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**ENVISIONING THE CITY OF THE FUTURE: RESPONSES TO
DEINDUSTRIALIZATION, SEGREGATION, AND THE URBAN CRISIS IN
POSTWAR DETROIT, 1950-1970**

by

ANDREW HNATOW

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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MAJOR: HISTORY

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

DEDICATION

For it was the voice of one
who had never been dirty or hungry,
and had not guessed successfully
what dirt and hunger are.

E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, 1910

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*If John Donne were correct, and no one is an island, than
this is doubly true for a PhD student.*

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Tracy Neumann, Janine Lanza, and John Pat Leary.*

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and many outside of it, who helped me along the way.*

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and the many more in and from places across North America, Europe, and West Africa,
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and conversations.*

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who always show me anew what love means.*

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in ways I could never express in words.*

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*My final thanks and gratitude are to those
who call Detroit home, past and present.
Speramus meliora; resurgent cineribus.*

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The crisis of Fordism rapidly or simultaneously became the crisis of the Fordist city.
W.F. Fever¹

There have been many Detroits over the past one hundred years. There has been the city of Henry Ford, of the assembly line, and of five dollar days. There was the Motor City, the world capital of automobiles, suburbanization, highways, and a working class with middle class remuneration. Or there was Motown, where glamor, music, and fame ruled supreme, regardless of the color of one's skin. There was, too, the model city of race relations in the United States. With 1967 came the Detroit of civil unrest that may be, depending on the beholder, a riot, an uprising, or a rebellion. Then there is the city of industrial ruins, the way paved by decades of deindustrialization and disinvestment, followed by the murder capital of crisis, crime, and violence. Finally, there is the empty city, an urban space perceived to be devoid of residents. A place of fear, of abandonment, which all-too-easily elides with the revitalization fantasies which paint the city as a blank slate, free for the taking.

During World War II, Detroit, the Motor City, claimed the mantle of the "Arsenal of Democracy," even as it began to encounter the costs of rapid growth and mass industrial production. By 1950, with the Second World War receding into memory, many began to image the future of Detroit in different ways. Some had visions of broad and stable homeownership and employment; others styled futuristic renderings of driverless cars and manufacturing facilities contained within mountains. Very few people in 1950, however, imagined Detroit as an urban space riven by racial and class divisions, plagued by unemployment poverty, and housing crises. By and large, Detroiters all wished and imagined a better future, although what they understood to

¹ Fever, "The Post-Fordist City," in Ronan Paddison, ed., *Handbook of Urban Studies* (London: SAGE Publications, 2009), 276.

constitute a better future was wide-ranging and occasionally conflicting. Central to the varying visions of the future of Detroit were different conceptions of what contemporary problems in urban spaces *were* and what future shape Detroit might take.

At the end of the 1940s and into the early 1950s, some automobile workers and their local governments railed against industrial decentralization, warning of “ghost towns” if industrial employment moved away. At the River Rouge industrial complex, in Dearborn, workers brought their concerns to the attention of the Ford Motor Company. Union officials and automobile companies disagreed with this prognosis, as did a federal judge. Across town in Grosse Pointe, a suburban community just over the city lines practiced a systematic and codified form of housing segregation, later subject to a state investigation. Defenders of the segregation system acted as they did out of a fear of the future might bring otherwise for their community. They saw themselves as guardians and protectors. But not all of members of their community agreed with this vision of a lily-white future. Instead, the dissenters organized to bring integration to their community.

By the late 1960s, local elites foresaw the need to plan for infrastructure needs up to the end of the millennium. An internationally prominent urban planner and theorist was engaged to plan the future of the Detroit region in the year 2000. Brilliant, imaginative, comprehensive yet human-centered, the planner and his team nonetheless argued that class and racial divisions were outside the project’s purview. The city they imagined called upon technology and a planned physical environment to create a different future for Detroit.

Around the same time, the Lyndon Johnson administration, prompted by Walter Reuther, moved to address the urban crisis across the country. Legislators responded with criticism and then a defense of what came to be known as the Model Cities program, revealing a spectrum of views with regard to race, class, federal intervention, and urban spaces. Similarly, the public statements

and internal communications of the LBJ administration on Model Cities revealed that, while the intention was good, an understanding of the class and racial divisions in urban America, as will be shown in the first two chapters, and the experiences of working-class and non-white city residents, was missing from these high-level conversations and plans.

The urban crisis is the conceptual heart of this study. Here, *urban crisis* is used as it was in the 1950s. That is to say, as a structural interpretation of the existence and causes of low-quality housing, industrial decentralization, the decreasing capacity of cities to provide services to their residents, and segregation.² It asks questions about whether residents in Detroit imagined these changes and how they attempted to get beyond them. In addition, this study draws from the work of Manuel Castells, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey.³ It does not concern itself with the “culture of poverty” or underclass interpretations of urban concerns, which blame cultural conditions rather than material ones for poverty and segregation in urban spaces.⁴ Instead, this study focuses on the on-the-ground effort to assess Detroit’s problems and imagine a way out of them, toward a different urban future. For local residents, the future included stable, unionized, employment and, while opinions were split on the merits of integration, the role of racial inclusion or exclusion was a large part of the conversation. The further from local communities one goes, the less understanding there is of the importance of industrial employment, and racial questions are more likely to be avoided than met head-on.

² Timothy Weaver, "Urban Crisis: The Genealogy of a Concept," *Urban Studies* 54, no. 9 (2017); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; originally 1996).

³ Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review*, no. 53 (2008); Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

⁴ For an overview of these arguments, see Weaver, "Urban Crisis: The Genealogy of a Concept."; and Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2016).

Regarding Detroit

The beginning, but certainly not the end, of the puzzle of Detroit and its fate is the intersection of class with race in the United States. Scholars have argued that white supremacy in the colonies, and then in the States, was rooted in the control of labor, and thus the control of the working class.⁵ Given the divisions among workers by gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and other identities, we should speak of different working classes, which together comprise the overarching working class. By the 20th century, and the spread of mass industrial production, further refined into Fordist production, exploiting racial and gendered divisions among laborers continued to be a key strategy among managers and the owners of capital.⁶ This is not to argue that discrimination based on race or gender are by-products of class relations, but rather that they are intertwined tightly and intimately with class structure. Thus, even as white Detroit auto workers staged wildcat strikes to protest integrated work spaces, key union wins – such as the unionization of Ford – only occurred when class solidarity held against racial divisions.⁷

Similarly, racial segregation has formed an integral component of US urban history. Just as DuBois wrote that the problem of the United States in the 20th century was the problem of the color line, cities in the 20th century United States were marked with the history and legacy of racial and ethnic inequalities. Detroit was and is no exception. A number of scholars already have tilled

⁵ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: the Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003); Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (2012); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume 2: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (London: Verso, 2012); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007); W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999, originally 1935).

⁶ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: New Press, 2001); Stephen Meyer, *Manhood on the Line: Working-Class Masculinities in the American Heartland* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Elizabeth Faue, *Rethinking the American Labor Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁷ Beth Tompkins Bates, *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995).

this soil. Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin's *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* (1975), covering Detroit in the late 60s through the early 70s, is one vital example.⁸ Another contemporaneous account, by radical geographer William Bunge, who taught at Wayne State University, studied one square mile in Detroit before, during, and after the events of the summer of 1967.⁹ Slightly earlier, in 1972, B. J. Widick, who came out of the union movement and the United Auto Workers (UAW) to teach economics at Wayne State University and then Columbia University, wrote *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*.¹⁰ More recently, historian Beth Bates addressed the racial politics of the city in *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*, which ended with the unionization of Ford in 1941.¹¹ All of these works are attentive to the interplay of race and class in the Motor City in the 20th century.

The two works of history that correspond the closest to this study are Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* and Heather Ann Thompson's *Whose Detroit?*, both of which examine the dynamics of race and class in Detroit in the decades following the Second World War.¹² Set in the 60s and 70s, Thompson's *Whose Detroit?* locates the labor movement in the context of 1960s social movements, including, most importantly civil rights. She demonstrates how interwoven the experiences of racism and classism were in the city. In tune with Thompson's interest in the carceral state, *Whose Detroit?* addresses issues of policing and law enforcement in an urban space, showing the power of courts, jails, and police as realms of racial oppression and class exploitation.¹³ Sugrue's *Origins of the Urban Crisis* is the launching point for study. My first

⁸ Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012; originally 1975).

⁹ William Bunge, *Fitzgerald: Geography of a Revolution* (University of Georgia, 2011).

¹⁰ B.J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence*, revised ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

¹¹ Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*.

¹² Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit?: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Cornell University Press, 2004).

¹³ Heather Ann Thompson, "Rethinking Working-Class Struggle through the Lens of the Carceral State: Toward a Labor History of Inmates and Guards," *Labor* 8, no. 3 (2011); Heather Ann Thompson and Donna Murch,

two chapters, on Local 600 and on segregation in Grosse Pointe, came from much more abbreviated discussions in Sugrue's study. As his title indicates, Sugrue examines the cause of the urban crisis in Detroit and identifies it as the interaction of housing segregation, job discrimination, and deindustrialization. This dissertation builds on Thompson's and Sugrue's work, asking how Detroiters understood these processes at the time and what their responses were. Thus, while Sugrue asks what happened in postwar Detroit to bring about its urban crisis, this study asks what Detroiters thought would or could happen as the city confronted challenges in the changing economic environment and encountered the political opportunities and limitations of the emerging liberal state.

Defining Deindustrialization

As the process of deindustrialization creates the background of much of this history, a brief discussion of the scholarly literature provides a useful background for the rest of this study. As Barry Bluestone has explained in his foreword to the collected volume *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*, industrial productivity has risen in the United States even as industrial employment has gone down. Despite the dominant narrative of deindustrializing cities in the US, the amount of manufacturing has gone up. In 1959, 16.7 million American workers were in the manufacturing sector, comprising a little over a third of all US workers outside of the agricultural sector (31.3%). In 1979 the actual number of workers had risen to 21 million even as the percentage dropped to 23.4%. By 1999, the actual number began to decline, to 18.6 million, and the percentage dropped as well, to 14.4%. After 2001, the number was down to 16.5 million, lower than in 1959, and the percentage was 12.6%, or around an eighth of all workers who were

"Rethinking Urban America through the Lens of the Carceral State," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (2015); Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy* (New York: Vintage Books, 2017).

employed outside of agriculture. “Millions of workers are losing their jobs,” Bluestone concludes, “in industries in which productivity is growing faster than sales. This cannot be termed ‘deindustrialization,’ but for the workers affected it feels the same.”¹⁴ While perhaps this does not describe the deindustrialization of the United States, it does describe the deindustrialization of the American workforce.

Additionally, Bluestone highlights a key aspect of attention to deindustrialization in the United States: that it is chronologically situated in the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, Bluestone pinpoints the 1973 oil embargo as the beginning of the economic woes that would come to be associated with deindustrialization. It set the stage for Bluestone’s own influential analysis, with co-author Bennett Harrison, published in 1982.¹⁵ Beginning with a 1980 *Business Insider* editorial calling for “the reindustrialization of America,” Bluestone and Harrison trace the “trouble” back to the early 1970s. In this telling, the 1960s were a time of growth and prosperity, a decade during which economic growth averaged 4.1% a year and the GNP grew by 50% over ten years. The United States was, as Kenneth Galbraith described it, “the affluent society” (with, as Bluestone and Harrison put it, “the notable exception of millions of black, brown, and teenaged workers.”)¹⁶ By the 1980s the tide had seemed to turn, as domestic economic concerns joined together with “America’s apparent inability to compete in the global marketplace.”¹⁷ In Detroit, the tendency to

¹⁴ Barry Bluestone, “Foreword,” in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2003), xii-xiii.

¹⁵ Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York City: Basic Books, 1982). Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott credit this book with introducing the term to “the popular and scholarly lexicon.” However, they also state that the first public use of the term deindustrialization was to describe the Allied policy towards Germany following World War II. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives that honor to the *Economist* in 1940, describing the Third Reich’s policy towards Vichy France. This quibble does not alter Heathcott and Cowie’s main point, although it is worth noting that the first use of the verb *to deindustrialize* occurred nearly six decades earlier, in 1882.

¹⁶ Bluestone and Harrison, *Deindustrialization of America*, 4; John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2009).

¹⁷ This timeline is used elsewhere, including in W.F. Lever’s entry on “The Post-Fordist City” and that of Douglas V. Shaw on “The Post-Industrial City” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 276 and 286, respectively.

blame non-Americans, or those seen as non-American, for the downturn in the metropolis's industrial employment has a troubling and chilling history. At the most benign, it involves defiant gestures like the UAW refusing to allow foreign-made automobiles to park in the lot at their headquarters, Solidarity House, on Jefferson Avenue or bumper stickers that read "Out of a job yet? Keep buying foreign." At its worst, opposition to foreign goods and workers fueled racial and ethnic hatred that led to brutal incidents such as the race-based murder of Vincent Chen in 1982.¹⁸

Putting temporal matters to the side, Bluestone and Harrison usefully delineate the different forms deindustrialization took. In one form, called "milking," a profitable plant could see its profits redirected elsewhere in the operation, leading to financial difficulties and problems with the physical plant. In a more aggressive form, management makes a conscious decision to allow the factory to deteriorate, with profits directed elsewhere and physical assets not maintained, leading to inevitably to inefficiencies and breakdowns. A third form involves shifting physical assets, like machinery or other equipment, to other locations. While the plant stays open, productivity declines. In a fourth form of deindustrialization, the one most closely associated with the process in the popular imagination, the plant – and possibly even the business – is closed. In a variant, operations are relocated elsewhere, a process which became known as the "runaway shop" in the 1930s and again in the 1950s. In the latter case, Bluestone and Harrison refer to the use of the term in "industries such as shoes, textiles, and apparel [which] left New England for the lower-wage, non-unionized South," but autoworkers in Detroit also used the term, "runaway shop," at the beginning of the 1950s, as the first chapter details.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bluestone and Harrison, *Deindustrialization of America*, 5; Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, "Vincent Chin: A Catalyst for the Asian-American Civil Rights Movement," *Michigan History Magazine*, 2017 March-April 2017.

¹⁹ Bluestone and Harrison, *Deindustrialization of America*, 7-8.

While pushing back against this popular narrative, Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott repeat the common misconceptions about the chronology in their introduction to *Meanings of Deindustrialization*. They write that while the late 1970s and early 1980s was the time during which *deindustrialization* became part of the political lexicon, its roots were longer than supposed. In 2003, the scholarly literature continued to have to argue against the dominant narrative that tied the period of deindustrialization to the late 1970s and the 1980s. Similarly, scholars have often argued that *deindustrialization* itself is not the most useful term, as the total number of manufacturing employment in the US did not change much, let alone shrink – from 18 million in 1965 to 18.5 million in 2000. Instead, what changed was the quality of jobs available and their compensation, the unionization rate (down 40% from 1985 to 2000), power relations in the workplace, and the location of manufacturing.²⁰

For these reasons, together with growing concerns about globalization and uneven development, many scholars have chosen to refer to *industrial restructuring* rather than *deindustrialization*.²¹ This is an important aspect to keep in mind in discussing a site of production such as Detroit, where the city proper lost manufacturing while production merely left the city for the suburbs or nearby locations like Toledo.²² Regardless, whether shops moved to the suburbs, neighboring states, or to the Sunbelt, manufacturing continued in the Detroit metropolitan area. The question is where it was located and what the quality of employment in the manufacturing sector was, as well as the broader context of local employment. Further, as sociologist Ruth

²⁰ "Introduction," in Cowie and Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins*, 14.

²¹ See, for instance, Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); W. F. Lever, "The Post-Fordist City" and Douglas V. Shaw, "The Post-Industrial City," in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*.

²² Some, including Constantinos Doxiadis, who is the subject of the third chapter, would include Toledo as part of the greater Detroit metropolitan area.

Milkman has written, examinations of job loss and industrial decline should not devolve into rosy nostalgia for what were harsh and often dehumanizing work conditions and jobs.²³

What is useful about the term *industrial restructuring* is how it conveys how deindustrialization was part of a larger process, “one episode in a long series of transformations within capitalism,” and that industrial production itself does not end. As Cowie and Heathcott phrased it, “deindustrialization and industrialization are merely two ongoing aspects of the history of capitalism that describe continual and complicated patterns of investment and disinvestment.”²⁴ They are the two sides of a single coin. Moreover, it helps to convey that deindustrialization is a process embedded in geography, in the sense that the location of manufacturing has always been place-based, uneven, and changing.

Cowie and Heathcott argue that the point of departure for any discussion of deindustrialization “must be respect for the despair and betrayal felt by workers,” the “defeat and subjugation” of “workers who banked on good-paying industrial jobs for the livelihoods of their families and their communities.”²⁵ Yes, but how necessary was it that these jobs were *industrial*? Did workers mourn factories as factories, in and of themselves, or for the good-paying and seemingly stable jobs ensured by unionization, with a relative ease of entrance? What was lost when workers no longer had the ability to plan ahead and to count on employment with which one could support one’s family and sustain one’s community? We should ask to what degree industrial employment was necessary for these conditions of labor. Other fields of work, such as teaching and nursing, if they are unionized, meet many of these criteria, although with major exceptions.

²³ Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory: Auto Workers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 12.

²⁴ Cowie and Heathcott, "Introduction: The Meanings of Deindustrialization," in Cowie and Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins*, 15.

²⁵ Cowie and Heathcott, "Introduction: The Meanings of Deindustrialization," in Cowie and Heathcott, eds., *Beyond the Ruins*, 1. See also Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo, *Steeltown USA: Work & Memory in Youngstown* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2002).

The first is the mass employment required by mass production, and the second is the requirement in these latter occupations for higher education.

Deindustrialization was devastating to workers, workers' families, and working-class neighborhood and communities. Most important was the loss of the conditions of labor favorable to workers, not industrial production in and of itself, with its ear-shattering noise, its inhuman rhythms, and its back-breaking work. We should ask how stable were these conditions of labor under an industrial regime. Do we remember as permanent what was really a fleeting historical moment contingent on the Second World War, followed by the Cold War and proxy wars, such as that in Korea? Did manufacturers, amiable during time of national security and federal contracts, merely revert to the status quo as soon as it was expedient? As labor historian Nelson Lichtenstein has argued, "the very idea of such a postwar accord is a suspect construct," that whatever industrial peace that did exist "came flying apart when management in highly competitive industries went on the postwar offensive."²⁶

Nonetheless, it is that concept of the postwar accord that provides the foundation for the American (and Canadian) framework for Steven High and David W. Lewis's in 2007 work, *Corporate Wasteland*, in which they contextualized "the deindustrial sublime."²⁷ The American (and Canadian) dream, as it was conceived in the post-World War II era, found fulfillment in the blue-collar middle class, by which "the higher wages won by unionized workers offered millions

²⁶ Nelson Lichtenstein, "Class Politics and the State during World War Two," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 58 (2000): 270.

²⁷ What High and Lewis call the *deindustrial sublime* overlaps with what others have critiqued as *ruin porn*. See, for instance, John Patrick Leary, "Detroitism," *Guernica*, January 15, 2011, https://www.guernicamag.com/leary_1_15_11/, accessed August 27, 2018. High and Lewis are not uncritical of the preservation of closed sites of industrial production, however, noting that "the factory-scape might be retained, but the jobs were gone, as were the workplace cultures on which industrial workers depended for status and solidarity." See Steven C. High and David W. Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2007), 31.

of families a home in the suburbs and a broad range of consumer goods.”²⁸ The unsettling impact of industrial restructuring undermined this dream of economic uplift and underscored the fundamental economic precarity and vulnerability of working-class people and communities. By contrasting deindustrialization in the US and in Canada, the authors of *Corporate Wasteland* show how economic transformations do not occur in vacuums and how their consequences are shaped by public policies and laws. High and Lewis argue that deindustrialization in both countries is often framed as inevitable, “a natural by-product of corporate capitalism.”²⁹ Instead, the authors pinpoint two major factors in plant closings: relocation and obsolescence. Both are entirely under the control of companies, although their decisions are guided by cost-saving and profit margins, not the negative impact on the labor force or local communities. The result is uneven development, a plant closing in one place with another opening somewhere else, in which “people and places have become disposable” under the guise of what Schumpeter called creative destruction.³⁰

Jefferson Cowie traced how this played out with RCA Victor in his 1999 study, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*, which chronicled how a Camden, New Jersey, plant's workforce was slashed in the late 1940s following unionization in 1937. The jobs moved first to Bloomington, Indiana, a city attractive to RCA due to “the population's desperation for work.” When unionization came to Bloomington, and a strike wave in the mid-to-late 1960s, RCA moved production first to Memphis for a few years before crossing the border to Ciudad Juarez. From the 1960s through the 1990s, the Bloomington plant continued to decline until it shut

²⁸ High and Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland*, 3. See also Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

²⁹ High and Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland*, 7.

³⁰ High and Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland*, 8; Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2005).

down completely in 1998 as production was siphoned down south, where labor was cheaper and non-unionized.³¹

Industrial Production and Detroit's History

From the late 19th century through the Second World War, Detroit was a boomtown propelled by industrialization, even as its early days of industrialization were outpaced by the behemoth of Fordist production. In 1870, the city's population was 80,000, and it grew to 465,000 within forty years. Between 1910 and 1920, with the advent of mass automobile production, the population more than doubled that number, to 994,000. By 1930, the population was 1.5 million, and the city reached its population peak at 1.8 million in 1950.³² By the postwar era, automobile production and its secondary industries were what kept Detroit moving as a center of mass industry. The working-class communities of postwar Detroit were predicated on mass industrial employment. This employment, or at the very least its enduring potential and possibility, was the *sine qua non* of Detroit as a city of a relatively prosperous working class.³³

The beginning of the 20th century saw a diverse economy in Detroit, with regional manufacturing and retail of stoves, carriages, railroad cars and equipment, drugs, and boots. By 1920, however, the automobile industry dominated the economy of Detroit.³⁴ There was a hiatus, during the Second World War, in 1943 and 1944, when the auto industry produced no cars but instead focused on defense production – tanks, armored vehicles, planes, and munitions. When peacetime production resumed, the demand was all the greater for the moratorium. The record year for automobile production was 1929, when 5.4 million automobiles were made. In 1948, 5.3

³¹ Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*. The quote is from p. 43

³² Douglas V. Shaw, "The Post-Industrial City," in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 285, 290.

³³ On early industrialism in Detroit, and the social concerns it raised, see Joseph Stanhope Cialdella, "Landscape of Ruin and Repair: Parks, Potatoes, and Detroit's Environmental Past, 1879-1900," *Michigan Historical Review* 40, no. 1 (2014). For a discussion Fordism, see Fever, "The Post-Fordist City," in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 273-283.

³⁴ Scott Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), 177.

million were produced, just slightly under the record, and the next year the number was 6.6 million. By 1950, it was 8.8 million. This growth bespoke a number of changes, both nationally and globally. Before the Second World War, the auto industry was largely subject to consumer demand – and automobiles were, relatively speaking, luxury goods. While that luxury was extended to the middle class and even better paid working-class consumers, via used vehicles, they were not crucial for transport or most employment. Consequently, consumer demand often went down during times of economic hardship, and the entire auto industry, and employment in related industries such as steel and rubber, went down with it. The advent of the military-industrial complex during the Second World War meant that defense contracts and the post-war rebuilding effort could give an impetus to American industry that was independent of consumer demands, even as war-time savings fueled consumer demand in cars in the 1950s.³⁵

From 1947 through 1967, the number of industrial workers employed in manufacturing in Detroit proper fell from 281,500 to 149,600, a decrease of 47%.³⁶ In the same years, the workforce grew in the surrounding communities in the tri-county area (Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne) from 186,700 to 244,700, or an increase of 31%.³⁷ The worst job losses occurred in the 1950s, due to a combination of four postwar recessions, the loss of small manufacturing plants and defense jobs, the rise of automation and other technological changes, and decentralization of production to

³⁵ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 159-160.

³⁶ This study will use the terms *Detroit proper* or *the city proper* to indicate that the city's suburbs and metropolitan areas are excluded from whatever statement or argument is being made. Similarly, *metropolitan Detroit* or *the metropolitan area* is used to indicate that suburban areas are included.

