initially, Lathrop was slated for complete demolition. Several groups started to challenge the plan, but CHA had full control of the process and did not allow other groups to give suggestions. According Lisa DiChiera, Director of Advocacy at Landmarks Illinois, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Section 106) prevents the demolition of Lathrop under the plan for transformation. Lathrop is registered as a historic site because of the architecture and quality. The state office in Springfield, Illinois is in charge for enforcing the law. Lisa states that Section 106 allows for a democratic process to happen in regards to the future of Lathrop Homes.

Residents often use the research from Landmarks Illinois in their organizing campaign. The organization conducted a reuse study finding that the buildings are structurally sound, in condition for rehabilitation. Neighbors who are supportive of the preservation efforts also refer to the reuse study as a reason against demolition. In 2007, Landmarks added Lathrop to its “Top Ten Most Endangered Places” list. Federal and state oversight gives Lathrop residents a form of protection in the redevelopment process. At events, Lathrop residents can often be heard stating that the buildings are structurally sound, negating the need for complete demolition of any buildings in the development.

This organization is most concerned about the preservation of existing structures, their historic heritage, and sustainability. Their success in preventing the demolition of Lathrop also relies on making economic arguments. For instance, the

agency states rehabilitation saves funds because most of the money for new construction goes to the materials while in rehabilitation it goes to labor. Landmarks also highlight how Lathrop Homes would qualify for federal rehabilitation tax credits and affordable housing tax credits. Although the goal of Landmarks Illinois is not to advocate for the residents, they do acknowledge how the surrounding areas are predominantly market-rate and believe this project will preserve housing for low-moderate income families in the area.

Currently, most of the buildings will be rehabbed under the current redevelopment plan. Developer Mary Heiss states that a few must be demolished for reasons logistical reasons, and more demolition would benefit the community. She goes on to say the demolition of more buildings would provide more parking and better accessibility for the elderly and people with physical handicaps. However, residents are not concerned about parking because that would benefit market-rate people and shoppers. At a LAC meeting, residents became extremely skeptical when Mary mentioned that a few buildings would be demolished. However, residents are concerned because this could lead to a decrease in units. This might seem like a trivial complaint from some perspectives, but with less than a third of units allocated for public housing, residents believe that every building should be preserved. Grassroots organizing by residents might have had an impact in slowing down the process, while garnering support for their cause. Mary states one of the major reasons the development process is taking so long is because whenever residents protest CHA hesitates to move the project forward. Unfortunately, the residents' organizing is seen as a problem. Mary

mentioned that the company does not receive a “dime” until the project is done. This shows the competing capitalist interests and people who are less privileged positions. Developers see the Lathrop redevelopment as just another project and just want to get the job done. The developer also does not realize that including residents in the process might prevent some opposition to the plans.

According to Wacquant (2001) urban spaces, in the periphery, are places to contain marginalized groups. Containment allows for the continued subjugation and monitoring of poor and often minority populations. This containment creates a polarization between law-abiding whites and criminal Blacks. Many residents at Lathrop fear this will happen to them if Lathrop is redeveloped. Resident Sandra Cornwell fears that residents might end up in developments on the Southside, which tend to have less resources and opportunities. Reduction of the public housing units at Lathrop denies the reality that marginalized groups need protection because the private market fails to protect them from ongoing forms of discrimination (Quillian 2006).

Segregation also causes financial challenges for minority populations. Rugh and Massey (2010), reveal that the foreclosure crisis happened as a result of financial institutions targeting minorities in segregated communities for subprime mortgages. These readings reveal that many of the processes in the urban sphere are deliberate in limiting the life chances of minorities. In the past, overt efforts were used for segregation such as violence and riots to prevent Black people from living in certain areas (Hirsch 1983). Now, policies that promote speculation and privatization within the housing market cause many problems that disproportionately impact African

Americans and the poor (Brenner et al. 2012). Therefore, the mechanisms to justify the negative outcomes of segregation will have to be deliberate.

CONCLUSION

COULD LATHROP BE AN EFFECTIVE MODEL OF PUBLIC HOUSING?