³⁷ Thomas A. Klug, "The Deindustrialization of Detroit," in Joel Stone, ed, *Detroit 1967: Origins, Impacts, Legacies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 65.

communities outside the city proper.³⁸ For example, at Chrysler, employment dropped from 100,000 to 35,000, most of which occurred at its major factories in Detroit.³⁹

Even in good years for the automobile industry, such as 1955, unemployed auto workers in the city were did not benefit, as the auto companies built new factories incorporating new technologies of automation in surrounding communities – such as Trenton, Warren, and Utica – to replace the aging industrial infrastructure in Detroit proper. As auto production increased to new heights, up to 10,000,000 annually, employment in auto factories stayed the same across the United States. The result was, in B. J. Widick’s phrasing, “severe dislocations” of Detroit industrial workers in the 1950s.⁴⁰ Nor was Detroit alone. Nineteen fifty-six was, after all, the year pinpointed by sociologist Daniel Bell, writing in 1973, as the year when the United States shifted to being a post-industrial society, as evidenced by, “for the first time in the history of industrial civilization,” the number of white-collar workers was greater than the number of blue-collar workers.⁴¹

Detroit may not have been a center for high-tech manufacturing, but it was the site of booming production that went hand-in-hand with a increased consumer demand following the war, which in turn mean a new demand for labor. In addition to recent migration to the city, the increased demand for labor deepened the continuing housing shortage. Further, 75% of new housing in the metropolitan area was happening outside Detroit proper, in Macomb and Oakland counties. Developers found that it was more cost-effective to build new housing and factories in

³⁸ See Klug, “The Deindustrialization of Detroit,” 66, Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 137. Also, “Supported by the large-scale use of the car, extreme spatial-functional differentiations developed, characterized by suburbanism, the formation of satellite towns, the depopulation of the inner cities, the loss of smaller industrial and service enterprises, and the growth of hypermarkets and trading estates. . . . State and local government supported this process through traffic development, housing policies and subsidies.” Fever, “The Post-Fordist City,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 275.

³⁹ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 139.

⁴⁰ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 137, 139-140.

⁴¹ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). See also Shaw, “The Post-Industrial City,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 286.

undeveloped areas outside the city rather than rebuilding or renovating existing buildings in the city.⁴²

That the 1950s were such turbulent years for auto workers in Detroit serves as a reminder that the Motor City went through several generations of automobile production. The first generation was the early factories located in the city proper with heavy demand for labor, which gave way to a second generation of increasingly automated plants located in metropolitan areas. This, in turn, gave way to a subsequent generations of plant relocation, automation, and worker displacement and relocation. Indeed, the movement of production from the city proper into the suburbs correlates to the suburban boom in metropolitan Detroit. In the 1950s, 500,000 people moved out of Detroit, with a net loss of 270,000. On the other side of the city border, Warren, a suburb just to the north of Detroit and one of the suburban communities that saw the construction of new auto plants, grew to a city of over 100,000 as Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors built facilities there, joined by smaller auto parts suppliers. Nor did these changes occur in a social or political vacuum: Warren remained an all-white community until the 1970s.⁴³

Journalist Scott Martelle has argued that Detroit's current fortunes would have been fundamentally different if the city's economy had continued to be as closely tied to defense spending after the Second World War as it had been during the war. Martelle's argument suggests the difficulties that arise from equating deindustrialization with a decline in industrial manufacturing overall, rather than a decrease in manufacturing's share of the economy and, vitally, the number and quality of jobs manufacturing provides.⁴⁴ It is not industrial production *per se* so

⁴² Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 161.

⁴³ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 140-141.

⁴⁴ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 160-161. Drew Desilver, "U.S. Manufacturing Jobs Have Disappeared, Output Has Grown," July 25, 2017, Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/07/25/most-americans-unaware-that-as-u-s-manufacturing-jobs-have-disappeared-output-has-grown/>, accessed August 23, 2017

much as the conditions of production that matter. But neither are industries outside of automobile production, including defense, immune from the forces that weakened the economies of cities like Detroit – decentralization of production, automation, outsourcing – that might call for smaller workforces in dispersed locations, rather than large workforces in centralized locations.⁴⁵

Moreover, decentralization was often a condition for defense contracts. It is not far-fetched, given Detroit’s role as the Arsenal of Democracy during the war, that industrial decentralization was related to, if not direct defense contracts, than at least the possibility of future defense production on a different model. Regardless, the defense spending that did come Detroit’s way was on a far smaller scale than that directed towards the Sun Belt, which saw high-tech, computer, and electronic manufacturing develop in ways they never did in Detroit. The defense jobs that did exist in metropolitan Detroit were far outside the city’s limits, such as at the Warren tank plant, and therefore increasingly outside the reach of city residents. The economy of the region might have evolved differently in Martelle’s hypothetical situation, but it would not done much to change the situation of Detroit’s central city.⁴⁶

At the Ford River Rouge complex, workers noted both small scale and more expansive forms of deindustrialization in the years following the Second World War. Union leadership struggled to find a language to describe their situation, which they had not witnessed prior to the postwar period. Layoffs, speedups, automation, and runaway jobs were all decried. As early as 1948, the

⁴⁵ David N. Pellow and Lisa Sun-Hee Park, *The Silicon Valley of Dreams: Environmental Injustice, Immigrant Workers, and the High-Tech Global Economy* (New York: New York University Press, 2003). The authors document how manufacturing work in the United States is now primarily low-wage work in electronics performed by immigrant women (see pages 86-91), and many perform piecework from their homes (p. 158). See also W.F. Lever’s “The Post-Fordist City,” where the author writes “post-fordism equates with small units of production located in smaller urban centres,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*.

⁴⁶ See Margaret Pugh O’Mara, “Uncovering the City in the Suburb: Cold War Politics, Scientific Elites, and High-Tech Spaces,” in Kevin Michael Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 59-66; Margaret Pugh O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 166.

term *decentralization* was used to identify the loss of employment at Ford and automobile companies in metropolitan Detroit, even as new factories continued to be opened elsewhere.⁴⁷

Like other large manufacturing concerns, Detroit auto companies conducted large-scale decentralization during the 1950s, building factories closer to other regional bases and reducing the cost of labor.⁴⁸ In the decade following the Second World War, General Motors build factories in Atlanta, Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Wilmington, Delaware; Framingham, Massachusetts; Linden, New Jersey; South Gate, California; and Parma, Ohio. All of the company's new or expanded factories were outside of Detroit.⁴⁹ Moves to integrate production meant that local small-part suppliers lost significant business.⁵⁰ While the large automakers were changing their operations, the auto industry in Detroit was undergoing other changes, too. Large job loss (77,000 jobs) occurred when Kaiser-Frazer, Midland Steel, Hudson, and Packard went out of business. In 1940, 625,456 Detroit city residents were wage-laborers, and that number grew to 757,772 in 1950. By 1960, however, it has shrunk to 612,295, below the 1940 figure. In 1970, the number was 561,184. The decline in the number of production workers mirrored this pattern. In 1939, before wartime production kicked off, the number was 181,935. It rose to 281,515 in 1947, and then declined to 232,348 in 1954. It further dropped to 145,177 in 1958 – again, below the prewar number. Employment in the auto industry, which was sensitive to consumer demand, was

⁴⁷ Early protests against decentralization at the River Rouge complex came from the “Progressive Slate” in a 1948 election in UAW Local 600. “Stop Decentralization. No more moving of jobs to other cities,” read the first plank of the slate’s platform in one of their campaign posters. The head of the Progressive Slate in the late 1940s and the first president of Local 600, Percy Llewellyn, became one of the main voices in the local’s campaign in the next few years. See “Layoffs? Lost in the Shuffle?” 1948, he Percy Llewellyn Papers, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University (hereafter PLP).

⁴⁸ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 175.

⁴⁹ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 175-176.

⁵⁰ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 175-176.

constantly in flux and tumultuous. The winter of 1949-1950, for instance, saw sudden layoffs that raised the number of unemployed in Detroit to 127,000.⁵¹

These changes had a profound impact for the economic well-being of city residents. The median family income for white Detroiters in 1959 was \$7,050, while it was \$4,370 for black Detroiters. In the next decade, the median income rose 71% for white Detroiters, but only 40% for black families. Seventy-three percent of black households lived on less than \$6,000 a year, whereas only 41% of white households did so. Combine this racial disparity with the demographic shift occurring as white Detroiters began leaving the city proper for the surrounding suburbs, as the proportion of city residents who were black began its upward trajectory. As Detroit became more African American in population, it also became relatively more poor, with a corresponding impact on neighborhoods, small businesses, local shops, and housing stocks. By 1969, the median family income in Detroit was \$10,045, but the median family income for black families, just under half of the city's population, was \$8,645. "Detroit," Scott Martelle noted, "was two cities defined by one boundary."⁵²

The deindustrialization of Detroit was part of a global economic restructuring. This restructuring has been variously called post-Fordism, post-industrialism, postmodern, or neoliberalism, with each term containing differing connotations and critiques.⁵³ Common

⁵¹ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 178, 137-138.

⁵² Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 179. Martelle also notes that the numbers can be misleading since the city of Detroit and its metropolitan area was so economically divided following the Second World War. An unemployment rate of 6% for the entire metropolitan area, he argues, "signified at least double that percentage within the city, and half as much in the outlying areas." Furthermore, the survey overlooked black Detroiters. Thus, black unemployment was double that of white unemployment, and black youth unemployment was at 35%. "Scant attention as given to the human misery caused by this economic dislocation," wrote Martelle, "Most of the time the majority of the unemployed were the same: the blacks, the newly hired, the unskilled." See Martelle, 138-139.

⁵³ See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*; Saskia Sassen, *The Global City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*; Setha M. Low, ed., *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

characteristics among them include a shift to knowledge and service industries, the spread of consumerism to all areas of life, global interconnectedness and networks (including multi- and transnational corporations), and flexibility of employment, also called precarity.⁵⁴ Deindustrialization could, theoretically, occur without loss of industrial employment. If the relative share of a city's economy taken up by manufacturing decreased, eclipsed by new engines of economic growth, such as services ranging from medical, educational, and governmental to consumer services, then one could describe that city as post-industrial – that is, no longer economically dominated or defined by industrial production. In practice, due to technological advances such as automation, job loss tends to go hand-in-hand with the decreasing importance of industrial production.⁵⁵

Wartime Detroit and the Postwar City

For Detroit, the Second World War began before the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A year earlier, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called on the United States to provide aid to Great Britain against the Axis. “The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting,” the president soberly told those listening, “They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security.” Roosevelt’s address announced that “business as usual” could no longer continue. As production must move away from the market and towards defense, so workers and management had to work together for the greater good. “We must be the great arsenal of democracy,” the president exhorted.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ List based off that of Fever, “The Post-Fordist City,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*. But see also Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*; Sassen, *The Global City*.

⁵⁵ Shaw, “Post-Industrial City,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 285-286.

⁵⁶ Fireside Chat December 29, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15917>, accessed July 30, 2016. See Josh Zeitz, “The Speech That Set Off the Debate About America’s Role in the World,” December 29, 2015, *Politico*, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/12/roosevelt-arsenal-of-democracy-speech-213483>, accessed July 30, 2016, for a brief discussion of FDR’s vision of the US as a global power versus

Detroit industry responded to Roosevelt's call, and the transition was profound. Of the city's existing industrial machinery for automobiles, only 12% could be used for the creation of tanks, trucks, boat and submarine engines, machine guns, anti-craft weapons, and airplanes. Consequently, as the auto industry retooled, the tool-and-die industry underwent a profound change. In an often cited example of wartime conversion, Ford built a new facility in Ypsilanti, Michigan, roughly 18 miles from Detroit, in 1943. The Willow Run Bomber plant, where Ford applied the structure of the assembly line to the production of war planes, was the largest war plant in the world when it opened in September, 1941. In August, 1944, the Albert Kahn-designed factory could claim to finish a new B-24 every hour.⁵⁷

The change in production brought a change in labor demands. Through a combination of industrial recruiters and word-of-mouth, Detroit received around 500,000 migrants – many African American – between June 1940 and June 1943. This influx led to a severe housing shortage, which, due to racial segregation, affected black Detroiters the most.⁵⁸ The growing struggles over access to decent housing and jobs created a perceptible climate of racial tension. One Catholic unionist newspaper put it bluntly, stating in June 1943 that “to tell the truth, there is a growing, subterranean race war going on in the city of Detroit which can have no other ultimate result than an explosion of violence.”⁵⁹ Similarly, Walter White, the national director of the NAACP, warned a Detroit

that of Henry Luce's concept of the American Century. For Detroit during the Second World War, see Charles K. Hyde, *Arsenal of Democracy: The American Automobile Industry in World War II* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

⁵⁷ Sarah Jo Peterson, *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 139-140; The Detroit Institute of Arts, *The Legacy of Albert Kahn* (Detroit: Gaylord Printing Company, 1970), 25-26; Roger Biles, "Expressways Before the Interstates," *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 5 (2014): 846. For the differences in responding to FDR's call between labor and management, see Elizabeth Faue, "Shifting Labor's Loyalties: Redefining Citizenship and Allegiance in the 1940s Left," in Philip Abbott, ed., *The Many Faces of Patriotism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 127-144.

⁵⁸ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 140.

⁵⁹ *The Wage Earner*, June 1943, quoted in Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 100.

audience, “Let us drag out in the open what has been whispered through Detroit for months – that a race riot may break out here at any time.”⁶⁰

Break out it did. Fighting between white and black Detroiters began on June 20, 1943, on Belle Isle, a 900-acre Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park located on an island in the Detroit River, between the US and Canada, that had been open to city residents since 1845. By nightfall, the fighting involved several hundred people and had migrated from the island onto the mainland. The violence escalated over the next several days. In the end, thirty-four people were killed and 433 injured. Houses, stores, and factories sustained property damage of \$2 million, and the US Army was required to restore order in the city. Who was killed during the violence, however, points to an underlying truth. Of the thirty-four killed, twenty-five were black, and seventeen of those were killed by police. None of the white Detroiters were killed by police.⁶¹

Accounts from June 1943 demonstrated that white and black Detroiters behaved very differently during the tumult. While hundreds of black Detroiters looted white-owned businesses in black neighborhoods, thousands of white Detroiters concentrated on meting out violence to black men and women who crossed their path in the city. In other words, a larger number of white Detroiters were intent on doing harm to people while a smaller number of black Detroiters attacked property. This dynamic led journalist Scott Martelle to write that “where the whites acted out of a desire to maintain the Jim Crow-like status quo, the blacks acted out of a frustrated drive to break down barriers.” He cited a contemporary analyst who noted that “the main difference was that the blacks acted out of hope and the whites acted out of fear.”⁶²

⁶⁰ *Michigan Chronicle*, June 7, 1943, quoted in Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 100.

⁶¹ Detroit Historical Society, “Belle Island Park,” <http://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/belle-isle-park>, accessed July 30, 2016. Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 153-154.

⁶² Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 155. One assumes that Martelle’s use of “the whites” and “the blacks” is intended to correspond to the contemporary use of those terms in 1943.

This pattern of behavior, of two different forms of rioting, reveals two different forms of policing in the city. Black looters received the full force of armed agents of the state while white rioters received indifference, and sometimes a helping hand. As economist B.J. Widick recounted, “The country got some idea of how Detroit was behaving when newspapers printed a photograph of a Negro World War I veteran being held by police while a white man hit him.”⁶³ The NAACP, civic and religious organizations, and community leaders protested the police’s use of force against black Detroiters and police indifference to the white rioters’ violence. The Detroit Chapter of the NAACP, then the largest chapter in the country, stated, “There is overwhelming evidence that the riot could have been stopped at its inception Sunday night had the police wanted to stop it. So inefficient is the police force, so many of its members are from the deep south, with all their anti-Negro prejudices and Klan sympathies, that trouble may break out again as soon as the troops leave.”⁶⁴

Protests against the behavior of Detroit police were not solely from the leaders and institutions of black Detroit. Brigadier General William E. Guthner, former police chief of Denver and the officer in charge of the federal troops during the 1943 riot, was far from impressed with the behavior exhibited by the city police during the turmoil. “They [Detroit police] have been very handy with their guns and clubs and have been very harsh and brutal,” according to Guthner, “They had treated the Negroes terrible up here, and I think they have gone altogether too far. [...] If they want everybody to get back to normal, the police will have to get back to normal themselves.”⁶⁵ Most important, none of the underlying issues behind the riot were addressed, let alone resolved after the disturbance ended. Far from resolution, the official post-riot reports and analyses placed

⁶³ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 103.

⁶⁴ *Detroit Tribune*, July 3, 1943, quoted in Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 104.

⁶⁵ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 107. See Robert Shogan and Tom Craig, *The Detroit Race Riot* (New York: Chilton Books, 1964), 87.

on the blame for the riot centrally on the black community. County Prosecutor William E. Dowling pointed to the black press and the NAACP as the major culprits, arguing that the latter had “been fomenting trouble with their crusades in the Negro neighborhoods from the start. If they want to do something constructive they might try to control the Negro Press.” The committee on the riot, convened by Michigan’s governor Harry Kelly, piled on, stating that the racial tensions came from “the positive exhortation of many Negro leaders to be militant in the struggle for racial equality.”⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, Detroit’s black community was outraged with analyses that placed the blame squarely and only on black Detroiters. A *Michigan Chronicle* editorial rued the consequences, writing, “The race riot and all that has gone before have made my people more nationalistic and more chauvinistic and anti-white than ever before. Even those of us who were half liberal and were willing to believe in the possibilities of improving race relations have begun to have doubts – and worse they have given up hope.”⁶⁷ Frustrations over racial discrimination in the Motor City were deeper than narratives of Detroit as the model city on race relations completely taken by surprise in 1967 allow or acknowledge.

June, 1943, witnessed the brief boiling over of what simmered away beneath the surface of Detroit during the war years. Perhaps it was the context of the war that open the gates to physical violence, or perhaps the tension had simply brought city residents to a breaking point. Whatever were the exact variables that led to the riot, the broader climate was clear. It was tensions revolving around overcrowded housing, the influx of migrants to the city, and the growing African American community coupled with widespread white racism and tensions over job discrimination and security. As blame was placed on civil rights organizations like the NAACP, the city continued to

⁶⁶ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 110. See *Detroit Times*, July 27, 1943; *Fact Finding Committee Report on the Detroit Riots*, August 11, 1943.

⁶⁷ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 111. See Louis E. Martin, *Michigan Chronicle*, editorial, August 13, 1943

be the site of unresolved conflict over who belonged where, who could go where, and what the consequences of violating these informal rules would be. As the riot proved, violence in the streets of the city was not an improbable response.

The tensions in the city might have gone back under cover, but they by no means disappeared. Once the war ended, leaders in Detroit shifted their attention to the need for urban development, which included highway construction and slum clearance. In 1945, then-city treasurer Albert Cobo wrote a letter regarding urban development to the city council advocating highway construction as an integral part of maintaining real estate values in downtown Detroit.⁶⁸ The city's Detroit Plan of 1947, released under Mayor Jeffries, addressed these concerns. It showed how race, poverty, housing, and the use of space intersected in the immediate postwar moment. In November of 1946, the mayor announced a plan to raze a hundred acres of "blight" northeast of downtown Detroit but south of Gratiot Avenue.⁶⁹ The land would be sold to private developers to build new, private, housing. Part of the plan was to generate income via property taxes, so the construction of public housing was out of the question. The upfront cost to the city would be \$2 million, taking into account the resale of the land to developers, the mayor reasoned, but the plan would pay for itself over fifteen years. The plan explicitly moved low-income Detroiters out of their homes to make way for better, private, housing stock that would generate higher tax returns for the city.

When the condemnation of housing began in 1947, the area proposed by the city had grown from a hundred acres to 129. A legal challenge to the city's right to condemn private property to sell the land for private development was overcome, and demolition was allowed to begin in 1950.

⁶⁸ Biles, "Expressways Before the Interstates," 846.

⁶⁹ I place the word *blight* in quotation marks to signal that its meaning is often political in nature, rather than an objective evaluation, and therefore should never be accepted as a description uncritically.

The land then sat vacant for five years. The city's housing department did not successfully relocate most of the seven thousand black families displaced by the scheme. As black Detroiters were severely limited as to the neighborhoods into which they could move, many of those displaced moved into nearby neighborhoods, further worsening overcrowding. "Rather than ending blight," journalist Scott Martelle noted, "the Gratiot redevelopment project simply redistributed it."⁷⁰

Globally, the era of the Bretton Woods Agreement was beginning. The United States was the foremost industrial and military power in the world following the Second World War, although its close rivalry with the Soviet Union meant that the American military and defense communities actively planned for further conflicts. Part of Cold War planning was an emphasis on geographic decentralization of strategic locations that could be targets of Soviet weapons. Detroit's role as an industrial center, including as a producer of military machinery, meant that new government contracts came with stipulations requiring production facilities and factories be moved away from central urban areas.⁷¹ The postwar boom in production and resulting demand for labor combined with earlier migration to the city, placing even more stress on housing in Detroit. The result was that seventy-five percent of new housing was built outside of the city proper, in adjacent Macomb and Oakland counties. While existing buildings in Detroit became outdated, cheap land outside the city required no razing or renovating of existing structures in order to build.⁷²

Detroit's 1949 Mayoral Race

By the end of the 1940s Detroit was already a city of industrial might, union strength, racial tension, and a housing crisis. All of these dynamics came to the front during the 1949 race for the

⁷⁰ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 158.

⁷¹ O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley*, 161; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*; Kenneth T. Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History* 6, no. 4 (1980).

⁷² Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 161.

office of city mayor. The mayoral election saw record voter turn-out in what was then the fourth-largest city in the United States, and demonstrated that these issues were not far from the minds of most Detroiters following the war. The *Chicago Tribune*, reporting on the election, called it “one of the most bitterly challenged in the history of the city.”⁷³ The two main contenders – George Edwards, Jr., and Albert E. Cobo – represented competing visions of the city. Where Edwards ran on a campaign of social justice associated with fair housing, employment, and labor, Cobo ran a campaign premised on “pragmatic” financial common sense. Edwards’ vision entailed a city government that included the marginalized and the least well-off, while Cobo’s vision was oriented towards the interests of the professional and business classes of the city.

Edwards was a Democrat, and he came out of the progressive, New Deal liberal, wing of the United Auto Workers. He graduated from Harvard with a master’s in sociology by the age of 20, and he worked for two years as a researcher in the Student League for Industrial Democracy under Norman Thomas.⁷⁴ In 1936, Edwards moved to Detroit to join the industrial union movement. By 1938, he was the head of the UAW’s Welfare Department. In 1940, Republican Mayor Jeffries asked Edwards, only 25 years old, to serve as the director of the Detroit Housing Commission. In 1941 he won his first of four two-year terms on the Detroit city council, the youngest council member to be elected at that time, and served as Detroit’s air raid warden while working shifts at the Timken-Detroit Axle Company. Two of his terms on city council Edwards served while stationed in the Philippines with the US Army. While overseas, he was elected the

⁷³ “Detroit Voters Again Say ‘No’ to Labor Choice,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 9, 1949, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1949/11/09/page/2/article/detroit-voters-again-say-no-to-labor-choice>, accessed March 31, 2017

⁷⁴ SLID was the precursor to Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which became the largest New Left organization of the Sixties, and who wrote their 1962 *Port Huron Statement* as a UAW campground north of Detroit. See Andrew Hnatow, “Visions of the New Left: Organized Labor, the Port Huron Statement, and the Making of SDS,” in Jon K. Lauck et al., eds., *Mapping Midwestern Minds: Essays on the Intellectual History of the American Midwest* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, forthcoming).

council president, a position he won twice. He earned a law degree from the Detroit College of Law in 1944. In 1949, Edwards turned his attention away from the city council and towards the mayoralty.⁷⁵

By contrast, Cobo, a Republican, was a trained accountant who had left the private sector to temporarily work for the city during the Depression under New Deal Democrat mayor Frank Murphy. Cobo wound up being appointed to the vacant City Treasurer position in 1935, and then won the position in the next election. Cobo wove together fiscal conservatism, which aligned him with the business and real estate interests in the city, and the sensibilities of “an old-ward-style politician.” As journalist Scott Martelle characterized him, Cobo “maintained close personal ties with the leaders of ethnic clubs and service organizations – the life blood of Detroit’s Democratic-heavy politics.” While Edwards was back by the industrial UAW and CIO, Cobo was endorsed by the craft-oriented AFL.⁷⁶

Housing and race became central questions during the race. Edwards, who had long defended public housing and voted several times to locate public housing outside of the inner city, ran on a platform of public works (such as cleaning streets and building more playgrounds and public housing) and civic reform (specifically police reform).⁷⁷ Edwards received substantial union support during his campaign, including \$30,000. The labor movement also produced over

⁷⁵ Biographical information from Timothy McRoberts, “George C. Edwards, Jr. Papers,” Walter P. Reuther Library, May 9, 2012, <https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/8607>, accessed April 1, 2017; Dominic J. Capeci, ““Never Leave Me”: The Wartime Correspondence of Peg and George Edwards, 1944 to 1945,” *Michigan Historical Review* 27, no. 2 (2001): 93-94; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 142, 144, 145; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 66-67.

⁷⁶ “Detroit Voters Again Say ‘No’ to Labor Choice,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 9, 1949, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1949/11/09/page/2/article/detroit-voters-again-say-no-to-labor-choice>, accessed March 31, 2017; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 163, 164, 167.

⁷⁷ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 165-166, 170; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 83.

1.3 million pamphlets, supporting his election, printed in English, Polish, and Hungarian, as well as door-to-door canvassers, and sound trucks.⁷⁸

True to his stated fiscal conservatism, Cobo ran on a platform focused on fixing the city's budget and implementing better management. In contrast to Edwards' calls for increased public housing, Cobo advocated slum clearance, with the cleared land then being sold to private developers. He also called for better city services, such as fixing sewer problems, but he used rhetoric that emphasized tax-paying. He told an interviewer that "the people who pay taxes want better services for their money." An innocuous-sounding statement, but it had clear implications in a city where most property-owners were white and many blacks were renters.⁷⁹ Not all of Cobo's positions were racially coded. He was quite clear in his meaning when he warned about the threat of "Negro invasions" of all-white neighborhoods.⁸⁰

The voter turn-out for the September 13th primary to determine who would run in the November election was record-breaking. Cobo came out ahead, with 170,000 to Edward's 113,000. In the aftermath, Edwards lost no time in painting Cobo as working for well-off suburbanites and real estate developers in Grosse Pointe, Birmingham, and Bloomfield Hills rather than being motivated by the interests of city residents.⁸¹ The argument was helped by Cobo's plans to clear out slums and sell the land to private developers, with no accommodation given to city residents who lost their homes. Cobo, however, deflected Edwards' characterization by countering that such development would result in more tax revenue without a corresponding raise in the tax rate, thus raising more funds for schools, parks, and other city services. Cobo contended that those

⁷⁸ Thomas J. Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," *New Labor Forum*, no. 1 (1997): 22; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 83.

⁷⁹ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 166.

⁸⁰ Cobo quoted in Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," 22; Biles, "Expressways Before the Interstates," 851; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 82.

⁸¹ Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," 22; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 83.

displaced could be housed in apartments built first on the cleared land for purpose, although where they would live between the time of condemnation, demolition, sale, and the development of new housing was unclear.⁸² “Sure there have been some inconveniences in building our expressways and in our slum clearance programs,” Cobo later commented when criticized for demolishing African-American neighborhoods in order to build highway, “but in the long run more people benefit. That’s the price of progress.”⁸³

Just as the rhetoric and reality of tax-paying had racial implications, so did that of slum clearance. The majority of those targeted for slum clearance were black Detroiters. The more Edwards, however, defended public housing and sought endorsements from black Detroit community leaders – such as Dr. James J. McClendon, the president of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP – the more radical he appeared to moderate white Detroiters. The election results in November made this crystal-clear. Cobo won with 313,136 votes to Edwards’ 206,134. Cobo won every city precinct except for those in black neighborhoods.⁸⁴ He was true to his campaign promises and in the first weeks of his mayoralty he vetoed eight of twelve proposed public housing projects. The ones that escaped his axe were all in black inner-city neighborhoods. The eight he cancelled were all located in white, outlying, parts of the city. Later, Cobo moved to quash the city’s public housing program altogether, replacing its director, who had served under the two previous mayors, with a private developer. Detroit only built 8,155 units of public housing between 1937 and 1955, putting the nation’s fourth largest city behind Boston, Newark, Norfolk, St. Louis,

⁸² “4 Contenders Bandy Issues,” *Detroit News*, September 2, 1949. Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 166-168. Cobo did, as city treasurer, create a delinquent tax payment plan that prevented thousands of Detroiters from losing their homes via delinquent tax sales. See Dan Austin, “Meet the Five Worst Mayors in Detroit History,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 29, 2014, <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/2014/08/29/5-worst-mayors-in-detroit-history/14799541/>, accessed March 31, 2017; Melvin G. Holli, “Mayoring in Detroit, 1824-1985: Is Upward Mobility the ‘Impossible Dream?’,” *Michigan Historical Review* 13, no. 1 (1987): 10.

⁸³ *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1954, quoted in Biles, “Expressways Before the Interstates,” 851; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 48.

⁸⁴ Biles, “Expressways Before the Interstates,” 851.

and New Orleans in the construction of public housing.⁸⁵ This would have long-term consequence for the city's development and for race relations within the city.

The election showed that Edwards' UAW backing did not go far, despite his candidacy in a heavily unionized town. Being a Democrat did not ensure him victory in a heavily Democratic city. In an UAW campaign debriefing, one organizer related, "They told me that the union is OK in the shop but when they buy a home, they forget about it [...] as long as they think their property is going down, it is different." A labor campaign coordinator working on Detroit's west side reported that he thought "in these municipal elections we are dealing with people who have a middle class mentality. Even in our own UAW, the member is either buying a home, owns a home, or is going to buy one. I don't know whether we can ever make up for this difficulty."⁸⁶ The UAW's political endorsement was strangely limited in the UAW's city. The UAW's first foray into the city's mayoralty race, in 1937, had resulted in a two-to-one defeat, beginning a pattern that repeated for the next three decades.⁸⁷ Since Edwards became a Wayne county judge by appointment in 1954, won reelection in 1955, and won election to Michigan Supreme Court in 1956, it is clear that he did not have trouble winning public office as such. But he did lose the mayoralty of Detroit, reinforcing the sense that city politics were more closely tied to racial dynamics within the city than other public offices.⁸⁸

The 1949 mayoral race focused on themes that arose time and time again in 20th century Detroit. There was the interweaving of class and race, sometimes intersecting, and other times competing against one another. There was the importance of housing and housing policy, and who lived where, and who had the right to which parts of the city. There was the policing and

⁸⁵ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 85-86.

⁸⁶ Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," 23-24; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 84.

⁸⁷ Holli, "Mayoring in Detroit, 1824-1985: Is Upward Mobility the 'Impossible Dream?'," 8.

⁸⁸ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 168-170.

criminalization of certain Detroiters and certain parts of the city. There was the red scare and the threat of communism. These were pressing issues in the immediate postwar United States, and they were essential questions in Detroit's city politics. They shaped the decisions made by voters and elected officials, as well as those of bureaucrats and functionaries.

Thomas Sugrue has argued that white Detroiters' politics were due to an investment by the white working-class, previously a collection of various ethnicities, in protecting their recently earned "whiteness." Going further, Sugrue argued that the Reagan Democrat phenomenon should be placed in the historical context of "Cobo Democrats."⁸⁹ In a 1950 study of the union voting patterns in the 1949 Detroit mayoral election, Harold Sheppard used the anti-Semitism scale developed in Theodor Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* to correlate ethnic prejudice to voting preference. The study found that union members were not statistically different from non-union members in terms of prejudices, but that generation and ethnic affiliation made a difference. Sheppard hypothesized that younger workers, who tended to have lesser attachment to ethnic identity and who tended to be better educated, also tended to have fewer ethnic prejudices such as anti-Semitism. Younger workers also tended, however, to have less involvement in the union. Thus, older, less-educated, ethnic-identifying union members were more likely to vote Republican than younger, more educated, non-ethnic-identifying union members.⁹⁰

Consider the issue of housing, which is, fundamentally, about where an individual or a family is and is not allowed in a city. In a city with high homeownership, and where working people, due to union wages, increasingly could afford their own homes, contestations over housing was tied to the fact that houses were assets. Houses become imbued with the meanings and feelings that their inhabitants give them (as the location of family life or personal refuge, or as

⁸⁹ Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," 22, 24.

⁹⁰ Harold Sheppard, "The Union as a Political Influence," *Journal of Social Issues* 9, no. 1 (1953).

manifestations of one's social standing or respectability, to give but two examples), but they are also sources of profit and significant investments that were expected, at the very least, to maintain their value. In this context, people went to extremes to prevent the devaluing of their property, and fears of racial integration lowering property values further exacerbated feelings, either hidden or explicit, on race and class.

Chapter Outline

By the time High and Lewis wrote *Corporate Wasteland*, they could identify a forty-year decline in North American manufacturing. Using the framework of uneven development and industrial restructuring, however, one could address deindustrialization outside the framework of a decline in manufacturing overall. That is to say, a metropolitan area such as Detroit could be the site of deindustrialization, even as industrial production stayed roughly stable throughout the country. This is what the workers at Ford's River Rouge complex confronted in the a few years after the end of World War II. The first chapter of this dissertation sets the stage for the following chapters by examining an early case of what would become known as deindustrialization, at the time called decentralization, in metropolitan Detroit. The case study specifically looks at a Ford industrial center, the River Rouge facility, that began to decentralize only a few years after World War II. The UAW local representing the facility brought a lawsuit against Ford for breach of contract, which was thrown out of court for various reasons, including the red scare during the Korean War, the lack of support on the part of the UAW leadership, and the primacy of business prerogatives over community well-being. A vital dimension of the local union's fight against the movement of jobs and production away from their communities was the enlisting of those local communities, beyond the factory gates, in their campaign against industrial decentralization. Local

municipalities supported the local union, arguing that the future of their communities depended on the continuing presence of automobile production and employment.

The second chapter moves across town, and examines ethnic and racial segregation in metropolitan Detroit. The suburb of Grosse Pointe, immediately adjacent to the city, codified segregation into a methodical and orderly system, in which real estate agents agreed to a point-based system of client evaluation. Those who failed to receive the necessary number of points, the number of which varied according to one's ancestry, were refused housing in the suburb, regardless of ability to pay. This system was the subject of a state investigation in 1960. The architects and defenders of the arrangement took the stand to explain and justify their reasoning. In response to these revelations and in the context of the Civil Rights Movement broadly, some residents of Grosse Pointe joined together in order to promote integration and inclusion in their community. Thus, two separate visions of the future were at play in Grosse Pointe, one based on racialized fear and the other on racial acceptance.

These first two chapters lay the groundwork to understanding how class and race played into divisions in the metropolitan Detroit area. The third chapter switches viewpoints, and examines the findings of a prominent urban planner engaged by the local electric utility to project the future of greater Detroit in the year 2000. The planner, Constantinos Doxiadis, operated within the framework of *ekistics*, the scientific study of human settlements that he founded. Doxiadis' treatment of racism was ambivalent, wavering between arguing that it was a social problem, not an urban one, yet he also acknowledged that it deeply involved cities. While ambivalent on racial matters, Doxiadis explicitly considered class stratification to be natural and desirable and coupled

this view with a belief that industrial production would continue apace, perhaps even expand, in the Detroit region.⁹¹

The fourth chapter continues that examination of responses to the urban crisis, this time at the federal level. President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society, in its desire to create a society of shared prosperity and well-being, targeted the urban crisis via the Model Cities program. This chapter focuses on the legislative battle prior to the passing of the bill, originally proposed by UAW-president and Detroitier Walter Reuther. It looks at the reasoning behind objections to the legislation and arguments for it. Racial and class difference came to the fore, such as objections to school integration as exposing one's child, coded white and middle-class, to the "slum child."

While the fourth chapter focuses on the Model Cities program before its passage into law, the fifth chapter looks at the legislation itself and how members of the Johnson administration justified it and defended it. Just as the ways that members of Congress had attacked the legislation before its passage was indicative of the various ways Americans thought of and understood race and class in urban spaces, the ways that the administration thought and understood the same came across in their speeches, white papers, and internal memos. These revealed that members of the Johnson administration understood the best future for American cities like Detroit to be middle-class. They were wary of black political power even as they disavowed racial discrimination and segregation. For some, the future of urban areas was not even urban. Rather, suburbanization was the future and the ideal.

The first two chapters on racial and class divisions in metropolitan Detroit provide the foundation for the later chapters – the concrete lived experiences of city residents in the decades

⁹¹ Urban scholar Carl Abbott dates the shift from expected continual growth to fears of resource depletion to the early 1970s, with the 1972 Club of Rome (a group of economists and scientists) report *The Limits of Growth*, followed by the 1972-73 OPEC oil embargo. Carl Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures: Cities in Science Fiction and What We Might Learn From Them* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016), 155, 160.

following World War II. It is in that context that we must understand the attempts by planners and experts to address what they see as urban problems and ills. The fundamental and overarching focus of the study are the reality of class and race divisions in the metropolitan areas, and how these divisions are ignored or inadequately addressed by responses to the urban crisis. I seek to understand why people thought the way they did, and how they defended their thoughts on segregation, on integration, on work, on industrial decentralization, on urban planning, and on federal urban policy to others.⁹²

Taken all together, the study argues that the solutions proposed by Doxiadis and the LBJ administration, while understanding that racial segregation, discrimination, and unemployment were parts of the urban crisis, could not quite understand what they were. The flipside of this is that, in the case of Detroit, local city residents often had a much better sense of what was going on, although they did not have enough power to challenge the forces of industrial restructuring and systemic racism. Nonetheless, some residents imagined futures in which employment was assured, or in which a community could be integrated.⁹³ Despite their expansive and ambitious future imaginings, the Doxiadis project and the Model Cities team did not dream this big.

This study uses Detroit as a case study, but the themes it explores are not only applicable to Detroit, or even to cities in the United States. One can see them in the *banlieus* of Paris, rather notoriously in urbanist circles. Much academic work focuses on Paris, but it emerges in fictional work as well, such as the novel *Arab Jazz*. The same themes are present in cities such as Amsterdam and Stockholm, as demonstrated in Ian Buruma's *Murder in Amsterdam* or Ruben

⁹² I take inspiration here from Emily Rutherford's May 18, 2016 blogpost for the *Journal of the History of Ideas* on "Intellectual History from Below." See <https://jhiblog.org/2016/05/18/intellectual-history-from-below/> (accessed 9/4/18).

⁹³ On the other hand, there were also Detroiters who imagined a future predicated on racial segregation.

Östlund's 2017 film *The Square*.⁹⁴ While the dynamics change when demographic differences include religion and language, the impact of residential segregation and discrimination in employment remain similar. While the language of colonialism has been used to critique this dimension in the United States – by the Black Panthers and others influenced by revolutionary movements around the world in the 1960s and 1970s – the colonial aspect is clear cut in the cases of previous colonial powers in Europe and those they previously colonized, as Carl Nightingale's *Segregation* details.⁹⁵

Furthermore, other scholars have detailed the moment where this study ends. Historian Tracy Neumann, in *Remaking the Rust Belt*, details how postindustrial urban policy foresaw cities designed to cater to financial and commercial service sectors, “scrubbed free of evidence of manufacturing,” and as the sites of “culture and leisure activities that would appeal to tourists and suburbanites.”⁹⁶ These ideas did not come out of nowhere. They were the result of international networks of urban planners and policy creators, as described by Christopher Klemek and Daniel T. Rodgers.⁹⁷ This study adds to these works, tracing the responses to industrial restructuring in the United States during a slightly earlier timeframe. A significant difference is that while postindustrial ideas in the 1980s were, as Neumann describes it, “closely linked to the ethos of privatization and devolution that permeated urban developments in North Atlantic nations in the last quarter of the twentieth century,” the individuals and organizations examined in this study are by far liberal in orientation. This is the case, certainly, with the Johnson administration and those

⁹⁴ Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: Liberal Europe, Islam and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2007).

⁹⁵ Carl H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁹⁶ Tracy Neumann, *Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

⁹⁷ Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

who worked on the Great Society, which was explicitly seen as a descendant of FDR's New Deal. Even someone with strong ties to the business community such as Constantinos Doxiadis, was generally liberal in approach, as well. They accepted the positive role of states in private housing markets and public sector services. While Doxiadis actively encouraged the involvement of business and private sector community members in finding solutions to urban problems, he did not have any qualms about enlisting the aid of government and public funds as well. Yet, as the last chapter of this study chronicles, one of the main architects of the Model Cities program envisioned a city that was designed to middle-class tastes and oriented around attracting suburbanites back to the city.

CHAPTER 2 “GHOST TOWNS IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE”: INDUSTRIAL DECENTRALIZATION AND WORKING-CLASS ORGANIZATIONS IN SUBURBAN DETROIT IN THE 1950S

We shall solve the problem of cities by leaving the city.
Henry Ford⁹⁸

A dominating physical presence up to the present day, the Ford River Rouge complex at its peak was a sight to behold. The expansive complex located in Dearborn, a suburb adjacent to Detroit, was, according to a *Vanity Fair* cover story in February, 1928, “the most significant public monument in America.” The Rouge plant “[threw] its shadow across the land more widely and more intimately than the United States Senate, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Statue of Liberty” The fashion and popular culture publication dubbed the industrial mammoth “America’s Mecca,” given that it embodied the “cardinal virtues” of size, quantity, and speed.⁹⁹ Historian and Walter Reuther biographer Nelson Lichtenstein described the Ford River Rouge plant as the realization of Henry Ford’s “dream of continuous, integrated manufacture” and an “industrial marvel, the largest concentration of machinery and labor anywhere in the world.”¹⁰⁰ Even today, the complex is clearly visible from the sky and in aerial photographs of metropolitan Detroit, rivaling the scale of the downtown business district.

From its beginning, the Rouge plant was a monument to American industry. Designed to be able to construct an entire automobile on site from raw materials, the complex was made up of over twenty-three buildings packed into a square mile. These ranged from a power station to mills and foundries to assembly plants. In a fictionalized account of a new worker approaching the

⁹⁸ Mark I. Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 381.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 17.

complex for the first time, novelist and native Detroiter Jeffrey Eugenides described, “the main building, a fortress of dark brick, [which] was seven stories high, the smokestacks seventeen It was like a grove of trees, as if the Rouge’s eight main smokestacks had sown seeds to the wind, and now ten or twenty or fifty smaller trees were sprouting up in the infertile soil around the plant.”¹⁰¹ The Rouge plant was so complex that it was and is often compared to the city in its own right. Allan Nevins, a biographer of Henry Ford, once wrote that the Rouge “was an industrial city, immense, concentrated, packed with power.”¹⁰² In a telling turn of phrase, The Henry Ford’s website on the history of the complex describes the Rouge in the 1930s as “a city without residents.” Its workforce in 1929 was around 100,000.¹⁰³

It was that workforce, the disregarded residents of an immense industrial city, that contributed to the Rouge’s uniqueness and importance. The industrial complex could not run if not for its workforce, but the significance of the Rouge workforce went beyond that fundamental fact. Labor relations in the automobile industry were inherently national, if not global, in scope. This was not because the union locals involved were engaged necessarily in large-scale battles, but because of the degree and scope of industrial power located in Detroit. When the president of General Motors, Charles Wilson, stated during his 1953 Senate confirmation hearings to become Eisenhower’s Secretary of Defense that “what was good for the country was good for GM and vice versa,” he was not indulging in overblown rhetoric. During World War II, GM accounted for a full 10% of all war materials manufactured from metal in the United States. The course of the auto industry was of national importance, and consequently so were the labor relations within the auto

¹⁰¹ Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex* (New York City: Picador, 2002), 94-95.

¹⁰² Quoted in Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 17.

¹⁰³ “City without residents” at The Henry Ford, “History & Timeline,” <https://www.thehenryford.org/visit/ford-rouge-factory-tour/history-and-timeline>, accessed August 21, 2016. 1929 workforce number from The Henry Ford, “Ford Rouge Timeline,” <https://www.thehenryford.org/visit/ford-rouge-factory-tour/history-and-timeline/timeline>, accessed August 21, 2016. See description of the River Rouge in Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*, 49; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 17.

industry. Strikes and contract negotiations were national news. Even the most parochial union grievance could, under the right circumstances, become a fight with far extending consequences.¹⁰⁴

Of the industrial might located in Detroit, the Ford River Rouge complex made up a significant component. Consequently, the UAW local representing the Rouge workforce, Local 600, was a titan among UAW locals. It was the largest local union in the world. In the late 1940s, it had more members than twenty-five of the thirty-six national unions in the CIO.¹⁰⁵ A good deal of the local's strength came from the nature of the River Rouge complex itself: Local 600 represented a large number of auto workers. In Detroit, workers at the Rouge made up 3.7% of the city's total workforce, with an estimated 6.5% of Detroit families with employment ties to the complex.¹⁰⁶ Due to the local's large membership, and the diverse manufacturing process present at the River Rouge complex, Local 600 wielded an immense influence. Combined with that size and influence was a clear left-leaning bent in the Local's political orientation. Local 600 was "a rank-and-file kind of local," Ernest Goodman, the labor lawyer who represented the local, remembered, "None like it anywhere in the country I don't think." "It was pretty anarchic in their thinking at least," he said of the local's politics, "It was wonderful democracy-in-action in a local union."¹⁰⁷

But that anarchic, democracy-in-action spirit confronted a changing power dynamic in the postwar economy. In 1950 American industry was changing rapidly, with companies investing in automation, speeding up production rates, and moving their factories away from centralized industrial cities. In terms of bottom-lines, these changes were beneficial. For workers in centralized

¹⁰⁴ 10% statistic from Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 159.

¹⁰⁵ Steve Babson, Dave Elsila, and Dave Riddle, *The Color of Law: Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 207.

¹⁰⁶ Caleb Southworth and Judith Stepan-Norris, "The Geography of Class in an Industrial American City: Connections between Workplace and Neighborhood Politics," *Social Problems* 50, no. 3 (2003).

¹⁰⁷ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 207-208.

industrial cities, however, these changes had profoundly negative effects on their employment as well as for the communities they inhabited. The residents of metropolitan Detroit were aware of the potential consequences of these policies and choices, including offering organized resistance to them. In the immediate post-WWII period, the local UAW union at the Rouge began raising the alarm about what they called decentralization, a deliberate corporate policy of moving jobs and production away from the company's manufacturing center.

Between 1950 and 1953, the leadership of Local 600 ran a campaign against decentralization after they recorded significant job loss at the Rouge complex.¹⁰⁸ Ford's leadership reassured the local's leadership that decentralization of production was not an issue. Unsurprisingly, local members felt angry and betrayed when they discovered the company moving machinery out of the complex in the middle of the night. Their fears were confirmed. Jobs originally held at the Rouge were going to contractors, or to Ford plants outside of Detroit, such as in Buffalo and Cleveland.¹⁰⁹

Moving to stop the flow of jobs away from the Rouge complex, Local 600 filed an injunction against Ford in early 1952. It argued that Ford was committing a breach of contract, as the company and the UAW had recently signed a historic five-year contract. The union, Local 600 argued, would never had signed the contract if they had known their jobs would be relocated. Dramatically, at the same time as their claim against Ford was being heard in court, testimony regarding Communist penetration and influence of Local 600 was being heard by the House Committee on Un-American Activities in a courtroom down the hall.¹¹⁰ A mix of reasons,

¹⁰⁸ Executive Board July 17, 1951 and Executive Board July 24, 1951, UAW Local 600 Collection, Box 3, Folder 1, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. (Hereafter Local 600.)

¹⁰⁹ Executive Board, August 7, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600; Executive Board, August 21, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600; Executive Board, August 28, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

¹¹⁰ Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 81-82; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 318; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 162; Babson, Elsil, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 208.

including different strategic positions between the UAW local and its parent organization, as well as Cold War anti-communism, led a decision against the local's lawsuit. The HUAC hearings proved to be embarrassing, and Walter Reuther and the International UAW stripped the local's leadership from office and placed the local under receivership.

While Local 600 was unsuccessful in court, they were successful at a campaign aimed at raising support within local communities and municipalities surrounding the Ford River Rouge complex. Industrial decentralization, the union leaders argued, would take away the employment that supported working-class Detroit, which in turn threatened the foundation of the entire community. Their campaign relied on a fundamental fact for working-class communities: Without employment, communities disappear. The rhetoric that emerged from Local 600's campaign often evoked the image of ghost towns. But while the original ghost towns were mining towns whose existence dwindled with the resources they extracted, communities predicated on production operated under a different economic logic.¹¹¹

Industrial ghost towns entailed the loss of production. Such a loss could be caused by a variety of factors: company strategy, lack of materials, or a loss of consumer demand, for instance. That local politicians supported this argument suggests that these arguments resonated beyond the union, and that Local 600 was not merely a voice in the wilderness. This was not merely a case involving industrial workers concerned with their individual jobs and incomes. Community members outside the factory gates also saw their futures and communities bound together with the continuing presence of industrial work, and publicly asked for the Ford Motor Company to

¹¹¹ The Oxford English Dictionary cites the first use of *ghost town* in 1931, in G. F. Willison's *Here they dug Gold*: "Today all lie ghost towns smelling of the long processes of ruin and decay."

consider the well-being of the communities surrounding their factories when making corporate decisions.¹¹²

In response, the Ford company at first argued that decentralization was due to matters of national security. Production was down due to wartime demands on steel and, further, was in compliance to the national defense plan in place at the beginning of the Korean War in late June, 1950. The local union came to the conclusion, however, that decentralization was a deliberate policy choice by the company, independent of external concerns.¹¹³ The Korean War provided a convenient, if puzzling, cover for industrial restructuring. The outbreak of war created another boom in demand for labor, and Detroit saw a full-employment economy again.¹¹⁴ There was not only federal spending at play. Americans bought eight million cars before cutbacks in the winter of 1951, stemming from the cyclical nature of automotive employment, saw unemployment in Detroit rise once more to 127,000. Defense spending flowed into Detroit the following year, adding 221,000 more jobs. The spoils of war were short-lived. By the end of 1958, there were only 30,000 defense-related jobs in the state of Michigan.¹¹⁵ In a sense, the moment of well-paying blue-collar industrial jobs in Detroit was supported by the Second World War and sustained by the Korean War, a forty-to-fifty year period between the unionization of the auto industry in the late 1930s

¹¹² Cf. Kevin Boyle's analysis, which called Local 600's campaign "essentially conservative" for "accepting labor's subordinate position" and for "simply" asking for "a bigger share of the wartime spoils." Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 77.