At a public rally held by Lathrop residents on December 10, 2013, a politician states concentrated poverty will not work anymore when asked if he would oppose the inclusion of market-rate units. Dominant discourses pointing to concentrated poverty as a problem have been circulating for years within academic and nonacademic domains. However, not all public housing is concentrated in poverty, as evidenced by Lathrop Homes. Lathrop is unique in many ways as it provides many resources that other developments lack such as a diverse group of racial and ethnic groups. In the case of Lathrop, there is an inherent contradiction in the statements made by politicians, neighbors, and people in the broader community that Lathrop residents are living in concentrated poverty. Analysis of several factors directly challenge the notion that people in Lathrop are living in concentrated poverty.

A common argument made for redevelopment is that it will create a diverse community. However, Lathrop is already diverse in that it is home to white, Black, and Puerto Rican people. People can be heard speaking Spanish when walking through Lathrop, attending a community event, or rally related to the redevelopment. The appreciation of different foods is event that when community events are held you can get traditional barbeque or Puerto Rican options too. All this indicates that the leaders within the community are aware of the diverse social needs of the residents. At most

organizing events and meetings there is usually someone present to translate for the Spanish- speaking residents.

Lathrop is different from many other non-senior developments in that many of its residents are older, having lived in Lathrop for several decades. Many residents speak of raising their families in Lathrop and being raised in Lathrop. Several older residents made it clear that they could move, but after living in Lathrop so long they could not imagine living somewhere else. This points to the reality that people make a decision by placing value in living in a community with support over living in a nicer some. Yes, the actual structure of the buildings can make it difficult for older residents. For instance, some of the apartments are four stories tall. Stairs must be taken to reach all of the units because the buildings lack elevators. The walk up units only have bedrooms on the second floor. Bobby Watkins, an older resident likes Lathrop but considers moving to a place that is more accessible for him.

Another factor contributing to the distinctiveness of Lathrop is the low-density. Several residents' state there is a different feel to the development because of the four story apartments and walk up units. Throughout the years residents have been able to support each other by watching each other's children and socializing because the makeup of the community according to Cynthia Scott:

There was a lot of families, who my girlfriend who worked part-time and I mean tight sisterhood. If one of us was having difficulty we were always there to help the other out. Uh, if for example we had dinner night. One would serve meat, the other serve a vegetable, and the other would serve a side dish, so no one spent all the money on one meal. So the next week I'd serve the meat, someone else would serve the vegetable, and someone else would serve the side dish.

Unfortunately, the low-density is also the result of the North part of the development being vacated in 2010. Since then, some residents have described it as a “ghost town” because only 150 out of 925 units are occupied. Every resident interviewed states the reason they want to stay at Lathrop is the availability of resources like public transit, clothing and grocery stores, and place for recreation. Resident Miguel Suarez explains why he believes Lathrop should just be rehabilitated:

Well, if anything, they were talking about, well see because Lathrop was built so many years ago, because it was built in 1935, a lot of these units are small. Some of these apartments can be reconfigured, as I believe some of them have been reconfigured. Lathrop is a 950-unit public housing facility and if they were to rehabilitate it, they could bring back at least 800. You know, make the apartments bigger, do some reconstruction for a lack of better words, they really do not have to demolish any of the buildings. I believe of two the buildings because of the foundation or the leaning or one thing or the other do need to come down. If that is the case then fine, but I would say that 90 to 95 percent of the buildings are better than any of the market, market rate buildings in the surrounding community. So as far as what I like about Lathrop, we are the only ones up north, we are in a dynamic neighborhood, we have all the amenities around use that we need, we are close to public transportation, we have schools nearby, we have all the stores we need nearby. We have everything we already need here. All these plans the partners are talking about we already have. We are a diverse community, which we have always been. And they are talking all kind of crazy when they are talking about bringing in a diverse, how do you call it, a mixed- income community. We ready have that, so I like Lathrop as is. As far as what I don't like about Lathrop, nothing. I like everything about Lathrop. It should be left alone, if anything made better. But not just destroyed and dismantled like the city and CHA wants to do.