¹¹³ Percy Llewellyn, referenced above, argued this was clearly the case as the company began this policy well before the United States went to war. See, for instance, Executive Board Meeting, September 4, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600: "[Michigan] Representative Lesinski had referred to the [Truman] administration's program on decentralization because of the war effort, but when Brother Llewellyn had pointed out to him that various Ford plants had been set up prior to the defense program and that the company was building new plants for each defense job obtained, Lesinki promised to check with various agencies and contact various people to work on a national level." See Margaret O'Mara, "Uncovering the City in the Suburb: Cold War Politics, Scientific Elites, and High-Tech Spaces" in Kevin Michael Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 57-79, for how national defense policy favored decentralization, albeit in a different sector. See also O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley*.

¹¹⁴ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 138.

and the significant decline of industrial employment in the 1970s and 1980s. This relationship with national defense was not unremarked in the 1950s, such as when UAW lobbyist Paul Sifton warned in 1951 that “under the imperatives of the world conflict, we drift into a military-industrial receivership.”¹¹⁶

The economic stress on Detroit’s working classes were not solely within their places of employment. As the next chapter will explore in further detail, the dynamics of segregation existed throughout Detroit and its suburbs, and affected industry. As decentralization (or what we have come to call deindustrialization) progressed, the economic pressures of racism increased. Further, as white Detroiters were able to follow industrial jobs out of Detroit while black Detroiters were geographically constrained, due to segregation in housing, so did the brunt of deindustrialization come to rest on the African American community. This burden grew and contributed to tensions undergirding the 1967 riot and beyond.¹¹⁷

In fact, Dearborn, the site of the Ford River Rouge complex, was openly segregationist. In 1950, its population was 94, 994.¹¹⁸ Its mayor from 1941 until his retirement in 1978, Orville Hubbard, won eighteen elections. He had declared himself “for segregation 100 percent” in a 1956 interview.¹¹⁹ In 1944, he opposed a Federal Public Housing Authority (FPHA) proposal for public housing for black workers near the Rouge complex. The draft resolution Hubbard gave to the Dearborn City Council against the proposal called for the protection of property values and called

¹¹⁶ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 78, 284, fn 45.

¹¹⁷ See, for instance, the critiques of “niggermation” and “plant-tations” forward by the Revolutionary Union Movement (RUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*, 85-106. See also Michael Hamlin, *A Black Revolutionary's Life in Labor: Black Workers Power in Detroit* (Detroit: Against the Tide Books, 2012), 32, 132-139; Thompson, *Whose Detroit?*, 105-127; Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 196-198; Jeremy Milloy, *Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Violence at Work in the North American Auto Industry, 1960-80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

¹¹⁸ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 141.

¹¹⁹ George Galster, *Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respect in the Motor City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 199.

the proposed housing “an invasion.”¹²⁰ Although UAW Local 600 and the NAACP campaigned for the housing project, Hubbard insisted that housing black workers was “Detroit’s problem.” “When you remove garbage from your backyard,” he explained, “you don’t dump it in your neighbor’s.”¹²¹ When the FPHA moved the project to neighboring Ecorse Township, Hubbard called it a “sneak move” on the part of the “goddamned nigger-loving guys” of the agency. The Ford Motor Company joined with the Dearborn City Council and the board of Ecorse Township to sue the FPHA to prevent construction.¹²²

In 1948, the John Hancock Life Insurance Company attempted to build private rental housing on the Ford Motor Company’s property. Orville Hubbard attacked the project as an opening for black Detroiters, who were confined to segregated and overcrowded Detroit neighborhoods like Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, to move to Dearborn. He accused the insurance and automobile company of conspiring against Dearborn. City employees handed out leaflets reading, “Keep Negroes Out of Dearborn! Protect Your Home and Mine! . . . With none of the 15,000 Ford Rouge Negro workers living in Dearborn, don’t be ‘lulled into a false sense of security’.”¹²³

Nor were black Americans the only ones targeted. In the 1950s, Dearborn’s Arab community was beginning to grow in a neighborhood east of the Rouge complex called the South End. Calling them “white niggers,” Mayor Hubbard sought to deny permits to homeowners in the area. He leaned on the Federal Housing Administration to restrict mortgage insurance for the neighborhood.¹²⁴ The city then bought up properties with the stated goal of converting the area

¹²⁰ Galster, *Driving Detroit*, 142-143.

¹²¹ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 76.

¹²² Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 76-77.

¹²³ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 141-142.

¹²⁴ Unfortunately, this was not a unique tactic. See Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017).

into industrial use. The case dragged year upon year through the court system, with no resolution until decades after the fact: a class-action lawsuit by the South End Community Council was awarded in their favor in 1973. Only then was the destruction of the community ceased, and the 350 displaced homeowners allowed to sue the city of Dearborn. Nonetheless, Mayor Hubbard had achieved his goal. In 1970, Dearborn had remained all-white.¹²⁵

This dynamic is all the more striking because the River Rouge plant had the largest African American labor force in any Detroit auto factory. As a consequence, Local 600 had the largest African American membership of any UAW local. While one cannot argue that Local 600 voiced the views of Detroit's black working class, its history contains the possibility of speaking to more than just the experience of the city's white working class. Indeed, historian Beth Bates calls Henry Ford's policy of hiring African American workers his third revolutionary practice in automobile production, following the assembly line and the five-dollar day.¹²⁶ Ford's policy was not disinterested, as he hoped that black workers loyal to him would form a bulwark against unionization. Ford's plan backfired, however, during the 1941 UAW drive, during which he hired black workers *en masse*, driving the number of black Ford workers to an all-time high of 14,000-16,000 by the end of March. As Bates argues, the turning of black workers away from allegiance to Ford and to the UAW was not due to the union in and of itself. One African American union organizer, David Moore, recalled that the UAW leadership acted "as though they just did not care about black workers at the Rouge." Black workers' embrace of unionization was rather a decision to work for a better future by building on the opportunities of working for Ford.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Galster, *Driving Detroit*, 178.

¹²⁶ Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*, 50.

¹²⁷ Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*, 245-246.

But, as segregation in Dearborn shows, in the words of labor journalist B. J. Widick, writing in 1972, “the sad fact is that union solidarity never went beyond the plant in Dearborn.”¹²⁸ This analysis holds true for housing, but belies a more nuanced, if ambivalent, history of cross-racial working-class solidarity. One such example involves the American pastime of baseball, and its close cousin, softball. In late April, 1943, the Local 600 newsletter, *Ford Facts*, ran an article – “CIO Demands City Stops Racial Discrimination in Use of Ball Fields” – in which the anonymous author related how the Greater Detroit and Wayne County Industrial Union Council officially sent a protest to Mayor Jeffries over the “barring of Detroit’s Negro citizens from most of the public baseball diamonds” in the city. The Detroit Baseball Federation, the article noted, “actively practices racial discrimination,” and affirmed the CIO position that “no citizens shall be discriminated against because of color or creed.” Right above the article, with big black letters inviting the reader to “PLAY BALL!,” Local 600 announced that they “had started forming its own ball league.”

In the same issue, to drive their point home, *Ford Facts* ran picture of the Briggs Local 212 UAW-CIO softball champions of the 1939 Inter-Union UAW Softball League. In 1940, the photo caption related, Briggs Local 212’s hardball team had refused to play in the Detroit Baseball Federation due to its discriminatory policy against black players. The Briggs Local was “actively working . . . to promote equal athletic opportunities for all Negro and white workers.” The CIO, the caption asserted, “is opposed not only to segregation in the shop but also to segregation in all other activities and pursuits engaged in by Negro and white workers.”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 87. See also Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

¹²⁹ *Ford Facts*, Wed. April 23, 1942, published by Ford Dept., UAW-CIO, 9016 Michigan, Detroit, No. 16, p. 4 and p. 3, author’s possession.

Photo captions are one thing, but creating popular, integrated, ball leagues in a matter of weeks is another. On May 10, *Ford Facts* ran a picture of Michael F. Widman, the director of the Ford CIO drive, throwing the first pitch of the Local 600 softball league (“of Negro and white players”), and a nearby photo caption of a game noted “the fast action on the field Sunday.” A few pages later, a headline announced, “Negro Players Star in Ford Local Baseball League,” recounting how, on the previous Sunday (May 4th), the Local 600 baseball series had opened, with “many Negro lads” who were “active as players and managers.” “All teams,” the article defiantly explained, “are open to players regardless of race, creed, or color.” Further, the article added that “most teams are mixed, Negro and white.”¹³⁰

Crucially, union members did not seem to mind. “The competition became keen and hot,” players were in “flashy outfits,” but the lack of racial discrimination did not dampen the mood. In fact, the opposite occurred: despite originally planning for twenty-five teams, over a hundred had been formed since Local 600 had announced the league, “with more applications coming in every day,” and more equipment already needing to be ordered. Nor could Local 600 pass by an opportunity to take a dig at major league baseball, which would remain segregated until opening day, April 15, 1947, when Jackie Robinson debuted with the Brooklyn Dodgers. “Big league moguls,” the newsletters scoffed, “have for some time stated that the fans are not in sympathy with Negro and White playing on the same team. But some Ford Local teams, not only have Negro and White on the same team, but have a Negro Manager.” These included Frank Milliams, from the heat treatment department (and “the former manager of the famous West Side Black Hawks”), and Henry “Skippy” Bulkey, from the Rolling Mills. The league was so popular that the union was

¹³⁰ *Ford Facts*, Sat. May 10, 1941, No. 19, p. 2 and 4.

in negotiations to secure playing fields at night, in addition to already having games going mornings, evenings, and on Sundays.¹³¹

The next week, *Ford Facts* boasted of the continuing popularity of the integrated league, describing how “Baseball Draws Huge Crowds To Play and Watch.” Even more teams had been formed, reaching 125, and forcing the creation of multiple leagues to accommodate them all. *Ford Facts* ran the scores of the games, with team names listed like the Motor Building Tomcats, the Local Boys 751, the Foundry Cardinals, the Foundry Champs, and the Motor Building Heart Breakers. Nor were players encouraged to keep it on the field: *Ford Facts* encouraged members to wear their uniforms to a labor demonstration featuring Philip Murray in Cadillac Square, in downtown Detroit, the following Monday.¹³²

This brief history of working-class recreation contains much: how working-class culture existed outside the world of work, despite being dependent on it. How racial discrimination could be palpable in one arena, such as housing, and irrelevant in another, such as a baseball game. How something as mundane as an amateur sports game could carry large political weight on its shoulders. How public spaces, such as baseball diamonds, were not open to all Detroiters equally. How class, just as much as race, was visibly inscribed in the geography of metropolitan Detroit.¹³³

The neighborhoods encircling the Rouge and other factories were the homes of the workers whose labor filled spaces of production.¹³⁴ The loss of large-scale industrial production, and the

¹³¹ *Ford Facts*, Sat. May 10, 1941, No. 19, p. 4. The original twenty-five teams plan comes from *Ford Facts*, Sat. May 17, 1941, No. 21, p. 2.

¹³² *Ford Facts*, Sat. May 17, 1941, No. 21, p. 2, p. 1.

¹³³ For one example of how a labor historian has examined how class shaped where people lived, in early twentieth-century Denver, see Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 68-69.

¹³⁴ Southworth and Stepan-Norris, "The Geography of Class in an Industrial American City: Connections between Workplace and Neighborhood Politics."

economic and social system of Fordism curtailed communities, physically and socially.¹³⁵ In addition to the geography of socioeconomic class, there is the geography of deindustrialization: where jobs were, where they went, and which parts of the city were affected. City residents organized against decentralization at the Rouge, recognizing a threat to their homes, families, communities, and ways of living, and that threat eventually resulted in diminishing and damaging the surrounding communities.

Local 600's Campaign Against Decentralization

By 1950, the internal politics of UAW Local 600 were, as historian Nelson Lichtenstein phrased it, “an entire world of ethnic and ideological complexity.”¹³⁶ A sample of the diversity of positions present in the local union came across during the 1950 election for the local's presidency, won by thirty-four year old Carl Stellato. He had started out working as a machine-setter in the River Rouge complex when he was eighteen years old and with a eighth-grade formal education, followed by a few years of working on the International UAW's staff before winning the local's presidency. Stellato and his slate were seen as being pro-Reuther, which was not necessarily a positive comment in the Rouge plant.

One candidate, Fred Soretti, boasted that he “has never been a supporter of Walter Reuther” and “has not made a deal with Reuther” as the top two reasons to vote for him, before assuring voters that “the fight will continue for Democracy and against Dictatorship from the top in UAW.”¹³⁷ The Stellato slate released a flier defending themselves against another faction in the

¹³⁵ E.P. Thompson, “There is no such thing as economic growth which is not, at the same time, growth or change of a culture,” in “Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past and Present* 38: 56-97; “. . . the Fordist regime of accumulation was based in the final analysis on the idea of mass production, mass consumption, and a Keynesian system of state regulation.” W. F. Lever, “The Post-Fordist City,” in Paddison, ed. *Handbook of Urban Studies*.

¹³⁶ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 314.

¹³⁷ “Boatin Supports Soretti,” undated, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, UAW Local Unions, 1946-1970, Subseries B: Local Union Correspondence, 1946-1970, UAW President's Office: Walter P. Reuther Records, Walter P. Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. (Hereafter WPR.)

plant, “the Thompson Group,” that accused them of being “stooges for the International Union, [and] that the UAW-CIO, to which we all belong, is a sinister organization which is trying to destroy our Local Union.” Stellato and his group, the flier continued, would “fight any individual or group” that tried to separate Local 600 from the UAW, before finishing with a call against company unionism, speed-ups, job movement, and “to restore militant union leadership in Local 600.”¹³⁸ The campaign manager for the Progressive Unity Slate, Ed Lock, attacked candidate Paul Kay for following “the Reuther role of confusing, dividing and disrupting,” reminding voters that “you all know that the undemocratic actions of the Administrators HAVE NOT brought greater benefits for Ford workers.”¹³⁹ Separate from the election, the officers and committee members of the Gear and Axle Building in Local 600 sent Walter Reuther an letter asking him if “the walls of Solidarity House [are] so sound proof, or are you so far removed from actual conditions in the shop that you do not hear the angry resentment of Ford workers?”¹⁴⁰

Thus, it is unsurprising that Stellato and his team responded, following their successful campaign, that “We are independents. We are independent of Reuther. We are independent of the Communist Party.” Rather, they identified as “free Americans and militant Unionists.”¹⁴¹ Stellato began his presidency by removing left-wing and anti-Reuther union officials from office, via a UAW constitutional clause prohibiting members of the Communist Party from holding office, a difficult process given Local 600’s history and culture. Throughout the 1940s, the local union had consistently elected left-leaning leaders with a preference for direct action on the shop floor. In

¹³⁸ “Unionism or Company-Unionism? – Who Are the Real Stooges?” Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹³⁹ “Measure Them Up: Facts About the Coming Plastics Building Elections by Ed. Lock campaign manager Progressive Unity Slate - - Geo. Pluhar for President,” Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁴⁰ Walter Reuther to Officers and Committeemen of Gear and Axle Building Local 600, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁴¹ Carl Stellato, Pat Rice, William R. Hood, W.G. Grant, “We Are Independents,” Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

May of 1949, for one example, the Rouge workers shut down the entire complex for twenty-four days to protest the increased speed of production. Nor did Stellato's attempt to change the local union's direction endure. Local 600 demonstrated its stubbornly independent streak by reelecting the purged leadership in that fall's elections.

A complicating factor to the politics of Local 600, especially in relation to the left-wing, was its large African American membership, which overlapped with but was not directly tied to the significant Communist Party presence in the local. The Communist Party had been a fixture of politics at River Rouge since at least the 1920s, thanks to antifascist workers of Polish, German, and Italian backgrounds. The black and Communist Party membership had a synergistic relationship, as the Communist Party was known as one of the few white-majority organizations that openly supported racial equality as well as economic equality. In particular, some parts of the black community grew more receptive to the Communist Party following the 1931 defense of the Scottsboro Boys, nine young men falsely accused of and convicted for raping two white women on a train between Chattanooga and Scottsboro, AZ, by the International Labor Defense (ILD – the legal branch of the Communist Party) while the NAACP avoided the case. To be sure, not all black workers were members of the Communist Party or fellow travelers, but many of the Communist Party members at River Rouge were black. By the middle of the 1940s, half of the Communist Party members at the plant were African American.¹⁴²

In the 1940s, the UAW's African American membership had become a stronghold of union activism. Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein noted that the Rouge in the 1940s

¹⁴² Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 29, 76-77, 116; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 54. For more on the Scottsboro case, see James A. Miller, Susan D. Pennybacker, and Eve Rosenhaft, "Mother Ada Wright and the International Campaign to Free the Scottsboro Boys, 1931-1934," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 2 (2001). For the case's reception in Detroit, see Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*, 175-179.

“overshadowed all other Detroit area production facilities as a center of black political power.”¹⁴³ Black unionists took aim at racism and discrimination in the workplace, the union, and in society and politics. Local 600 became a center of this anti-racist activism. Well-known activists, like Horace Sheffield and Shelton Tappes, who had backed Reuther since the organization of the Rouge in 1941, attained high positions within the UAW. They, along with other members, like Willoughby Abner, formed the Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC), a black caucus within the UAW, to open a position on the union’s International Executive Board (IEB) to an African American member. At the 1955 UAW Convention, delegates from Local 600 called for a nomination of an African American member to serve as a vice-president, but the resolution was not carried.¹⁴⁴

Yet, while a significant number of rank-and-file Local 600 members supported the CP, purges of the left-wing leadership that had led the local through the 1940s and into the 1950s followed wider trends in the United States and coincided with other purges in the UAW. Eleven unions, with a combined membership of around 900,000 – about a fifth of the CIO’s membership – were forced out of the CIO in 1949 because of their ties to the Communist Party.¹⁴⁵ Contemporary events contributed to the deteriorating political climate in the United States. In 1949, the victory of Communist forces in China, the successful testing of atomic weapons by the USSR, and the revelation of allegedly Soviet spy rings in the United States fed fears of Communist expansion and led to great anticommunist sentiments and politics. Then, in 1950, North Korea

¹⁴³ Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (1988): 794.

¹⁴⁴ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 29, 116, 129-130. As Kevin Boyle notes, the dynamic of African American union activism in the North, where black members serve in high-ranking positions, is different from that in the Jim Crow South, where black members were forced to stay in low positions.

¹⁴⁵ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*; Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 64, 70, 77; Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America: A History*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966), 367-368.

invaded South. The environment was ripe for the rise of Senator Joe McCarthy, whose inquisitions in the nation's capital, and the hysteria is fueled, led prominent political columnist Joe Alsop to remember later that "The nation had simply taken leave of all sense of proportion."¹⁴⁶

As far as Carl Stellato was concerned, despite working with the left-leaning union officers after their reelection, communism entailed "disloyalty and unpatriotism to the Government [and] Constitution of the United States," and he deemed it a danger to legitimate unionism.¹⁴⁷ However, as Stellato moved away from the pro-Reuther orbit, and accepted a working relationship with the left-leaning forces within the local, he also would be swept up in the anti-communist hysteria spreading across the country.¹⁴⁸

In the summer of 1950, a few weeks before the Korean War began, UAW president Walter Reuther successfully negotiated a five-year contract with General Motors that was shortly emulated by Ford and Chrysler as well. The five-year contract, nicknamed by *Fortune* the "Treaty of Detroit," stipulated a cost of living allowance, a company-funded pension plan, and wage increases tied to increased production.¹⁴⁹ While such a contract provided stability and the means to plan further into the future for both the UAW and Ford, Local 600 was more concerned with the increased laying off of workers and the speeding up of the assembly line at the Rouge complex. In response to widespread work shortage at the Rouge, Stellato and other Local 600 leaders argued that workers should not be called to work overtime as long as others were laid off. In addition, Local 600 noted that these were not issues that only affected automobile workers at the Rouge. Their proposed solution was a thirty-hour work week for forty hours pay, a challenge to Ford

¹⁴⁶ Gregg Herken, *The Georgetown Set: Friends and Rivals in Cold War Washington* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 194.

¹⁴⁷ Stellato quote from "Statement of Policy: Ford Local 600 UAW-CIO," March 10, 1952, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁴⁸ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 77.

¹⁴⁹ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 75; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 277, 280, 315.

management as well as to the UAW and Reuther's recent negotiating victory.¹⁵⁰ On a deeper level, Local 600 radically suggested disconnecting worker pay from the amount of labor he or she performed. Nonetheless, the actions open to Local 600 were constricted by the contract, including the ability of workers to respond directly to conditions on the shop floor. Stellato thus described the five-year contract as amounting to "entrapment."¹⁵¹

Rank and file campaigns, furthermore, ran counter to Walter Reuther's vision for the direction of the UAW. Reuther had been raised in a Socialist household and maintained a belief in the need for a democratically-controlled economy.¹⁵² He saw the UAW as more than a trade union. Instead, Reuther imagined the union as an organization that provided the means to affect broad social and economic change. To achieve these strategic ends, Reuther set about centralizing the UAW and consolidating a hierarchical, top-down, flow of power in the union once he was elected president in 1946. There were benefits to the union in doing so. The UAW's history had included divisions and antagonism between skilled and unskilled workers, native-born Americans, old Northwestern European immigrants, and new Southern and Eastern European immigrants, white workers and black workers, and rural migrants and the city-bred. There were political divisions between communists, socialists, Trotskyists, Catholic unionists, and radical trade-unionists.¹⁵³ Reuther believed centralization of power would limit such conflicts and allow the UAW to pursue his broader ends.

The political environment in the postwar United States, with its burgeoning "byzantine world of federal regulations," favored centralized union bureaucracy over rank-and-file campaigns

¹⁵⁰ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 314. Executive Board September 25, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600; Stellato, Rice, Hood, Grant, "We Are Independents"; Stellato to HUAC, March 10, 1952, "Statement of Policy: Ford Local 600 UAW-CIO," Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁵¹ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 208.

¹⁵² Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 18-22.

¹⁵³ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 13-14.

and shop floor militancy.¹⁵⁴ While president, Reuther moved to further consolidate his power. Capitalizing on the pervasive anti-communism of the post-war period, he purged the UAW of communist officials, clearing the way for the union to comply with 1947's Taft-Hartley Act while removing the main critics of Reuther and supporters of shop-floor democracy.¹⁵⁵ The left-leaning leadership of Local 600 was a fly in his ointment, and Local 600 leaders often spoke out against Reuther's desire to pursue a "militant unionism pursued through a centralized union management."¹⁵⁶ The basis of the long-term contract was the promise of stability. For the employer, this entailed the ability of the UAW to provide a stable labor force. The trade-off for Reuther and the UAW for stability for their membership was that the union essentially promised to provide labor management.¹⁵⁷ But it was economic stability, nonetheless, and it was probably even more important to Reuther and the UAW given that they had gone full strength for an economic bill in 1949 that would provide for "publicly planned economic abundance" under the guidance of a tripartite government-management-labor board only to see it roundly defeated after President Truman, facing considerably pressure from the business community, ordered White House officials to oppose the bill.¹⁵⁸

This context explains why, when Local 600's executive board began their campaign against decentralization in 1950, they were met with a chilly response by Reuther and his team. "Local 600 goes on record," the local resolved on February 10 of that year, "requesting the International

¹⁵⁴ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 17.

¹⁵⁵ The Taft-Hartley Act required, among other provisions, that union officials sign annual anti-Communist affidavits. Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 32, 28-29; Dulles, *Labor in America*, 355-361, 364-369; Martin Halpern, "Taft-Hartley and the Defeat of the Progressive Alternative in the United Auto Workers," *Labor History* 27, no. 2 (1986). Also note Reuther's close ties to the Socialist and Communist wings of the early UAW, and his abrupt about-face in the spring of 1938 following what Reuther saw to be a Communist-planned "double-cross" during a Michigan CIO convention, detailed in Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 124-125.

¹⁵⁶ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 30.

¹⁵⁷ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 290, 295-296.

¹⁵⁸ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 65.

Union to continue to make a thorough investigation” of reports of a company *policy* of decentralization. The resolution ended by confirming the union’s right to strike if such a policy existed. The summer of that year, the local union created a committee on decentralization, which pressed to meet with Henry Ford II to discuss the realities and consequences of a policy of decentralization.¹⁵⁹

When Carl Stellato wrote letters to Reuther asking him to arrange a meeting with Henry Ford II, then president of the Ford Motor Company, Ford himself consistently redirected Stellato’s requests to the company’s Director of Personnel, John Bugas, as well as “numerous lesser officials”.¹⁶⁰ Stellato was stymied as neither the Ford Company nor the UAW seemed to recognize that “the decentralization problem” was, in fact, a problem. As he wrote Reuther, Stellato considered it a vital question, as it “indicates that thousands of our members may be displaced by this new Ford Motor Company plan.” Nor was he only concerned with union members. Stellator wrote to Henry Ford II, “You, I am sure, are thoroughly aware of the possible effect on our members – your employees – and the communities surrounding the Rouge Plant of removing twenty or thirty thousand jobs from this area.” “Certainly,” Stellato added, “you must agree with me that there is no issue more important to the worker and the community than jobs.”¹⁶¹

In response to Stellato’s questions, Bugas responded only with vague assurances and guarded comments. On May 29, Stellato ran through a litany of questions, including how many jobs would be moved out of the Rouge, how many workers would be affected, and in which buildings and in which positions. On June 7, Bugas responded that “plans for the future will be determined first of all by the over-all economic situation” but that the company needed “to remain competitive in a

¹⁵⁹ Executive Board February 10, 1950, Box 2, Folder 14, Local 600.

¹⁶⁰ Stellato to Reuther, July 25, 1950, Box 249, Folder 19, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁶¹ Stellato to Reuther, July 25, 1950, Box 249, Folder 19, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR. Stellato to Henry Ford II, May 15, 1950, Box 249, Folder 19, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

highly competitive industry” and that decisions would be made “in direct relation to our ability to operate efficiently.” Ford would react as management thought appropriate in response to market forces. “It is true,” Bugas conceded, “that several plants are under construction and that we will begin work on other in the very near future.” Nonetheless, he concluded, “I believe it is fair to say, however, that the transition will be a gradual one and that in most instances where work will be moved out of the Rouge Plant, it will be replaced by operations currently being done elsewhere or by outside suppliers.” Bugas’s indicated that job loss would not occur due to decentralization, even as he avoided addressing other means by which the company was eliminating, reducing, or relocating production work.¹⁶²

Bugas’ reassurances did not prevent Rouge workers from noticing that, between July 1950 and July 1951, the hourly workers in the complex dropped from 67,000 to 54,000. The Press Steel Building alone saw the decrease of 4,069 workers, from 10,905 to 6,836.¹⁶³ For the members of Local 600, these losses seemed to contradict what the company told them. Consequently, the Executive Board passed a resolution at the end of July, 1951, stating that “speed up, layoffs, run-away shops, wage freeze and the high cost of living” were all problems that affected the entire automotive industry and not just Local 600 or Ford workers. Nonetheless, Walter Reuther assured Local 600 that the layoffs were a result of a shortage of steel, a consequence of the Korean War.¹⁶⁴

So it was that on July 7, 1950, Stellato wrote a letter to Henry Ford II. He insisted that “the decentralization problem raises questions which go beyond the realm of pure industrial relations. The moral and economic issues . . . are such as I feel warrant your personal attention.”¹⁶⁵ The head

¹⁶² Bugas to Stellato, May 29, 1950, and Stellato to Bugas, June 7, 1950, Box 249, Folder 19, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

¹⁶³ Executive Board, August 28, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

¹⁶⁴ Executive Board July 17, 1951 and Executive Board July 24, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

¹⁶⁵ Stellato to Henry Ford II, July 7, 1950, and Ford to Stellato, May 19, 1950, Box 249, Folder 19, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

of Ford Motor Company disagreed, despite Stellato's continuing and persistent attempts to attain a meeting with him. Regardless, that Stellato framed the issue of decentralization as a moral and economic quandary that went beyond "pure industrial relations" was an indicator of how Local 600 understood decentralization and the stakes involved. It was just not a matter of wages and work conditions, but of the livelihood of entire working-class communities, an argument that would be brought to the forefront in a matter of weeks and which surfaced again in massive plant closings two decades later.

Given the response Local 600 had received from John Bugas, they were surprised to learn that the company was moving machinery out of the Rouge, to be sent other production facilities, in the dead of the night. It was, as one Ford worker wrote in a letter to Local 600's newsletter, *Ford Facts*, "thievery in the night."¹⁶⁶ Paul Boatin, a member of the local's executive committee, reported on August 7 that he had received a phone call early in the morning that machinery was being moved out of the Motor Plant. Boatin investigated the matter. He was told by management that the machinery was being moved to the Ford Dearborn Engine Plant, but other union members reported that the machines to be shipped out were addressed to different plants. "There was no question," Paul Boatin told his colleagues on the executive committee, ". . . that very soon now the workers would be out of jobs, and the company is taking the jobs out without giving the union a guarantee of other jobs coming in."¹⁶⁷ In addition to machinery being relocated, other jobs were being outsourced to outside contractors. A part of the six-cylinder engine that was made on premise, for example, was moved to an independent shop in Brighton. In other cases, the jobs were

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 157.

¹⁶⁷ Executive Board, August 7, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

moved to Ford plants in other locations. Jobs in the Press Steel department of the River Rouge plant were moved to Buffalo, and gear and transmission work was moved to Cleveland.¹⁶⁸

Following a summer of uncertainty, and being given a run-around by the company, the executive board of Local 600 passed a lengthy resolution regarding decentralization on August 21.¹⁶⁹ Restating their belief that this was not a parochial concern relevant only to their local union, the resolution immediately framed the issue as one that affected “workers in the Detroit Metropolitan Area” who worked at “Ford and other plants.” Local 600 was unambiguous in their assertion that larger issues were at play than ones that just affected their membership, their workplace, or even their company.

In addition to alerting UAW members to scope of the problem, the resolution confirmed two more premises that are crucial to Local 600’s argument. The second premise placed automobile workers in the context of their entire lives: “Workers,” the resolution declared, “are citizens of long standing in their communities, home owners, taxpayers, and their complete plans for the future,” which included the raising of families and the pursuit of social lives, “are geared to their living in the Metropolitan Detroit Area.” This was not a claim about labor relations, but a claim about citizen rights and the ways local communities were constituted by those whose livelihoods depended on the continuing presence and health of the auto industry.

The union’s third premise expanded the idea of community presented in the preceding premise. “Community groups,” Local 600 explained, “such as the City Councils, Civil Organizations, Churches, etc., have a responsibility towards the Citizenry in their immediate community.” Again, the claim regarding the rights of workers as citizens is striking. Workers are citizens, and local communities, including local government and religious institutions, have a responsibility to

¹⁶⁸ Executive Board, August 21, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

¹⁶⁹ The following quotes all come from Executive Board, August 21, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

support their peers. Thus, Local 600 called upon local organizations and institutions to support workers facing job loss due to decentralization. The reasons for doing so were starkly clear. “If decentralization of industry continues and workers are continually laid off,” Local 600’s resolution continued, this would “entail greater financial spending on the part of the community, and these communities will become partial ghost towns.” The loss of jobs on the part of industrial workers at the River Rouge and other plants, Local 600 argued, would constitute a severe loss for the community as a whole. Their futures were intertwined.

Following from these premises, Local 600 suggested immediate steps in opposition to job loss due to decentralization. First, “all Mayors, City Councils, Civic Organizations, Church Groups, Fraternal Organizations, Veteran Groups,” should become involved in the campaign against decentralization, revealing Local 600’s understanding of how far the impact of decentralization would be felt. If veterans and fraternal organizations gave the list a masculine tilt, it should be noted that church groups, civic organizations, and even city councils meant that women in the community were included in this call to arms. Second, Local 600 called for those concerned to contact all relevant politicians and government employees, beginning with President, in order to share concerns of how decentralization would “destroy the ‘Arsenal of Democracy.’”¹⁷⁰ Once again, Local 600 moved from local threats and local solutions to factors of national and international relevance, and emphasized that decentralization was more than just a labor dispute. Invoking Detroit’s identity as the Arsenal of Democracy, so soon after the Second World War and in the midst of the Korean conflict, positioned decentralization as a threat to national security.

Whether at the level of national defense or at the local level of the neighborhoods near the Rouge, the language of the resolution poses job loss as a danger to the community. Unemployment

¹⁷⁰ Executive Board, August 14, 1951 and August 21, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600.

from corporate decentralization of production did not solely affect abstract workers, but the foundations of communities that would also, in turn, suffer because of decentralization. Workers were much more than a supply of labor; they were community members, homeowners, taxpayers, and people who planned on raising his or her family in the local community. Consequently, according to Local 600, it was the duty of local governments, community organizations, churches, as well as the union to resist industrial decentralization. In a time of war in Korea and the Cold War globally, Local 600 called on communities to defend their jobs in the name of national defense, the rights of citizenship, and economic self-preservation. The local union repeated their right to conduct a strike as one means to resist the threat of decentralization.

The members of Local 600 did not rest following this resolution. Rather, they took their campaign to the local communities they had exhorted to rally to the union's cause. The local union asked municipalities with significant employment at the River Rouge complex to pass resolutions against decentralization. The city councils of Dearborn, Melvindale, Garden City, and Ecorse all answered Local 600's call, and formally condemned the policy of industrial decentralization. A notable exception was the city of Detroit, whose conservative mayor, Albert Cobo, refused to support the city council resolution supporting the Local's campaign.¹⁷¹ The local did not just stop at city councils. Local 600 also contacted senators from Michigan, Republican Homer Ferguson and Democrat Blair Moody, to enlist their support. Both Ferguson and Moody agreed to publicly state their opposition to the policy of decentralization. When Local 600 contacted Michigan Representative John Lesinki, Jr., a Democrat, about joining their campaign, he originally demurred. A local business owner in addition to being a politician, Lesinki argued that decentralization was part of the war effort in Korea. Percy Llewellyn, of Local 600, responded that

¹⁷¹ Sugrue, "Labor, Liberalism, and Racial Politics in 1950s Detroit," 21.

the policy of decentralization at begun at the Rouge plant before the war had, and Lesinki agreed to investigate the matter in greater depth. He later added his voice, along with the two senators, to those who were, as the union phrased it, “concerned with the possibilities of ghost towns in the very near future.”¹⁷²

The resolutions from local city councils were passed in the fall of 1951. Garden City sent the local union their official statement in October, in which they wrote that they were “going on record in opposition to decentralization of the Ford Motor Company and calling upon the President of the United States, Governor Williams, and the Congressmen of the State of Michigan to investigate the decentralization program of the Ford Motor Company and effect a program of bringing jobs into the Rouge Plant.”¹⁷³ The Dearborn City Council voted unanimously to support Local 600’s position after Percy Llewellyn requested their support. He spoke movingly at a city council meeting of “pensioners [who] are forced to give up their ties and move along.”¹⁷⁴ He also noted the amount of taxes Ford paid to Dearborn, and “pointed out that city taxes would go ‘sky high’ if Ford continued to move out.” The city council president, Marguerite Johnson, reportedly replied, “Why, in ten years this city would be a ghost town.”¹⁷⁵

Statements in support of Local 600’s campaign did not always entail support for their reasoning or, indeed, the same reasoning at all. The Dearborn City Council, while agreeing to condemn decentralization, disagree over why it should be condemned. One member, Martin Griffith, argued that decentralization was the result of Dearborn not respecting Ford Motor Company enough. Mayor Orville Hubbard, Griffith reminded the rest of the council, “ridiculed

¹⁷² Executive Board, August 28, 1951, Box 3, Folder 1, Local 600; Executive Board, September 4, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600; Executive Board, September 11, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600.

¹⁷³ Executive Board, October 30, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600.

¹⁷⁴ “Ford Decentralization to Be Studied by City Council and Local 600,” Folder 1, PLP.

¹⁷⁵ “Charges of Ford Decentralization Arouse Council,” Folder 2, PLP.

and threatened officials of the Company as well as saying he would punch John Bugas, vice-president, in the nose.” And now Ford was building factories elsewhere. Another council member, Joseph Ford, disagreed with Griffith, arguing that he did not see how the mayor’s attitude had any bearing on Ford’s policies. “We must do something before Dearborn is a ghost town,” council president Marguerite Johnson reiterated, before declaring that she was not interested in jobs anywhere but in Dearborn.¹⁷⁶

As Local 600 was rallying community members and organizations to its cause, the competing claims between the local union and the international UAW came to a head. The Committee on Decentralization finally arranged a meeting with the Ford Motor Company and with the international union in September. Walter Reuther informed Local 600 that the UAW would take the meeting over, including determining who would and would not be allowed to participate in the meeting. Only Local 600 President Carl Stellato was granted permission to attend the meeting. He walked out of in protest, insisting that he would never presume to represent all of Local 600 by himself. At the same time, Stellato refuted accusations that the campaign was merely a ploy against Reuther. The anti-decentralization campaign, he maintained, was not an attempt to needle Reuther or seek personal glory at his expense. Nonetheless, the conflict between the local and the international undermined the attempt to bring the local’s concerns to Ford.¹⁷⁷

At the end of September, a month after the union began discussing the authorization for a strike, the local’s language became more militant. The executive board accused the Ford Motor Company of deliberately misrepresenting decentralization as a matter of government policy undertaken for security reasons. Further, the leadership of the local urged all possible means of

¹⁷⁶ “Ford Decentralization to Be Studied By City Council and Local 600” and “Charges of Ford Decentralization Arouse Council,” Folder 2, PLP.

¹⁷⁷ Executive Board, September 18, 1951, Folder 2, Box 3, Local 600.

disseminating information regarding decentralization, including the use of *Ford Facts* (Local 600's newsletter), leaflets, daily newspapers, and meetings at the plant gates. Even more striking is their demand that

. . . . efforts [to] be physically instituted to stop the job movement out of the plant by having the workers form a human snake across the gates. In other words, the local would have to resort to tactics of 1936 and 1937 in order to keep the jobs in the plant.¹⁷⁸

The sit-down strikes of 1936 and 1937 were used in the Flint strikes when the United Auto Workers gained recognition at General Motors and, subsequently, at Chrysler and Ford. Such an allusion suggested that the local union saw the struggle against decentralization as just as important as the original struggle for union recognition fourteen years prior. If one accepts that the scale of significance was similar, then one could argue that those struggling against decentralization could reasonably respond with tactics such as the occupation of factories in the tradition of the sit-down strikes.

The environment of the late 30s and the early 60s were not similar. Sit-down strikes had been declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 1939, and, besides, all the major auto companies had accepted collective bargaining. At Ford, the stringently anti-union ethos of management that had spurred the lively leftist worker culture had faded away following the 1945 retirement of Henry Bennett, the head of the notorious Ford Service Department, and Henry Ford's death in 1947, after which the reins were taken by his grandson, Henry Ford II.¹⁷⁹ "Class war," as B.J. Widick characterized it, "had been turned into a truce through negotiation."¹⁸⁰

In the case Local 600 did call a strike, they declared that the International UAW had an obligation to support them and that *all* Ford plants should be struck. Even as Local 600 moved

¹⁷⁸ Executive Board, September 25, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600.

¹⁷⁹ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 219.

¹⁸⁰ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 115.

deeper into their campaign against decentralization, Stellato took care to caution the rest of the local union that decentralization was not the only threat to workers. Conditions during the Korean war played a part, as did the investment automobile companies were putting into automation under the name of improving workplace safety. Local 600 continued to request a meeting with Ford head Henry Ford II, who refused while asserting that decentralization was not occurring. Snubbed by both the company and the international union, Local 600's executive board declared their intent to continue contacting more surrounding communities in order to encourage them to condemn the policy of decentralization. As Percy Llewellyn argued, Local 600, while doing "an excellent job," could only do so much: "The communities would have to be stirred up."¹⁸¹

In October, Local 600 began pursuing another strategy of resistance. The executive board retained the services of an attorney, Ernest Goodman, in order to issue an injunction against the Ford Motor Company for breach of contract. Their argument was that, had the union known what Ford was planning, they never would have agreed to sign the recent five-year contract. At the same time, relations between the local and international union disintegrated precipitously. Arguments between the two included matters over dues increases and relations with other unions. Local 600 responded publicly to their disagreements with Reuther and the International UAW through their autonomous publication *Ford Facts*, such as one issues with "Betrayal" in large black letters across its cover or another mourning "the death of democracy in the UAW."¹⁸²

Local 600's lawsuit against the Ford Motor Company was scheduled to be heard before federal judge Thomas P. Thornton on January 8, 1952. The suit asked the court to find that the five-year contract prohibited Ford from pursuing decentralization of the River Rouge complex; if such a decision could not be made, that the contract be declared null and void, and that an

¹⁸¹ Executive Board, September 25, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600.

¹⁸² Executive Board, October 2, 1951 and Executive Board, October 30, 1951, Box 3, Folder 2, Local 600.

injunction be issued preventing Ford from moving production from the River Rouge complex.¹⁸³ Local 600's lawyer, Ernest Goodman, described Ford's actions as fraudulent, asserting that "unless restrained by the timely intervention of this court" the Rouge plant would become "a mere shell of its former capacity."¹⁸⁴ His argument rested on section 301 of the National Labor Relations Act, which allowed for parties to a collective bargaining agreement to sue one another in federal court for breach-of-contract. As Ford had made assurances that employment levels at the Rouge would remain steady, if not increase, during the last round of contract negotiations, Goodman's argument was that the policy of decentralization, where employment was being sent to other plants and to contractors, constituted fraud with negative material consequences for the members of Local 600.¹⁸⁵

Ford responded that employment was down several thousand at the complex, but that the reason was to be found in government restrictions. Many, the firm argued, were employees who had worked less than three months. Local 600 countered that the number was closer to 20,000, and that at least part of the reason was the policy of decentralization.¹⁸⁶ Regardless, Ford defended their right to follow the market as they saw fit. Conceding that decentralization entailed breaking down large centers of production into smaller units, and that there was a benefit to those smaller units being moved to places with less union activity, Ford argued that the overarching strategy was a response to markets expanding in the South and to the West. As to the accusation of fraud, the company's lawyer argued, the fact that Reuther and the other UAW officers who had signed the contract were not party to the lawsuit spoke for itself.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ "Local 600 Brings Suit Against Ford: Charges Fraud in Decentralization Plan," Folder 2, PLP.

¹⁸⁴ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 177.

¹⁸⁵ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 209.

¹⁸⁶ "Ford Denies Dispersal: Union Fears Decentralization in Lay-Offs of 20,000," *New York Times*, November 14, 1951; "UAW Local Sues to Bar Ford Moves: Asks Federal Court to Issue Restraining Order," *New York Times*, November 15, 1951.

¹⁸⁷ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 219.

The bitter relations between the local and the international union colored the way that this suit was viewed. As one newspaper reported, “many observers viewed the union’s actions as another attempt by Stellato to heckle the administration of UAW President Walter P. Reuther.” Another newspaper declared that “decentralization is nothing new in the automotive industry.” It saw the only motive behind the lawsuit as “the feud between Local 600 President Carl Stellato and UAW President Walter Reuther.”¹⁸⁸

Before a decision was handed down, Local 600 was rocked by investigatory hearings conducted by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). HUAC had originally held hearings in Detroit in late February, 1952, in order to investigate Communist influence in industries involved in national defense.¹⁸⁹ On the final day of the hearings, Bereniece Baldwin testified for four hours. Baldwin was the dues secretary of the Michigan Communist Party; and, it turned out, an FBI informant. She informed the committee that the Communist Party was actively holding membership drives in Detroit factories associated with defense production and that the Party had targeted the Rouge for “special consideration” in its recruiting efforts.¹⁹⁰ Committee member Charles Potter, a Republican Representative from Cheboygan, Michigan, announced that HUAC would return in March in order to pursue further investigations into Communist influence in Local 600. Taking the opportunity to score political points off Michigan Democrats, Potter charged that Governor G. Mennen Williams and Senator Blair Moody “might try to stop the committee from returning to Detroit.” The state’s governor retorted that “Potter’s statement is an

¹⁸⁸ Executive Board, January 7, 1952, Box 3, Folder 3, Local 600; “Local 600 Brings Suit Against Ford: Charges Fraud in Decentralization Plan,” and “Behind 600’s Suit,” Folder 2, PLP.

¹⁸⁹ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 80.

¹⁹⁰ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 80; Babson, Elsil, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 211.

example of guttersnipe politics based on falsehood and innuendo. It's McCarthyism at its worst."¹⁹¹

The HUAC hearings that March into Local 600 provided many dramatic moments. Just as Ernest Goodman represented Local 600 in their lawsuit against Ford Motor Company, so he represented the nineteen Local 600 officers targeted by HUAC.¹⁹² The recording secretary of Local 600, William Hood, refused to answer any questions except to proclaim "that it was a damned lie that he was a Communist Party member." Pat Rice, the vice-president of the local, invoked his rights under the Fifth Amendment, to which committee member Donald Jackson, a Republican from California, responded that while taking the Fifth did not legally entail an admission of guilt, "what the American people think and what assumption they draw is an entirely different thing."¹⁹³ Dave Moore, an officer in the local, also invoked his Fifth Amendment rights, but not before condemning the hearings as an "inquisition" in which "I am damned if I do and I am damned if I don't."¹⁹⁴

With the threat of a HUAC investigation into the UAW in the background, Reuther and the UAW leadership were put in a difficult place. They sacrificed Local 600 in order to keep HUAC at bay. Reuther cooperated with HUAC, out of fear that not doing so would put the UAW "in jeopardy." Reuther was on record as opposing the tactics of HUAC, as was the CIO. Yet, while there were "kids in Korea dying," Reuther worried that HUAC would move "to try to put the union in a position where we were condoning the communists and were covering up for the communists."

¹⁹¹ Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 129-130; Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 210. See *Labor Action*, March 7, 1952.

¹⁹² Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 207.

¹⁹³ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 213.

¹⁹⁴ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 213.

Given that Local 600 was the main locus of Reuther's opposition within the UAW, it was a choice that did not give Reuther and his allies much pause.¹⁹⁵

Two members of Reuther's staff, Elesio "Lee" Romano, a former vice-president of Local 600, and Shelton Tappes, a former recording secretary of Local 600, were called by the committee to testify. "They would never have done it," Local 600's counsel, Ernest Goodman, stated later regarding Reuther's condoning the testimony, "could never have done it, if he hadn't give his consent It was sickening to so many of us."¹⁹⁶ Romano stated that there were around four hundred Communist Party members working for Ford, with around two thousand fellow travelers, and that 175 of them ran Local 600. Stellato, Romano explicitly testified, was not one of them, but the committee declined to hear testimony from Stellato in defense of the Local 600. Both Romano and Tappes named names, and both testified as to Reuther's anti-communist record. The UAW under Reuther, according to Tappes, was "the most active organization in this country against the efforts of the Communist Party."¹⁹⁷ Those UAW members that were named in the testimony faced reprisals when they went to work. They faced firing, sit-down strikes, being hung in effigy, threats, and simply being run out of factories.¹⁹⁸ These reprisals were a reminder that rank-and-file workers did not necessarily share the viewpoints of either their local's leadership or of the union's leadership.

Stellato, while not allowed to testify in person, nonetheless sent a letter to the committee defending Local 600 and his administration. The attempt of communists to infiltrate American factories and other institutions was a fact, Stellato wrote, but their mission was aided and abetted

¹⁹⁵ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 317-318.

¹⁹⁶ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 217.

¹⁹⁷ Elie Abel, "Witness Says Red Runs Big Ford Local: UAW Staff Man Tells House Committee 175 Communists Control 50,000 Members," *New York Times*, March 12, 1952. "400 Reds at Ford's Ex-Local Aid Says," *Detroit News*, 11 March 1952; "Names of Detroit Red Leaders Given at Quiz," *Detroit News*, 1 March 1952. Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 81; Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 217.