Resident Cindy Scott explains why she would like to stay in Lathrop Homes:

I want to stay on the North side. I would say, I will go east and I want to stay north because east and north you have more stores all over here and even down by Division now they are putting Mariano's and they are even putting up a mall. I want to stay where there are stores, and there is business, and diversity. When you are going further west and south you are losing the diversity and you are getting liquor stores. I don't want to go buy dinner at a liquor store. To go buy potato chips and pop, or have to ride a bus far distance. Since I've gotten

older I've gotten handicapped, on disability I've gotten sick and that's due to hereditary. But there is a closeness here. I can walk a few blocks right across the street and there is a grocery store. There's two bus stops, there's an L train, I can take the L all the way to Loyola Hospital. I'm not supposed to, but I can. I can take it to the blue all the way to Forest Park, take the Pace bus and boom I'm at the hospital. And it's an easy ride. I can walk in one direction and there is Mariano's, the police station, Toys R US. I can walk in another direction and have Target, there's Jack and Valentino, and my favorite store Joann's Fabric.

Most developments lack access to the resources that Lathrop residents have at their disposal. Lathrop residents are extremely grateful. Residents could also use the bus for doctor's appointments, to get groceries, and to visit family who live throughout the city. The argument might be made that they do not have access to jobs, but this is invalidated by interviews and personal observations. Residents mentioned that the access to public transit enabled them and their children to work. Observations reveal Lathrop residents going to or returning to work on the bus. They might not be high-paid jobs, but again, that is not the result of individuals but of larger structures that negatively influence minorities and the poor living in Lathrop.

Allies of Lathrop consists of former Lathrop residents, neighbors, religious leaders, and volunteers who support the efforts to keep the development free of market-rate units. There is also a group of lawyers working with residents who moved out of Lathrop and have the right to return. Organizer Jane Thomas states Lathrop has much support because it is on the Northside of Chicago and because of the diverse racial mix

of residents. Jane also states this is a reason why many of the organizing efforts at Lathrop does are successful. Many developments were torn down soon after the Plan

for Transformation was implemented. Lathrop has survived many years. Former Lathrop Resident Barbara Burns responded as followed when asked if she thinks Lathrop is a good model for public housing:

Absolutely, it is working. And it can be more of an effort there has to be a community effort because the disadvantage the advantage of keeping it affordable and public housing is that you can still have support systems there you still have Mary Crane, you can still have Cotter Boys and Girls Club. You start becoming a market-rate area and those organizations are going to be gone. They are there to provide services to lower-income families. You start to make lower-income families the minority and those organizations are going to be gone. Someone said to me well why can't the Boys and Girls Club serve whatever kids wind up being there and yeah they could. When you walk into Cotter no one ever says to you what is your income how much money do your parents make. Anybody can come there. The point is that they are there to provide something for lower-income kids, kids at risk. If you are a kid from a more well to do family you are welcome there, but if the community becomes predominantly well to do kids then Cotter is going to be gone. So now all the sudden whatever families remain or the 400 units that will public housing there is not going to be that support there for them. And the kind of services that upper and middle-class kids want their families want for their kids is different.

When policymakers and people with decision-making power decide that it is not feasible to have concentrated poverty, but it is acceptable to have concentrated wealth they have made a value judgment that middle and upper-middle class communities do not have problems. This view is normative in that it assumes that everyone has the means to make it to the middle-class. Therefore, because people living in public housing do not meet standards established by dominant groups like politicians, wealthy neighbors, researchers, and other disconnected spectators they are subject to the contestation of their space by these groups. The development could be rehabilitated and remain all public housing and programs could be made to integrate Lathrop with the surrounding community and more importantly the surrounding

community with Lathrop. Making sure residents are aware and able to access the many resources that exist in their community would make for a better argument.

In all, we see that Lathrop Homes counters dominant ideologies that mainstream society has about public housing. Unfortunately, public housing is so deeply associated with social ills that it is hard for many to ignore that any development can exhibit other features. Arguably, if middle and upper-middle class people moved into Lathrop now the perception of the development would change dramatically even if the circumstances of the subsidized residents stay the same. The reality of the diverse range of people from different race, economic, and life experiences challenges any notion of concentrated poverty. If the existing model at Lathrop does not work, then researchers and others concerned about housing must question if the conditions in public housing are the sole reasons for a desire to create a mixed-income developments.

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Winant, H. (2000). RACE AND RACE THEORY. Annual Review of Sociology, 26,
1.)CHAPTER ONE

VITA

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