¹⁹⁸ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 217-218; Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*, 127-136.

by the American government. “The lack of proper legislation,” the Local 600 president continued, “and enforcement of laws that guarantee all of the American people their civil rights, the unfair price and wage policy forced upon us by Government control, the inequitable income tax program coupled with the corruption and thievery on the part of higher Government officials” all worked to “hinder the efforts of those of us in the trade union movement who chose to direct the course of the trade union movement to exclude communists and communist objectives and methods.”¹⁹⁹ Not all Local 600 members were convinced. A bulletin circulated among the Maintenance and Construction Unit, condemned “the unholy alliance” between the Local 600 officers and the Communist Party, calling them “political prostitutes” who hid “behind the banner of Local 600,” and derided “the Fifth Amendment boys.” “The overwhelming majority in Local 600,” the bulletin stated, “honestly and sincerely believe in Free American Trade Unionism,” and ended by granting Stellato “the crown of Chief Flip Flop Artist of Local 600!”²⁰⁰ An anonymous flier demanded, “Ford Workers – Do you want Joe Stalin to run your union or do you want to run it yourself? . . . Let’s clean out Local 600!”²⁰¹

The day following Romano’s testimony, Reuther charged Stellato and other members of the local’s leadership before the International UAW’s Executive Board for failing to follow the union’s constitution. It barred Communists, along with Nazis or members of other Fascist parties, from being members or holding office. If found guilty, a local’s leadership would be removed from office and the local placed under receivership.²⁰² “Failure on the part of Local 600 officers,”

¹⁹⁹ Stellato to HUAC, March 10, 1952, “Statement of Policy: Ford Local 600 UAW-CIO,” Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

²⁰⁰ Maintenance and Construction Unit, “Knowledge is Power,” Volume 1, Bulletin 6, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

²⁰¹ “Ford Workers – Do you want Joe Stalin to run your union,” Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

²⁰² Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 81-82; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 318. See Reuther, March 12, 1952, and Stellato’s response, March 13, 1952, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR.

Reuther wrote in a telegram to the officers, meaning the failure to purge communist leaders, “. . . is strengthening the efforts of anti-labor corporations and competing union to undermine the organization work of our union.”²⁰³

The local’s leadership received only one day’s warning before the hearing, and they were not allowed to cross-examine witnesses. The presiding UAW officer, Vice-President John Livingston, supported the charges against the local’s leaders, with the result that the proceedings were more or less one-sided. Reuther attacked Stellato for nearly three hours before the latter was allowed to speak in his defense. Not all UAW officers approved of the decision to bring the Local’s officers up on charges. Leonard Woodock, by contrast, argued against giving in to the “neo-fascists” of HUAC. Reuther conceded that none of the officers of Local 600 were Communist Party members; rather, Reuther railed against Stellato’s persistent criticisms of the International UAW’s policies. Local 600’s leadership rebutted that disagreement was the essence of union democracy, but to no avail. After more than eleven hours, the International Executive Board voted to strip the Local’s officers of their positions and to place Local 600 under receivership.²⁰⁴

Local 600 remained under the direct control of the International UAW through an administrative board headed by Reuther, its elected leadership powerless, until September. In elections that month, fifteen Rouge buildings elected anti-Reuther candidates, and 80% of the members of the local’s general council were anti-Reuther union members. Carl Stellato was reelected as president – he ran unopposed, and he continued filling that office for the next

²⁰³ Elie Abel, “UAW Acts to End Ford Local’s Rule: High Command Orders Inquiry on Charges of Communism Before house Committee,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1952. Emphasis in original.

²⁰⁴ UAW press release, March 15, 1952, Box 249, Folder 18, Series VI, Subseries B, WPR; *Labor Action*, March 31, 1952. Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 82; Babson, Elsil, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 218.

decade.²⁰⁵ The antagonism between the international leadership and the local, however, played a part in undermining Local 600's legal case against Ford. The international union had assumed control of the local as the case was heard in the United States District Court in January 1952. A year and a half later, in July 1953, Judge Thomas P. Thornton dismissed the case. In his legal opinion, Thornton argued that if the contract between the union and Ford had been, in fact, breached, then the International UAW would have supported the case. Noting this, Thornton upheld the right of Ford to run and locate their business as they so chose.²⁰⁶ Following this decision, decentralization largely disappeared from discussion within the Local.²⁰⁷ Local 600's membership continued to rapidly decrease. With over 60,000 members in 1950, the local stood at 42,000, a decrease of 30%, ten years later.²⁰⁸

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the campaign of Local 600 against decentralization as an important precursor to later economic changes in the 1960s and 1970s, and as a vital historical case study complicating the dominant narrative of the 1950s as a time of shared prosperity. Rather, cracks in the foundations were beginning to form, and economic tensions and migrations were already forming in American cities in the immediate postwar period. Local 600's campaign provides an insight to how Detroit auto workers saw these changes, and the potential danger such changes posed for themselves and their communities. Yet, while this chapter finds the local's campaign a significant act of resistance to industrial decentralization, it also wants to resist casting them as

²⁰⁵ "Ford Workers Ballot: River Rouge Group Electing Officers, Voting on Strike," *New York Times*, September 10, 1952; Asher Lauren, "Ford Elections to End Seizure of Local 600," Folder 2, PLP; Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 318-319; Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 218.

²⁰⁶ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 162; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 177-178; Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 219.

²⁰⁷ Exceptions include an Executive Board meeting on July 7, 1953, in which an officer "stated that the Ford Parts Depot was faced with a decentralization problem. A job involving about 73 people has been discontinued the Company claims, because of cost." Executive Board, Box 3, Folder 3, Local 600.

²⁰⁸ Babson, Elsila, and Riddle, *The Color of Law*, 219; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 178.

heroic Davids to the nefarious Goliaths of the UAW and the Ford Motor Company. The difference between Local 600 and the UAW laid in part in the fact that the local union was concerned with the effects of decentralization on workers, their families, and their communities on the ground, while the international union took a top-down view. It balanced job losses in one place with new factories and employment opportunities elsewhere, while maintaining a working relationship with the automotive companies.

Reuther's concerns were broad and long-ranging. Such a perspective had been long part of Reuther's strategic vision, harkening back to his early days organizing. At the end of 1936, for instance, when Reuther and the fledgling UAW targeted a parts supplier, the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company, Reuther was able to convince union members to end a sit-down strike, despite the lackluster concessions from the company. "Reuther proved not only that he could deal with management," Reuther biographer Nelson Lichtenstein wrote about this moment, "but that he could persuade a reluctant rank and file to accept a poor settlement [...] in the interests of a larger collective interest."²⁰⁹ Reuther's position towards the Local 600 campaign in the early 1950s was similar: the interests of the Rouge workers were a reasonable short-term sacrifice to make for the larger, long-term, interests of auto workers nationwide.

Granting this charitable interpretation of Reuther's actions, it does not follow that the part of villain should go to Stellato, even though there are historians who have tried. Kevin Boyle, for example, in pursuit of praising Reuther, resorts to attacking Carl Stellato. The president of Local 600's criticisms of Reuther and the International Union were, in Boyle's words, "nothing more than gamesmanship."²¹⁰ The entire decentralization campaign, in Boyle's hands, was a mere anti-Reuther power play. Apparently Stellato's motivations are self-evident, as Boyle offers no

²⁰⁹ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 72, 63-73.

²¹⁰ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 284, fn. 43.

evidence in support of this assessment. Stellato, Boyle writes, in early 1951 “decided to use the restiveness among the rank and file to see just how weak the Reuther machine had become.”²¹¹

Boyle’s condemnation of Stellato is odd. He characterizes the local president as an opportunist and not as someone with legitimate concerns about how Reuther was leading the union. Then, to make it more bizarre, Boyle criticizes him for being too conservative. Missing the point of the decentralization campaign, Boyle argues that “Stellato could have offered a radical, even syndicalist alternative to Reuther’s social democratic agenda. Had he done so, it is at least conceivable that Reuther would have shifted to the left.”²¹² It may have been conceivable, but the entire argument rests on the assumption that what Stellato and Local 600 were criticizing was “Reuther’s social democratic agenda” and not his top-down and centralized leadership style. As for Local 600’s proposed policies, such as the 40 hours of pay for 30 hours, this were “essentially conservative” positions that “accepted labor’s subordinate position.”²¹³ Yet another assertion left unexplained, as quite a few people would be surprised to learn that a proposal to disassociate income from labor is “essentially conservative.”

Given that Stellato had begun working at the Rouge when he was 18, with his formal education ending after the eighth-grade, it seems particularly insidious to criticize him for having not presented, in opposition to Reuther, a fully-functioning alternative vision of the future of industry in the United States at a time when great transformations were beginning to take effect. This is not to argue that Stellato and Local 600 presented perfect solutions to the problem of decentralization. Rather, it is to highlight that Stellato and Local 600 were attempting to address a problem – how large-scale job loss hurt local working-class communities – that neither Ford nor

²¹¹ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 76.

²¹² Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 77.

²¹³ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 77.

the UAW took especially seriously. In other words, it is not a matter of who was right and who was wrong; to present Local 600's campaign in those terms is to miss its significance entirely. But even if one grants that Local 600's campaign was only to needle Reuther, it is still meaningful that it was decentralization that they picked as an issue. The ways that they addressed decentralization are still revealing of how Detroit autoworkers understood their city and their communities in the postwar period. It is revealing that local municipalities and city councils publicly agreed with Local 600 on this issue. In this study, however, Local 600's campaign is taken as a sincere attempt to resist structural changes. Even that resistance, as unsuccessful as it was, and as shortsighted as it might have been, should still be taken seriously, as the people behind it took it seriously.

The paradox is that while workers of different backgrounds mobilized to protect their communities from job loss, white workers also mobilized to protect their communities from integration, just as the residents of Grosse Pointe did, chronicled in the next chapter. As one UAW official put it, the union "helps [workers'] economic interests until they can have a front porch, and for that they become capitalists."²¹⁴ In other words, the increased stability and security that collective bargaining provided, and of which the Treaty of Detroit was an exemplar, led workers to work to protect those economic gains at the expense of broader social change. It is noteworthy that the union official above turned to housing as a prime example of such a gain.

As Local 600 and various communities foresaw, the policy of industrial decentralization had a profound impact on metropolitan Detroit. The problems that the city and its residents have faced over the decades since the 1950s are multiple, complex, and interweaving, but most observers agree that the loss of mass employment in the auto industry was a significant,

²¹⁴ Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*, 77-78, 284 fn. 44; Labor Action, April 13, 1953.

foundational, cause of Detroit's distress. In the face of the auto industry's pursuit of profit, the city of Detroit and its residents were, ultimately, disposable, or at least irrelevant.

Local 600's campaign was predicated on understanding this, as the repeated use of the imagery of ghost towns showed. Decentralization threatened the employment of union members, but also threatened the structure of the communities where they lived. That Local 600 received the support of local governments and politicians in their campaign suggests that the local union's arguments were understood to be motivated by something more than a labor dispute. This would remain true even if that was Local 600's only motivation. Its arguments resonated beyond the factory gates, revealing an acute understanding on the part of different metro-Detroiters that the loss of industrial employment threatened the existence of their communities.

Nevertheless, the support of city councils and community members paled next to the power wielded by the Ford Motor Company. Even if Reuther and the International UAW had chosen to put its formidable influence and power behind the anti-decentralization campaign, the campaign then would have had to challenge the legal and economic structure of the United States. The campaign asked that the prerogatives of business take into account the interests of their employees and the communities in which they are located. This is not an impossible arrangement, but it challenged conventional and deeply held thought in the United States in the 1950s. The Ford Motor Company pursued policies meant to maximize their profits in relation to the market, but such a policy was not self-evident or natural, and should be understood as a deliberate choice that devalued workers and local communities in the interests of economic "efficiency." Similarly, the ruling of Judge Thornton is reasonable within the context of a system that prioritizes the drive for profits over the stability and well-being of workers or their communities, but that does not mean that the system is necessarily reasonable or incapable of change.

Even though they lost their campaign, Local 600's resistance is important in that it revealed an awareness of the negative outcomes of what would come to be called deindustrialization. It called attention to these issues quite earlier than the popular conception of deindustrialization does, and it received support from people outside of the UAW and Local 600. It reveals how the leadership of Local 600 and community members such as city council members understood their city and their relationship to the automobile industry and industrial labor. It is a historical moment that contributes to an intellectual history from below, in an effort to trace the thoughts and worldviews of, not scholars and professional philosophers, but autoworkers and other metro-Detroiters.²¹⁵

Despite the resistance organized by Local 600, the end results compose a familiar narrative. Factories moved away from the old centers of industry; the power and influence of labor unions in the United States eroded; and the role of manufacturing in the national economy declined relative to other sectors. At the River Rouge complex, employment fell from 85,000 in 1945 to 54,000 in 1954, and to only 30,000 in 1960.²¹⁶ The reasons behind the failure of Local 600's organization of communities against decentralization in Detroit are indicative of how various national trends intersected to shape local history: the Cold War, anti-communism and red-baiting, the factionalism within organized labor, and the dependence of manufacturing cities on the continued presence of industry. The conflict between the leadership of the local, which had a grassroots and local point-of-view, and the UAW international leadership, which was top-down and focused on an international analysis, only added yet another obstacle for Local 600's campaign

²¹⁵ I've borrowed the term from Emily Rutherford's "Intellectual History from Below" blog post on the *Journal of the History of Ideas* blog, <https://jhiblog.org/2016/05/18/intellectual-history-from-below/>, accessed August 31, 2017.

²¹⁶ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 132.

to confront. To the local union, decentralization meant job loss and the destruction of communities, whereas the International UAW saw the expansion of industry and union influence.

As old industrial centers continue to struggle to gain their footing in the present global and increasingly service-based economy, it should be kept in mind that these quandaries are more than half-a-century old. Local 600's campaign against decentralization raised questions almost seventy years ago which continue to be pertinent in the present: to what extent do businesses have obligations or responsibilities to the communities which house them, if any? Should workers or communities have a voice in business decisions that drastically affect them? *Could* workers or communities have such a voice? This conversation was stifled for Local 600 in the early 1950s by the Cold War climate, in defense of an ideological position in support of free business and capitalism, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigations of the threat of Communism. In this milieu, the objections raised by Local 600 were overwhelmed and drowned out, and the industrial policy of decentralization continued, to the detriment of the health and vitality of the old urban centers of industry in the United States.

CHAPTER 3 “THIS POTENT, THOUGH INVISIBLE, BARRIER”: HOUSING SEGREGATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN SUBURBAN DETROIT, 1943-1973

I have a dream this afternoon that one day right here in Detroit, Negroes will be able to buy a house or rent a house anywhere that their money will carry them.

Martin Luther King, Jr.²¹⁷

On opposite end of metropolitan Detroit from Dearborn, a decade and a half after Local 600's campaign, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council invited Martin Luther King to speak in their community. He gave his address less than three weeks before his assassination, and after the fact, he described receiving “the worst heckling I have ever encountered in all my travels” in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. While King gave a talk on “The Other America,” a couple hundred demonstrators gathered outside the Grosse Pointe high school on March 14, 1968. They were not loud or boisterous, but they carried unambiguous signs and posters and “overshadowed” the talk inside. “Red Scum Get Out of Town,” read one. “Antichrist Must Go,” opined another. “Beware – King Snake,” announced one more. Inside the building, the tactics of the protesters were more aggressive. As King attempted to speak, “brazen hecklers” interrupted him with shouts of “Traitor!” and “Commie!”²¹⁸

The civil rights leader, who had faced down physical violence and jail repeatedly for over a decade, was as if “mourning” after the address, according to an Associated Press reporter. “I can't talk right now,” King said, when the reporter, Hugh Morgan, asked what King thought of the protest. As King put his head in his hands, he closed his eyes and sighed “in a series of short

²¹⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Address at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall,” June 23, 1963, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/address-freedom-rally-cobo-hall>, accessed October 11, 2018.

²¹⁸ Lee, Paul. "Up North: Martin Luther King, Jr., in Grosse Pointe; Part I of II." Michigan Citizen, Jan 24, 2004; Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council (GPHRC) Board Meeting April 2, 1968, Box 2, Folder 5, Grosse Pointe Civil Rights Organizations Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. (Hereafter GPCRÖP.)

breaths that was more like a sob.” “I have never received a reception on this level,” King later told reporters at a news conference.²¹⁹

The Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council had invited King to speak in the hope of encouraging “meaningful and forceful programs” in their community, which borders Detroit’s eastside, on matters of race in the wake of the events during the summer of 1967.²²⁰ That King spoke in Grosse Pointe, specifically, was a symbolically rich moment, resting on the history of discrimination and segregation in the wealthy, exclusive Detroit suburb. It is a history that intertwines race, class, and geography in metropolitan Detroit, which was a network of racialized borders and boundaries, divisions and fragments, unofficial yet well-understood fault lines that were policed and protected and jealously guarded. The organizing principle used to defend these divisions was *property values*; more specifically, the fear of property losing value due to the perception that certain city residents were, on the basis of their ancestry, less desirable neighbors than others. Nor was this solely racial prejudice, though it certainly encompassed racial segregation. It was also about ethnicity, class, and social status.

Grosse Pointe is made up of five small, individual yet related, municipalities often referred to collectively as either Grosse Pointe or the Pointes. They are situated on the southwest shore of Lake St. Claire, adjacent to Detroit and less than ten miles northwest of downtown. The five Pointes – Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Shore, Grosse Pointe Woods, and Grosse Pointe Park – together comprise an total area a little more than ten square miles overall, as compared to the 138 square miles of the city of Detroit.²²¹ Residents historically have included the

²¹⁹ Lee, Paul. "Up North: Martin Luther King, Jr., in Grosse Pointe; Part I of II." Michigan Citizen, Jan 24, 2004. The description of the protestors overshadowing King’s address and of King as in mourning come from Hugh Morgan, the AP reporter covering the event, quoted in the Lee article.

²²⁰ Will H. Kessler to Dr. Harry Meserve, re: Action Committee of the GPHRC, September 30, 1967, Box 1, Folder 5, GRCROP.

²²¹ Grosse Pointe (City), “About Us,” accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.grossepointecity.org/aboutUs.asp>; Grosse Pointe Farms, “FAQs,” accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.ci.grosse-pointe-farms.mi.us/faq.cfm>;

Dodge and Ford families, an indication of the Pointes' position as one of the wealthiest and most exclusive suburbs of Detroit. The Edsel and Eleanor Ford estate, designed by Albert Kahn and sitting on eighty-seven acres on Lake St. Clair, is admittedly one of the grander homes in the area, yet it serves as an example of the historical character and social milieu of the Pointes.²²²

The first half of this chapter focuses on the so-called Grosse Pointe point system, a method that was, as far as it is possible to know, particular to Grosse Pointe from about 1945 until 1960, whereby potential homebuyers were rated and scored according to their “desirability.” More than racial restrictive covenants written into deeds or the financial discrimination at the heart of redlining, both discussed in more detail below, the point system was, in the words of one local realtor, a conscientious and sincere attempt to practice what was wide-spread discrimination, practiced nationwide, in a fair and intelligent manner.²²³ Yet, African Americans and other minorities were still “undesirable” as neighbors even if they were well-off enough to afford to buy a home in the exclusive Grosse Pointe community. As explained in the introduction, housing had been a divisive issue in Detroit since the Second World War. While the stresses on affordable housing for workers was not a major concern for Grosse Pointe residents – it was one of the city’s wealthiest suburbs, after all – the same objections to integration found in Grosse Pointe were forwarded by working-class neighborhoods in metropolitan Detroit with significantly less economic resources. Therefore, the focus on Grosse Pointe in this chapter is not because housing segregation was peculiar to the Pointes.

Grosse Pointe Shores, Homepage, accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.gpshoresmi.gov>; Grosse Pointe Woods, “About Us,” accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.gpwmi.us/aboutus/aboutOurCity.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, “Grosse Pointe Park (City),” accessed 19, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2635540.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, “Detroit,” accessed 19, 2011, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2622000.html>.

²²² Grosse Pointe Historical Society, “The History of Grosse Pointe,” accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.gphistorical.org/league04.html>. Ford House, “Historical Legacy,” accessed December 19, 2011, <http://www.fordhouse.org/History.html>. Ford House, “Welcome,” accessed December 19, 2011. <http://www.fordhouse.org/Plan+Your+Visit/Welcom-38.html>, accessed December 19, 2011.

²²³ Wolff and Popa, “GP Point System Detailed,” *Detroit News*, May 3, 1960. For the full quote, see p. 95.

Rather, segregation was found across Detroit and its suburbs, as it was in most communities across the country. Instead, the focus on Grosse Pointe is because it offers the benefits of a case study in which economics is removed as an overriding consideration in the issue of housing segregation. The relationship between segregation and property values revolves around a number of interrelated issues, such as the cultural stereotypes of ethnic and racial minorities as incapable of maintaining a home in proper shape or, more materially, the discriminatory lending practices of banks and other financial institutions. The result of the latter practice was a self-fulfilling prophecy: ethnic and racial minorities denied the same access to credit as other homeowners were unable to buy as nice of homes or to maintain their homes in as nice of condition.²²⁴ However, in a community such as Grosse Pointe, the simple fact was that only those with means could afford to purchase property in the Pointes.

Yet, the same arguments against integration regarding property values are given in the Pointes as in less well-off neighborhoods. To argue that integration, ethnic and racial, would still lead to lowering or eroding property values despite the individual means of minority homebuyers was to argue that something else was at play. The financial precarity of working-class neighborhoods where one's home is one's largest and often only investment is more distant, even as the professional class is none less concerned with their financial security and stability. For working-class Detroiters, the combination of racial and ethnic prejudices could combine with financial uncertainty to create a potent mixture of precarity, mistrust, and fear. The first part of this chapter explores how this dynamic appeared in a metropolitan Detroit community with greater access to financial resources and stability.

²²⁴ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*. Jane Jacob's discussion of Boston's North End also revolves around discriminatory lending practices. See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992; originally 1961).

As the history of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council reminds us, however, there were white Detroiters and suburbanites who dissented from the prevailing racial and ethnic attitudes and worked to counter them. The second half of the chapter examines the successes and failures of the local residents in Grosse Pointe who sought to combat the discriminatory practices and reputations of the Pointes following state investigatory hearings into the point system in 1960. These hearings were given significant local media attention, and spurred some Grosse Pointers to take a stand for integration and civil rights in their community and in metropolitan Detroit. Within the context of the Civil Rights Movement, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council was mainly concerned with welcoming African American homeowners into their community. By the late 1960s they also explored ways to increase interracial understanding and appreciation, such as through an arts festival, in addition to legal strategies revolving around discriminatory home-selling practices. While the point system has a local notoriety unto the present, the history of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, which joined with similar Human Relations Councils across the metropolitan area, has garnered less historical attention. Yet, they reveal that communities were not always unified in their attitudes, and speak to the complex reality of racial politics in postwar metropolitan Detroit.

The Grosse Pointe Point System

Segregation could be an ad hoc affair – which houses a realtor chose to show, where they advertised, which loans banks approved – but the Grosse Pointe point system, developed circa 1945, shows that it could be highly organized. Additionally, given the role that suburbanization played in Detroit’s postwar history, looking at Grosse Pointe in this chapter, similar to looking at Dearborn in the last, is intended to shift the analytical framework beyond the municipal boundaries of Detroit and onto the metropolitan area. Often the city of Detroit is presented in scholarly works

as an island unto itself, divorced entirely from the large suburban community surrounding it, except when the suburbs emerge as some kind of white flight *deus ex machina* in the late 1960s. The relationship between the city and its suburbs was economic and financial; it was racial, and it was classed. This uneven relationship became only more significant as suburbanization drained the city of its professional, middle-class, and upper working-class white residents. The suburbs, as historian Robert Self and others have argued, were not just sites to which city residents fled. They actively enticed and drew city residents into them.²²⁵ That is to say, certain city residents. Using the case study of Grosse Pointe to explore the dynamics of segregation reminds us that the suburbs were carefully constructed racial and social sites.

As mentioned above, the details of the Grosse Pointe point system reached the light of day via a public state investigatory hearing. On a basic level, this is a benefit because it ensured that the details of the point system were well-reported and commented upon. More significant is that the sworn testimony of the architects and guardians of the system shows clearly that they considered the system both reasonable and justifiable. Rather than seeking to evade legal responsibility or otherwise excuse the system, they defended it. On the other hand, the fact that there was an investigation, and the responses registered by newspapers, suggests that the pro-segregation sentiments evinced by the Grosse Pointers questions were not as universally shared as they presumed.

It is not clear as to when or how, exactly, the point system came into existence. The Grosse Pointe Brokers Association (GPBA) and the Grosse Pointe Property Owners Association created

²²⁵ See Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Kruse and Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History*.

the system around 1945 and maintained it through 1960.²²⁶ The groups designed the system to replace the widespread use of restrictive covenants, clauses written into property deeds restricting who could purchase or inhabit a property by one's ethnic or racial background, which had been ruled as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in their 1948 decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer*.²²⁷ Restrictive covenants originated in California at the end of the 19th century in order to limit where Chinese immigrants could live. The use of these covenants was frequently challenged in court, so that one way of tracing their spread across the United States from the west coast is by noting challenges in the South by 1904 and in the North by 1922.²²⁸

Over time, restrictive covenants were used to target and restrict the housing choices of blacks, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans, including, in some cases, all non-Caucasians. The use of restrictive covenants arrived in the northern United States around the time of the first Great Migration north of African Americans, who fled failed cotton crops, sharecropping, and the increasing racial violence in the South, including recurring incidences of lynching in the 1910s. The expanded use of restrictive covenants also occurred in the wake of the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* decision by the Supreme Court, which overturned the use racial zoning, one of the first

²²⁶ For previous, albeit extremely brief, treatments of the Grosse Pointe point system, see Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 193; Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 192; Galster, *Driving Detroit*, 145. For a fictionalized account, see Eugenides, *Middlesex*.

²²⁷ See *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1; 68 S. Ct. 836; 92 L. Ed. 1161; 1948 U.S. LEXIS 2764; 3 A.L.R.2d 441 (1948), which included a case from Detroit. After buying a home in the Ironwood Avenue neighborhood in 1944, the McGhees were told a month after moving in, by the Northwest Neighborhood Association, that they had bought the house in violation of a restrictive covenant. The McGhees refused to move and the Association sued them. A Wayne County circuit judge ruled against the McGhees. The McGhees' appeals eventually led to them being represented by Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP's lawyer, before the US Supreme Court. The McGhee's case was merged with that of the Shelley family, who were from St. Louis. The US Solicitor General filed an amicus brief backing Marshall's case that restrictive covenants violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, and the Supreme Court unanimously agreed. See Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 188-189; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 182.

²²⁸ Michael Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 4 (2000): 550. See also Chapter 5, on restrictive covenants, in Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 78-91.

major legal victories for the NAACP.²²⁹ Black urban spaces were carved out in cities where the beginning of the First World War and anti-immigrant policies had created severe labor shortages. With these new black urban communities and employment opportunities came labor conflicts and housing disputes.²³⁰

Until the 1948 Supreme Court ruling against them, restrictive covenants were enforceable in court as a private contract. In 1911, a *New York Times* editorial described the use of “covenants of restriction” as effectively protecting neighborhoods from “negro invasion,” even as they claimed that the covenants were “solely for the purpose of preventing depreciation of property values.”²³¹ Over a quarter of a century later, the Federal Housing Administration’s 1939 *Underwriting Manual* advocated restrictive covenants, along with zoning and other regulations, as the ideal means to preserve the stability of neighborhoods. They explicitly meant occupancy by “the same social and racial classes.” Even after the Supreme Court declared covenants unconstitutional, the FHA did not make it a policy to cease insuring properties protected by restrictive covenants until 1950.²³²

In the case of Grosse Pointe, restrictive covenants declared homes to be for the “Caucasian race only.” “No lot or building,” declared one such covenant, “or part of any building thereon shall be used or occupied by any person or persons other than those of the Caucasian race, except that domestic servants not of the Caucasian race may occupy the premises where their employer

²²⁹ Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," 548; Patricia Sullivan, *Life Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 72.

²³⁰ Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," 544, 552-554; Bates, *Making of Black Detroit*; Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*; Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: H. Holt, 2004).

²³¹ “The Negro Invasion,” *New York Times*, December 17, 1911, 14, quoted in Sullivan, *Life Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*, 45.

²³² Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 436; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.

resides.”²³³ By no means, however, was Grosse Pointe unique in the metropolitan Detroit area for deploying restrictive covenants to maintain the racial and ethnic make-up of the community. In the 1940s, over 80% of the housing in Detroit, except for the inner city, was covered by racial restrictions. In a study of the deeds of ten thousand subdivisions in Detroit, sociologist Harold Black found that no land developed prior to 1910 had a restrictive covenant, while every subdivision developed between 1940 and 1947 restricted ownership or occupancy by African Americans. Despite their ubiquity, “restrictive covenants have never,” as a Grosse Pointe Brokers Association leaflet fretted, “given more than partial protection.” They were a piecemeal solution. They were expensive to implement as their efficacy demanded that every property deed in a given neighborhood or community include one. Besides, they were facing legal challenges in Detroit by 1944, and were ultimately overturned in 1948.²³⁴

The point system took housing segregation a step further. The details of the system were revealed in two lawsuits and an investigatory hearing in 1960, but the testimony of those involved suggests that not much changed during the fifteen years the system was in use.²³⁵ The arrangement

²³³ Douglas A. Sargent, MD, Statement of Open Housing Committee, September 20, 1973, Box 1, Folder 3, GPCROP.

²³⁴ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 44; Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," 559. "An Explanatory Leaflet" quoted in Don Beck, "40 Pct. Flunk Grosse Pointe Realty Test," *Detroit Free Press*, April 21, 1960.

²³⁵ The backstory of the lawsuits and investigatory hearing can be found in Harold Braverman to Sol Littman, May 26, 1960, re: Review of the Grosse Pointe Story; *Detroit News*, May 2, 1960; Robert A. Popa, "Only 33 Attend Session of Grosse Pointe Property Group," *Detroit News*, May 18, 1960; Ruth Haney, "Pointe Land Sale Suit Starts Today Testing Restrictions," *East Side Shopper*, March 24, 1960; "20 Called in GP Bias Probe," *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1960; "Anti-Defamation League Unit Raps G.P. Realty Questionnaire," *Detroit News*, April 20, 1960; "Negroes Don't Count in Grosse Pointe Bias," *Detroit Courier*, April 23, 1960; "Police Boss Defends His Group," *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1960; "Veto on G.P. Park Home Sale is Declared Illegal by Court – Industrialist Wins Battle," *Detroit News*, April 23, 1960; "Grosse Pointe Pastors Condemn Racial Bias," *Detroit News*, May 2, 1960; Jack Casey, "Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended"; "G.P. Quiz to Call 14 More – State Pushes Investigation of Realty Curbs," *Detroit News*, April 25, 1960; "2 G.P. Groups Plan to Keep Point System," *Detroit News*, May 17, 1960; "Grosse Pointers Evade Their Responsibilities," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 30, 1960; "Federal Violation is Charged in Pointe Trial," *East Side Shopper*, April 21, 1960; Wolff and Popa, "GP Point System Detailed," *Detroit News*, May 3, 1960; Jack Casey, "What's in a Name? - Plenty in Grosse Pointes," *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 1960; Jack Casey, "Pointe System Fair, Grosse Pointe Broker Says," *Detroit Free Press*, May 3, 1960; Wolff and Popa, "Inquiry on 'Point System' is Recessed for a Week," *Detroit News*, May 5, 1960; Jack Casey, "G.P. Brokers Air Reprisal in Point System Violation," *Detroit Free Press*, undated; Popa and Wolff, "Rebel

was straightforward. Real estate brokers submitted names of potential home buyers to the Grosse Pointe Property Owners Association (GPPOA) and Grosse Pointe Brokers Association (GPBA). These organizations in turn engaged a private detective to fill out a two-page form on the potential home buyers. The form, a type of survey, worked on scale of one hundred possible points granted or taken away for various reasons. Everyone needed at least fifty point to be approved to purchase a home in the Grosse Pointe, although some demographics needed more than fifty points in order to pass. A person of Polish descent needed at least 55 points, for example, to pass. Southern Europeans, defined as Greek, Italian, or Lebanese, needed 75 points, and Jewish buyers needed 85 points. There was not a defined protocol for those of African or Asian descent for, as a real estate office president stated, “Asian and Negroes had never become a problem.” Other criteria used to evaluate whether a prospective home buyer was “undesirable” included speaking with an accent, family size, “swarthisness,” education level, or considering oneself an “hyphenated American.”²³⁶

The secretary of the GPPOA, R. Noble Wetherbee, testified in 1960 that 1,597 investigations had taken place since 1945 (of the 1,597 reported investigations, 658 home buyers, 41%, were determined to be undesirable by the guardians of Grosse Pointe). This would average out to about 106 investigations a year. As each investigation cost between \$100 and \$150, it meant that, on average, between \$10,640 to \$15,960 was spent annually on investigations. While the

Realtor to be Called in Pointe Quiz,” *Detroit News*, undated; Ray Giradin, “Violated Point System, Broker Expelled – Tells of GP Association’s Reprisal,” *Detroit Times*, May 12, 1960; all in Detroit Commission on Community Relations (DCCR) / Human Rights Department Records, Part 3, Series 4, Box 36, Folder 9, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. (Hereafter DCCR.)

²³⁶ “Grosse Pointe,” *Rights: ADL Reports on Social, Employment, Educational and Housing Discrimination*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1960, p. 1-2; Jack Casey, “Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1960; “Negroes Don’t Count in Grosse Pointe Bias,” *Detroit Courier*, April 23, 1960. In 1960, a new form was developed to make it more difficult for prospective Jewish home buyers to pass. See Jack Casey, “What’s in a Name? - - Plenty in Grosse Pointes,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 1960 and Wolff and Popa, “GP Point System Detailed,” *Detroit News*, May 3, 1960 for examples of other criteria used in the survey. The term *undesirable* was the term used by the Grosse Pointe brokers and realtors involved. See “Anti-Defamation League Unit Raps G.P. Realty Questionnaire,” *Detroit News*, April 20, 1960.

averages are revealing, they cover up the yearly fluctuations. By 1960, about 300 investigations were taking place in a year. That meant that in 1960, the cost of the point system was between \$30,000 and \$45,000 a year. The average income for an American family in 1960 was \$5,600. Despite spending at least five times the income of an average family on these investigations, the secretary of the GPPOA asserted the findings were advisory only.²³⁷

Indeed, if a prospective buyer failed to meet score enough points, the twenty-four brokers and eleven associated brokers and builders of the GPBA were all advised of the fact. Failure to heed the results would lead to the personal intervention of the executive secretary of the GPBOA. According to the GPBA's own regulations, "the penalty for selling to an ineligible shall be forfeiture to the Association of the full commission, including the salesman's share."²³⁸ Paul W. Rowe, a former mayor of Grosse Pointe Woods, testified about the consequences of violating the GPBA's advisory system when he related how he was expelled from the association in 1957 for selling houses to two Italian families.²³⁹ Expulsion from the broker's association was a serious matter for a business that depended on having access to a network of critical contacts and information.²⁴⁰

In a joint statement by the GPBA and GPPOA, the guardians of the point system defended their interference in the private market as "a matter of supply and demand," that is, as a function

²³⁷ Cost of the investigation detailed in Jack Casey, "Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended," *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1960; 1,597 and 658 figures comes from Don Beck, "40 Pct. Flunk Grosse Pointe Realty Test," *Detroit Free Press*, April 21, 1960; average income for an American family given in "Average Income of Families Up Slightly in 1960," US Bureau of the Census, June 9, 1962, available online at <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-036.pdf>, accessed August 11, 2016.

²³⁸ Jack Casey, "Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended," *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1960; Joseph E. Wolff and Robert A. Popa, "GP Point Plan Detailed," *Detroit News*, May 3, 1960; from "Regulations Governing the Screening Process of Grosse Pointe Brokers Association," quoted in Don Beck, "40 Pct. Flunk Grosse Pointe Realty Test," *Detroit Free Press*, April 21, 1960.

²³⁹ Jack Casey, "G.P. Brokers Air Reprisal in Point System Violation," *Detroit Free Press*, undated; Popa and Wolff, "Rebel Realtor to be Called in Pointe Quiz," *Detroit News*, undated; Ray Girardin, "Violated Point System, Broker Expelled – Tells of GP Association's Reprisal," *Detroit Times*, May 12, 1960.

²⁴⁰ Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," 564.

of the private market. If neighborhood begins to become home for “a cliquish or clannish group of families unlikely to absorb local customs,” then it was only to be expected that potential home buyers (of the non-cliquish or -clannish variety, one guesses) would prefer to buy “where he believes his investment will be more secure.” It was a matter of home values and appraisals, “a vicious circle” in which the guardians noted that “even the unprejudiced person is affected.” The fear of integration lowering home values had the effect of lowering home values.²⁴¹

The GPBA and the GPPOA were not off the mark, either. Lowered housing values were not caused by integration, but by racial and xenophobic reactions to integration, or even the possibility of integration. The vicious circle existed, confirming the worldview of the prejudiced, and it was exploited by the less scrupulous of the real estate profession. In a move known as blockbusting, realtors and brokers would sell a house in an all-white neighborhood to a black family, or begin the rumor that such a transaction was soon to take place. Fearing a “takeover,” fear actively encouraged by the realtor or broker, the white residents would sell their homes quickly and – more importantly – cheaply. The broker or realtor would then sell the houses, no longer so cheap, to African Americans who were searching for a way out of the low-quality inner-city housing that residential segregation had forced them to accept in the first place. As economist Richard Rothstein phrased it, “Blockbusting could work only because the FHA made certain that African Americans had few alternative neighborhoods where they could purchase homes at fair market values.”²⁴²

²⁴¹ All quotes from the GPBA and GPPOA joint statement, reproduced in full in Jack Casey, “Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1960

²⁴² Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 195-196. For an example of blockbusting in East Palo Alto, California, see Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 12-13. For the quote, see Rothstein, 99. In fn 97, 271, Rothstein notes that blockbusting has been documented as being “prevalent” in Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Washington, DC, Chicago, “and other cities and in some of their suburbs.”

This process in the city of Detroit was exacerbated by the changing economic landscape, as the postwar movement of industry out of the city coincided with the changing racial landscape. Working-class white Detroiters consequently sought “to defend a world that they feared was slipping away,” as historian Thomas Sugrue notes, but in their view, “they blamed blacks for their insecurity.” The urban landscape racism had created served to further confirm the racism of white Detroiters. In reality, the first black family to move into an all-white neighborhood was often on better financial footing than many of their new neighbors.²⁴³

But it was not working-class Detroiters, white or non-white, who were house-hunting in Grosse Pointe. The economic argument around property values seems less convincing when, as in the case of those looking to move to Grosse Pointe, the people involved were far from financial instability. Economics and property values do little to explain the following three cases.

The first is that of Dr. Jean Braxton Rosenbaum, a psychiatrist and inventor who was also a direct descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In a letter to the Michigan Attorney General Paul L. Adams, Dr. Rosenbaum described how he was told he would have to wait to be passed by the GPPOA before purchasing a house in Grosse Pointe. Later, his broker informed him that “I could not buy, or even look at, a house in Grosse Pointe because I was Jewish.”²⁴⁴ Incidentally, the point system did not exclude those of Jewish background entirely, at least in theory. As Paul Maxon, the head of the Maxon Brothers, Inc, real estate office, explained, a person such as Albert Einstein could purchase a home in Grosse Pointe “because he was of sufficient prominence.”²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 211-214, 216.

²⁴⁴ “Jewish Doctor Bares GP Snub,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1960. “Grosse Pointe,” *Rights: ADL Reports on Social, Employment, Educational and Housing Discrimination*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1960.

²⁴⁵ “Negroes Don’t Count in Grosse Pointe Bias,” *Detroit Courier*, April 23, 1960.

Second is the testimony of Bruce N. Tappan, the president of the GPBA and a resident of Grosse Pointe Park. While on the stand, Tappan was asked by Solicitor General Samuel J. Torina, “Suppose a person in the Beaconsfield-Jefferson area has the money to move onto Lake Shore. Why should he be investigated?” Tappan shot back, “Just because a man is loaded with money doesn’t make him a gentleman.”²⁴⁶

Third, and last, consider the testimony of Orville F. Sherwood, to the effect that decisions over desirability could be reversed. In one case, Sherwood related how one prospective home buyer, who had run a real estate office on Woodward, and “employed a racially mixed staff of salesmen and office workers,” was “blacklisted from buying in Grosse Pointe.” However, it was later discovered that that the prospective home buyer had moved his business to a new location and had hired a white-only workforce. His blacklisting was repealed.²⁴⁷

In the first case, a man in the medical profession with a family history directly connected with the American Revolution was considered undesirable because he was also Jewish. The second tells us that personal finances or wealth were irrelevant. The guardians only allowed “gentlemen” to penetrate their cities’ borders. The term is vague. It easily could include self-made gentlemen but taken in conjunction with Dr. Rosenbaum’s experiences, perhaps it was more a declaration that “breeding” or background matters. In the third case, a businessman was undesirable not for any personal or financial characteristic but because his hiring practices were objectionable to the guardians of Grosse Pointe. The decision to reverse his blacklisting after he changed his business practices demonstrates this.

²⁴⁶ Testimony also in Wolff and Popa, “Inquiry on ‘Point System’ is Recessed for a Week,” *Detroit News*, May 5, 1960.

²⁴⁷ Testimony in Wolff and Popa, “Inquiry on ‘Point System’ is Recessed for a Week,” *Detroit News*, May 5, 1960.

It also demonstrates how insidiously racial segregation and discrimination operated. The economic argument forwarded by the guardians of Grosse Pointe rested on rotten foundations. That this businessman's hiring practices had no direct connection to his desirability as a neighbor, and certainly not to housing values, did not stop him from being blacklisted. His undesirability was rooted in his hiring a "racially mixed staff" in an office nowhere close to Grosse Pointe. His subsequent desirability came from his adopting discriminatory hiring practices. It is difficult to conceive how this criterion relates to matters of supply and demand in the housing market or matters of property appraisal.

Yet, the defenders of the point system maintained that it was merely "the most careful and considerate method possible for making the best of a difficult fact – of prejudices which affect real estate value, just as street paving and water systems are also facts affecting value." With not a hint of irony, the attorneys representing the GPBA and GPPOA publicly stated that the point system was "a plan that recognizes that all property owners, of whatever extraction, should be free to sell to whom they choose."²⁴⁸ After Bruce N. Tappan expressed his opinion on the difference between being a gentleman and merely "loaded with money," he testified that "it is pretty well known throughout Grosse Pointe that the brokers are always standing guard."²⁴⁹ Again, that realtors in the Pointes were always guarding the housing market belies their claims that housing was a matter of a free market, personal choice, and supply and demand.

Always standing guard, but against whom? The defenders of the point system argued that they were standing guard in defense of stable property values, but they were not reluctant to testify that they also stood guard against Jewish medical professionals moving next door and businessmen

²⁴⁸ The GPBA and GPPOA joint statement and the statement by the attorneys are both in Jack Casey, "Grosse Pointe Resident-Screening Plan Defended," *Detroit Free Press*, April 20, 1960.

²⁴⁹ Quoted in Wolff and Popa, "Inquiry on 'Point System' is Recessed for a Week," *Detroit News*, May 5, 1960.

who, in their private practices, hired employees who were not white. The emphasis on property values should not be dismissed, even as it appears unable to bear the weight placed on it by the guardians of Grosse Pointe. In spirit, if not in the details, this was in no way unique to Grosse Pointe or metropolitan Detroit. “This plan is being conducted,” testified realtor Paul Maxon, “in fine residential communities all over the country, but in a more informal manner, in a more haphazard, less fair, less intelligent manner than our own conscientious, sincere attempt to make the best of these well-known prejudices as they exist.”²⁵⁰

Again, there was a bitter truth behind the words of the defenders of the point system. Violence over integrated housing was a staple of early 20th century Detroit history. In 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet moved his family into an all-white neighborhood, causing a mob to crowd the street outside on September 9, pelting the house with stones, until someone inside the house fired into the crowd, striking two. The resulting murder trial brought the NAACP and Clarence Darrow to Detroit to defend Dr. Sweet and his friends who had been inside. Darrow achieved acquittals from an all-white jury after detailing the pervasive violence faced by African Americans over housing, and arguing that firing in self-defense was justified.²⁵¹ In February 1942, fighting broke out among a crowd of over a thousand people when the Sojourner Truth public housing project, for black residents in a white neighborhood, opened. The result was at least forty injured, over two hundred arrested, and over a hundred sent to trial.²⁵²

More pervasive was the more mundane, yet sustained, forms of violence faced by black pioneers in white neighborhoods: in cases from the late 1940s through the 1950s, these included thrown rocks and bricks, break-ins, water damage, thrown paint, smashed windows, constant

²⁵⁰ Wolff and Popa, “GP Point System Detailed,” *Detroit News*, May 3, 1960.

²⁵¹ Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*.

²⁵² Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 73-77.

phone calls, crowds outside at night, cars slowly driving at night, thrown eggs, salted yards, picketing, effigy burning, arson, slashed car tires, burning crosses, shouted epithets, torn down fences, trampled gardens, firebombing, burning trash cans, dumped garbage and waste.²⁵³ Between 1943 and 1960, at least 192 home owners associations were formed in the city of Detroit. As the flyer of one such association's emergency meeting in March 1950 alerted the public to the beginnings of integration, "Neighborhood Invaded by Colored Purchase on Orleans & Minnesota."²⁵⁴ The commonly-used language of *invasion* and calls for defense and protection indicate the degree to which urban spaces was divided into zones of occupation in the imaginations of city residents, with borders not to be crossed. Granting the premise of boundaries and borders, the logic of forceful response, including violence, follows in the case of unauthorized crossings.²⁵⁵

While racial prejudice was widespread – and in the case of Grosse Pointe, ethnic and religious prejudice as well – it is also accurate to characterize lowering of property values as a self-fulfilling prophecy, in the same way that a run on banks produces the outcome that everyone feared and had acted solely in order to avoid.²⁵⁶ The threat to property values were not just a case of prejudice, but of material circumstances, even if those material circumstance were, in turn, created by prejudice. As Jane Jacobs once noted, however, "credit-blacklisting maps, like slum-clearance maps, are accurate prophecies because they are self-fulfilling prophecies."²⁵⁷

The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established in 1933 to underwrite mortgages in order to reduce foreclosures. Its long-term appraisal system included the building

²⁵³ The ninth chapter of *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, "Violence and the Color Line," detail these acts of harassment and intimidation. See Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 231-258.

²⁵⁴ Martelle, *Detroit: A Biography*, 189.

²⁵⁵ See Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 75, 215, 226-229, 246-258.

²⁵⁶ The example of a bank-run as a self-fulfilling prophecy comes from the sociologist Robert Merton, who coined the term *self-fulfilling prophecy* in 1948.

²⁵⁷ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 301; Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 447.

itself as well as the surrounding neighborhood. In the case of the latter, homogenous, native-born, white-collar communities were privileged over diverse, working-class, and ethnic or black neighborhoods. As historian Kenneth Jackson has argued, the HOLC created the practice of redlining, named for the color used to designate high-risk neighborhoods on HOLC maps. More importantly, Jackson notes how this appraisal system rested on assumptions about the causes of neighborhood decline. It took decline to be the natural outcome of the age of structures and declining incomes. Just as importantly, there was no provision in the HOLC appraisal system to distinguish between changing demographics as a cause of decline, or of decline as the cause of changing neighborhood demographics.²⁵⁸ Private lending institutions, in turn, took their cue from this system of appraisal.²⁵⁹

When the HOLC was incorporated into the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934, it also incorporated these standards of appraisal. A 1938 FHA *Underwriting Manual* stated that, “if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.”²⁶⁰ The boundaries between different classes and races were often symbolic, but they could be all too concrete as well. In the 1930s, white Detroiters who moved near a black enclave on 8 Mile Road (today the northern limit of Detroit proper) could not secure FHA insurance due to the geographic proximity of black and white homeowners. In 1941, a developer built a concrete wall between the white and black communities, and the FHA

²⁵⁸ Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 423. Jackson notes how the idea of neighborhoods being “invaded” or “infiltrated” originated in models developed at the University of Chicago by Homer Hoyt and Robert Park in the 1920s and 1930s. It is also worth noting that this assumption of diversity and low-incomes equating to decline and slums was vigorously attacked by Jane Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. See also Arnold R Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁵⁹ Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 430; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.

²⁶⁰ Jones-Correa, "The Origins and Diffusion of Racial Restrictive Covenants," 565. The FHA 1938 *Underwriting Manual* was written by Frederick Babcock, who wrote *The Valuation of Real Estate* in 1932, which advocated enforcing segregated neighborhoods to protect from “undesirable” elements. See also Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 424.

then approved the mortgages for the white properties.²⁶¹ The wall still stands today. It was this federal support of segregation that allowed local initiatives, like restrictive covenants, to work effectively. In 1955, Charles Abrams, whom *Architectural Forum* described as “the foremost housing consultant in the United States,” described deeds with restrictive covenants due to FHA policies as “the common form of deed.”²⁶²

Even as the HOLC and FHA policies encouraged and reinforced racial segregation throughout the United States, their loans made homeownership a possibility for more Americans than ever before, including working-class families. However, the means by which homeownership was put within the purview of more Americans – and its privileging of new, single-family, construction – also resulted in the residential hollowing out of inner cities via suburbanization.²⁶³ The same programs that made home ownership an obtainable goal for the first time for many Americans also encourage those new homes to be built outside central cities, in suburban areas, while also condemning minorities to segregated neighborhoods, often in aging, inner cities. The causal relationship between integration and lowered property values was a fragment of the larger interlocking mechanisms of racial inequality in the United States, composed of self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling prophecies that blamed the victims of prejudice for the discrimination they faced while simultaneously denying minorities the means to create better lives.

²⁶¹ Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 437.

²⁶² Charles Abrams, *Forbidden Neighbors*, quoted in Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 446. Description of Charles Abrams taken from his obituary in the *New York Times*, February 23, 1970, <http://www.nytimes.com/1970/02/23/archives/charles-abrams-worldwide-housing-expert-dies-lawyer-author-68.html>, accessed March 30, 2017. Richards Rothstein constructed a historical and legal case in his 2017 book *The Color of Law* that federal policies supporting, encouraging, and implementing racial segregation were deliberate and intentional; see Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.

²⁶³ Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal," 432-433; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Self, *American Babylon*.

The Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council

The Grosse Pointe point system is often mentioned when segregation in Detroit is under discussion. Its systematic nature, based on rationality and efficiency, made it much more grotesque in a post-segregationist world. It was not a matter of passionate hatred, but rather a pragmatic solution given, calmly and reasonably, to difficult social tensions and conflicts. It is a reminder that racial discrimination can manifest in many different forms, and some of them can be banal in appearance, a far cry from the popular images of racism in the South. Photographs of lynchings or civil rights demonstrators being attacked spring readily to mind, but more structural forms of prejudice, such as housing segregation, are more difficult to see and compound over generations. To borrow from Hannah Arendt, we can speak of a banality of racism, and, to borrow from President John F. Kennedy, all that is required is for everyday people not to question the status quo, to follow orders, or, in this case, to follow the rest of the neighborhood.²⁶⁴

This is why it is so important to say that not all Grosse Pointers approved, supported, condoned, or appreciated the efforts of the Grosse Pointe segregationists. As is broadly true throughout human history, there were those who disagreed with the majority, and acted to the contrary. Held up as the bastion of segregation in metropolitan Detroit and as the home of the over-the-top point system, it was rarely, if ever, noted that other Grosse Pointers organized to combat segregation and racism when the point system became public knowledge in 1960. This newly-formed group continued to challenge segregationist policies for the next thirteen years. None would have stood out as rabble-rousers or trouble-makers on paper: they were professionals, upper-middle class, homeowners, men and women concerned with education and reaching out to

²⁶⁴ While John F. Kennedy credited Edmund Burke with the lines “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do thing,” that exact phrase cannot be found in any of Burke’s writings. However, the sentiment, in different words, can be found in both Burke and John Stuart Mills. See the *Quote Investigator* blog, <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/12/04/good-men-do/>, accessed 9/29/18.

houses of worship. They began by meeting secretly in each other's homes, but by the mid-to-late sixties they were marching in the street, knocking on doors, and pushing for a more inclusive community.

In 1960, the year of the investigatory hearings into discrimination among the real estate industry in Grosse Pointe, community members organized into the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council (GPHRC) to promote integration and cross-racial understanding. Admittedly, the founding members recognized that their social views were in the minority in Grosse Pointe, and so their meetings were held clandestinely in members' homes. At these first meetings, members largely "listened to Negro and white speakers, and tried to find ways to encourage integration and open housing."²⁶⁵ By 1962, the group had developed a wide-ranging general program of action.

The GPHRC discussed education and the hiring practices of schools. They showed the "support of our group for hiring Negro teachers [and] for the general hiring practices at all levels in the system without regard to race or creed." They discussed school curriculum and whether it is "designed to strengthen the concept of equality and brotherhood as American ideals." They wondered if the books in the local library "treat[ed] minority characters naturally and without stereotype," and they suggested erecting exhibits "emphasizing the contribution to American life and culture made by various groups, institutions, races, and nationalities." They talked about hosting teas or autographing parties with contemporary authors, "including authors from minority groups." Council members proposed that recreation was an efficient means to their goals. They suggested promoting athletic contests between "teams from the wider metropolitan area" and organizing a baseball or other athletic clinic with "teachers, prominent sports figures representing

²⁶⁵ 1970-1971 GPHRC membership flier, Box 1, Folder 7, GPCROP.

racial and national origins,” The also explored how to make it “comfortable for minority group friends of residents” to visit the waterfront parks of Grosse Pointe.²⁶⁶

The Council did not ignore commercial matters in their program. They intended to research public accommodation in Grosse Pointe among restaurants, motels, stores, banks, and other businesses. They wanted to know about their employment practices and how they could indicate their support of businesses with fair hiring practices. They investigated how public servants such as police officers were hired in Grosse Pointe and noted that many of the postal workers serving their community were African American. The Council planned to meet with labor unions, such as those of retail clerks, municipal workers, and waitresses, to further investigate hiring practices in the Pointes. Finally, there was housing, which was an issue “so broad and significant” to the organization.

After a few years the organization decided to publicly push for open housing and integration in Grosse Pointe. Members of the Council, the January 1963 GPHRC newsletter declared, “will agree that an all-white suburb stands as a symbol of the racism which troubles our society. Grosse Pointe residents need to make clear that they do not support racial exclusiveness.”²⁶⁷ Thus, in 1963, the same year which saw police dogs and fire hoses let loose on civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council organized a walk through Grosse Pointe in support of open housing. They organized their demonstration for June, the same month that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led a march down Woodward Avenue in Detroit and delivered a speech at Cobo Hall. Flanked by Reverend C.L. Franklin, the father of

²⁶⁶ All information in this paragraph and the next on the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council in 1962 from “Grosse Pointe Committee on Human Relations, Subcommittee on program (Arnold Johnson, chair; Louise Brown, secretary) Proposals to total body agreed upon by subcommittee May 18, 1962,” Box 1, Folder 2, GPCROP.

²⁶⁷ January 1963 Newsletter, Box 3, Folder 1, GPCROP.

Aretha, and the Detroit Council of Human Relations, Dr. King proclaimed that “segregation is a cancer in the body politic, which must be removed before our democratic health can be realized.”²⁶⁸

“In a real sense,” Dr. King continued, “we are through with segregation now, henceforth, and forevermore.” Before launching into his conclusion, which announced the same dream later delivered at the March on Washington, King encouraged his Detroit audience, “to work with determination to get rid of any segregation and discrimination in Detroit, realizing that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere [...] we must come to see that *de facto* segregation in the North is just as injurious as the actual segregation in the South.”²⁶⁹ King’s campaigns against housing segregation in the North are popularly associated with Chicago in the later 60s, yet at the height of the voting and anti-segregation campaigns in the South, King was in Detroit sounding the alarm on racial segregation in Northern cities.²⁷⁰

The Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council was just one of many Human Relations Councils across metropolitan Detroit to answer King’s call. In 1964, there were twenty-five such groups, including Human Relation Councils in Grosse Ile, Redford, Rochester, Trenton, Warren,

²⁶⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Address at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall,” June 23, 1963, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/address-freedom-rally-cobo-hall>, accessed on October 11, 2018.

²⁶⁹ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Address at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall,” June 23, 1963, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/address-freedom-rally-cobo-hall>, accessed on October 11, 2018.

²⁷⁰ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University, 2005); Mary Lou Finley et al., eds., *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the north* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2016). For the classic biography of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, see Taylor Branch’s trilogy: Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005); Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King years, 1963-65* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999); Taylor Branch, *At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007).

Centerline, Allen Park, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, and Pontiac.²⁷¹ The Grosse Pointe Council officially incorporated in 1964, with Dr. Charles E. Brake as its president. Seventy-nine Grosse Pointe residents attended its first membership meeting. Within one year, the Council had grown to 334 members. By 1969, it was over 500.²⁷² Once the Council had decided to take the step to become a public presence in Grosse Pointe, they did not back down. In 1966, they sent a letter to their members requesting permission to print members' names in the *Grosse Pointe News* and the *Grosse Pointe Press*, "as an expression of welcome to the 2 Negro families who are now residents of the Grosse Pointes."²⁷³ The two families, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Wright and Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Brown, both later moved out of Grosse Pointe in 1967 due to job transfers. When the Wrights moved in, the GPHRC not only welcomed them, but it also made sure that the family was not alone at the house, especially at night. After sunset, according to GPHRC member Sally Brown, a large number of cars would drive by the Wright's home until roughly 10:30 p.m., a chilling reminder that the Council's integrationist position was far from universally shared in the Pointes. The Council developed written plans on how to intervene in the case of "mob action" when families moved in, when houses were sold but not yet occupied, and when there was just the anticipation of a house being sold.²⁷⁴

As its members organized for integration and open housing in the Pointes, the Council found allies among local religious institutions. In 1966, David W. Palmer of the Grosse Pointe Congregational Church wrote to the Council that, "I believe that the Council's efforts have resulted

²⁷¹ *The Open Door*, June 1964, Vol 11, No. 1, Greater Detroit Committee for Fair Housing Practices, Box 1, Folder 8, GPCROP. Another indication of the spread and importance of Human Relation Councils as a movement is that Michigan State University hosted a Conference on Human Relations on June 3, 1967. See "University Resources and the Role of the Human Relations Committee in the Community: Proceedings on the Conference on Human Relations," Box 1, Folder 9, GPCROP.

²⁷² 1970-1971 GPHRC membership flier and the 1969-1970 GPHRC membership flier, Box 1, Folder 7, GPCROP.

²⁷³ Blair Moody Jr. to members of GRPHRC, July 31, 1966. Box 1, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁷⁴ "Emergency Plan A," Box 1, Folder 3 and "Proposed Plan for Dealing with Move-In Problem in Grosse Pointe," Box 3, Folder 5, GPCROP.

in a reasonable degree of tolerance, and that you should feel encouraged.”²⁷⁵ The spring of that year, the Council handed out pledge cards at local churches, so that churchgoers could publicly signal their support for the belief that “We who live in Grosse Pointe believe that any family should be free to choose its place of residence. We welcome neighbors on a personal basis without regard to race, creed, or country of origin.”²⁷⁶

Additionally, the Council spent a decade working to promote cross-cultural understanding. To them, segregation was not just a matter of economic and political inequality. Practical responses, such as escorting families during house visits, or planning to intervene in the event of a mob action, were a central part of their program. But so too were speakers, cultural events, panel discussions, and education aimed at furthering open housing as well as understanding between black and white Detroiters. For the Council, increased understanding and communication between the races was part of the remedy to segregation and racism in the metropolitan area. Many of these efforts were done in cooperation with ethnic and racial organizations. The Council, for example, encouraged its members in 1968 to support The Now People Arts Festival in East Detroit as part of their Human Relations Week. “Art,” the Council reasoned, “is to be the good common denominator for people to work together in an interreligious, interracial setting.”²⁷⁷ It was how they understood art and cultural events to be an essential ingredient in combatting racism. It also demonstrated how the Council was interested in not just creating a more inclusive community in Grosse Pointe but in Detroit and other suburbs. Additionally, they sought out ways to work with other organizations to improve relations across ethnic, religious, and racial lines.

²⁷⁵ Letter from David W. Palmer, September 1966, Box 1, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁷⁶ Kathy Cosseboom, *Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Race Against Race*, (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972,) 10, 14-15.

²⁷⁷ 1970-1971 GPHRC membership flier and 1969-1970 GPHRC membership flier, Box 1, Folder 7, GPCROP; Minutes for Annual Meeting, May 22, 1968, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

That same year, 1968, the Council brought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to speak in Grosse Pointe. This was their most well-known action as an organization. It would be difficult to say that it was their most important, for how could one devise a metric to measure the importance of providing support, solidarity, and friendship to black families moving into a hostile white suburb? Nonetheless, Dr. King's speech in Grosse Pointe, especially in conjunction with the tragedy of his murder on April 4 of that year, was an event of historical significance in its own right.

The Council began organizing in 1967 to bring Dr. King to speak the following spring, likely as part of their commitment to "sponsor meaningful and forceful programs" following the Detroit riots.²⁷⁸ In addition to Dr. King, the Council considered inviting Roy Wilkins, of the NAACP, or Patrick Moynihan, of the Moynihan Report.²⁷⁹ By the beginning of 1968, rumors of Dr. King's proposed visit to Grosse Pointe caused the president of the Council, Harry C. Meserve, to write to members. On February 12, 1968, he wrote that "while a great many rumors have circulated about this meeting, we believe that it will prove to be an important occasion of value to our whole community."²⁸⁰

Once again the views of the members of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council were not universally shared by other residents of Grosse Pointe. In March of 1968, the Grosse Pointe Property Owners Association, one of the two organizations behind the point system, sent a letter to all residents of Grosse Pointe. The letter listed the officers and directors of the Human Relations Council and the members of the Board of Education who had voted to allow Dr. King to speak the Grosse Pointe High School. The GPPOA's epistolary attempt at intimidation did not end there. Seeking to drive community opinion against the GPHRC and the appearance by King, the GPPOA

²⁷⁸ Will H. Kessler to Dr. Harry Meserve, re: Action Committee of the GPHRC, September 30, 1967, Box 1, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁷⁹ GPHRC Board Meeting, November 7, 1967, Box 2, Folder 4, GPCROP.

²⁸⁰ Harry C. Meserve to members, February 12, 1968, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

chided in their mass letter that “Grosse Pointe taxpayers will be forced to pay for additional police protection.” The letter then threw out the inflammatory supposition that “the [Grosse Pointe] Farms police are greatly concerned about the possibility of violence resulting from the appearance of Rev. King.”²⁸¹ Despite King’s well-known dedication to non-violence, the GPPOA did not shy away from suggesting that King, and by extension the GPHRC and the Grosse Pointe Board of Education, would be the ones responsible for any violence that resulted from King’s appearance in Grosse Pointe.

The GPPOA also distributed an essay, detailing their opposition to Dr. King, with the mass letter delivered to all Grosse Pointe residents. Printed on the verso of the letter, Frank S. Meyer’s “Showdown with Insurrection: Principles & Heresies,” from the *National Review* gave the residents of Grosse Pointe a better and fuller description of the dangers that Dr. King presented to their community. The “blatant admission that the aim of the non-violent movement,” the author wrote

is to provoke violence only exposes the surface. It is not merely in its commitment to the provocation of violence by others that this movement betrays the hypocrisy of its name; it is violent in its very essence, relying as it does upon a terror inspired by mobs to destroy the processes of constitutional government.

Thus the author, and the GPPOA, warned that the Nobel Peace Prize recipient was a violent hypocrite who, via terror, worked to subvert the constitutional government of the United States. In contrast to the seemingly dangerous path of Dr. King, Meyer praised that of Booker T. Washington, the educator who had discouraged thinking progress could be won through direct challenges to segregation and disfranchisement. “Respect and access to jobs,” Grosse Pointe’s residents read, “must be earned.” In his call for the “preservation of constitutional order,” Meyer apparently saw no contradiction in writing that a group of citizens must earn their civil rights,

²⁸¹ March 1968, GPPOA to all Grosse Pointe Residents, recto, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

guaranteed by the constitution through citizenship. The essay also traded in the classic tactic of characterizing the Other as inherently dangerous, violent, and criminal. Likewise, Meyer also blames the recipient of prejudicial treatment for causing that prejudicial treatment; here, that the possibility of violence in response to a talk in favor of civil rights is the fault of the speaker, and not the people acting violently.²⁸²

While the GPPOA's mass letter campaign was not subtle, the anti-King campaign of the far-right Detroit group, Breakthrough, was even less so. In a flyer entitled, "A Call to Action," the group wrote to residents of the metropolitan area that "with your help we hope to give Mr. King [sic] the kind of reception he deserves." Later in the same flyer, the group griped that "An American – George Wallace – was not allowed to come into our city to speak." The group unfavorably compared Dr. King to Governor Wallace, the notorious Dixiecrat from Alabama and presidential candidate who once declared that he stood for "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." The designation of Wallace as "an American" implies that Dr. King was not, in keeping with the othering of King, and all African Americans, as dangerous, violent, and suspect. Immediately, the group lumped their own difficulties in finding meeting spaces, including halls that had canceled their contract with Breakthrough, to the alleged censorship of George Wallace in Detroit. "Yet the Groppis, the King's, and the Carmichael's," the flyer concluded, "can come in here at their leisure and preach their hate and treason with impunity."²⁸³ While the GPPOA told the residents of Grosse Pointe that Dr. King stood for

²⁸² March 1968, GPPOA to all Grosse Pointe Residents, verso, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

²⁸³ "A Call to Action To All Breakthrough Members and Supporters," 1968, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP. Father James Groppi was a Roman Catholic priest involved in civil rights activism. Stokely Carmichael, later Kwame Ture, was a leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and is credited with coining the term "Black Power" in 1966. It is interesting that two out of the three examples are clergymen.

violence and the subverting of constitutional order, the far-right Breakthrough called him a preacher of hatred and treason. Rhetorical differences aside, the two analyses were not far apart.

Another flyer from Breakthrough, titled “Join the Protest Demonstration Against Martin Luther King,” managed to be even more belligerent towards the civil rights leader. Throughout the flyer words like *riot*, *peace*, and *civil rights* were always put in quotation marks. At one point, the author accused King of seeking to “bring our country ever closer to a state of total anarchy, communist revolution, overthrow and finally conquest.” It is not too surprising, given this line of reasoning, that the flyer concluded that anyone who attended King’s talk had to be a communist, a betrayer of the American forces in Vietnam, and guilty of treason.²⁸⁴

These flyers reveal more than just racial conflict in Grosse Pointe and metropolitan Detroit. There were claims about free speech, fears over the failure of the democratic process, the Cold War struggle between communism and capitalism, and the United States’ involvement in Vietnam. Finally, the Detroit riots of July 1967 were still stalking in the backs of many minds in the spring of 1968. This was especially so in communities immediately adjacent to Detroit, such as Grosse Pointe. “The riots polarized the races,” Kathy Cosseboom recalled her mother remarking, “The fear of the riots spreading to Grosse Pointe was very real.”²⁸⁵ Consequently, tensions were high in the Pointes preceding King’s speech. Given their “concern about the possibility of violence,” and “anticipat[ing] that any expense resulting from damage to school property” would be more than the Council could afford, two of the school board members, Arnold Fuchs and Calvin Sandberg insisted that the Council insure for the school for \$1 million for the night of March 14. The two

²⁸⁴ “Join the Protest Demonstration Against Martin Luther King,” Breakthrough, 1968, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

²⁸⁵ Kathy Cosseboom, *Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Race Against Race* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972), 166.

school board members had previously voted against the GPHRC and King being allowed to use school property.²⁸⁶

Over 1,700 people came to hear King's speech, "The Other America." Despite the "brazen" interruptions and heckling King received, the Council considered the event successful despite the bill of \$2,300 for police protection.²⁸⁷ The Council organized a panel discussion on his speech on April 9, "in order to preserve the awakened thoughtful feeling that . . . Dr. King has inspired in the community." Unfortunately, the event was overshadowed by the assassination of King on April 3, while he was in Memphis supporting striking sanitation workers. The Council decided the postpone the event for two weeks. The members of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, like many across the nation and the world, were shaken and shocked by King's violent death.²⁸⁸ Members of the Council discussed ways of commemorating Dr. King's life, including publishing his speech delivered in Grosse Pointe in a commemorative book. They donated \$500 to Detroit's Department of Parks and Recreation in memoriam.²⁸⁹

By the late 1960s, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council, like many other civil rights organizations in the United States, was increasingly frustrated with the seemingly slow pace of change. The night before Dr. King's assassination, the Council held a board meeting at which a

²⁸⁶ March 1968, GPPOA to all Grosse Pointe Residents. recto, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

²⁸⁷ Board meeting, April 2, 1968, Box 2, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁸⁸ Letter to council member, March 22, 1968,

March 22, 1968 letter and April 17, 1968 letter to council members, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP; Paul Lee, "Up North: Martin Luther King, Jr., in Grosse Pointe; Part I of II." Michigan Citizen, Jan 24, 2004; "Dr. Martin Luther King," Grosse Pointe Historical Society, <http://www.gphistorical.org/mlk/index.htm>, accessed December 19, 2011; Cosseboom, *Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Race Against Race*, 11.

²⁸⁹ Board meeting, May 7, 1968, Box 2, Folder 5, GPCROP. The next year, on March 14, 1969, the GPHRC commemorated Dr. King's speech in Grosse Pointe with a memorial ceremony at Grosse Pointe South High School. Reverend Willis Taber spoke, and the Northeastern High School choir performed. The Council presented duplicate sets of books to both Grosse Pointe high schools and the central library in memory of Dr. King, at a cost of \$157. Books were considered to be "more effective in winning young people to Dr. King's cause," see board meeting, January 7, 1969; board meeting, March 4, 1969; and GPHRC 5th Annual Membership Meeting, May 28, 1969, in Box 2, Folder 6, GPCROP. Later, on April 8, 1969, the Board approved a further \$85 on books after hearing that student at the private St. Paul's High School "were hurt at being omitted from our donation of books in memory of Dr. King," board Meeting, April 8, 1969, Box 2, Folder 5 GPCROP.

member demanded that the organization answer the following question: “Are we going to be a reactor group only or are we going to initiate action?” The meeting minutes of a board meeting in October, 1968, succinctly yet eloquently summed up the night’s meeting by reporting that it was “regretted that the council has been all talk and no action.”²⁹⁰

In 1969, the Council poured its energy into a Fair Housing bill in Grosse Pointe Farms, which ultimately was defeated, 2,200 to 1,500 votes, after “an exceptionally large turnout for a spring election.” Despite the loss, the Council noted that there were at least 1,500 residents welcoming to minority home-buyers.²⁹¹ In their campaign, the Council was assisted by the Grosse Pointe Students Council on Racial Equality (SCORE), which took a more direct route to organizing. Whereas Council members would affix brochures to doorknobs, the students insisted on ringing doorbells and having discussions on fair housing with the inhabitants then and there. “There were,” the Council’s Board noted, “some complaints and problems with the police.”²⁹²

Just as the Council was learning to work with more ardent student activists, so they could not avoid the issue of the war in Vietnam. In 1971, the Grosse Pointe Human Rights Council connected civil rights with the war in Vietnam. Much like others had done during the previous wars the US fought in during the 20th century, the GPHRC noted that black soldiers were dying in Vietnam yet faced discrimination at home. In advertisements in the *Grosse Pointe News*, the Council apologized to readers for bringing up dead or maimed black Americans soldiers in Vietnam. In a slight towards respectability politics, the advertisement asked what a better topic of conversation would be. “Daylight saving time?” the text demanded. “Municipal boatwells? Improved snow removal? . . . Meanwhile, back in Viet Nam, Harlem, and Cambodia choices are

²⁹⁰ Board meeting, April 2, 1968, and October 8, 1968, Box 2, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁹¹ Dr. John Olson, VP Fair Housing Committee, re: Grosse Pointe Farms Fair Housing Vote, May 1969, Box 3, Folder 1, GPCROP.

²⁹² Board meeting, February 4, 1969, Box 2, Folder 6, GPCROP.

more limited.”²⁹³ In addition to the moral case being made over sacrifices of life and limb, the language also carries an argument about citizenship.

With the new decade of the 1970s, the public statements of the GPHRC contained a new urgency. Housing continued to be a concern. “The Grosse Pointe real estate complex continues to be uncooperative,” the Council’s Housing Committee reported in 1971, “and resistive to assuming its moral obligations to people or its legal obligation to the spirit of the MI Fair Housing Law, Public Act 112 of 1968.” The Housing Committee continued:

Our business should and must be to break down the relatively unchallenged control which the real estate complex holds. Real estate firms seldom show blatant discrimination, but, with few exceptions, engage in subtle tactics aimed at effectively discouraging minority home-seekers.

The Housing Committee reiterated the need for the Council to accompany home-seekers in order to “record all interactions, and act as witnesses if necessary.”²⁹⁴

The next couple years did not show much improvement in terms of housing integration, as far as the Council’s Housing Committee was concerned. Dr. Douglas A. Sargent, the chair of the Housing Committee in 1973, reported in late September of that year that “It is our opinion that the Fair Housing Act of 1968 has had little practical impact upon the pattern of minority housing in Grosse Pointe.” All minorities, the report continued, but especially those of African ancestry, could find housing in the Grosse Pointe community “by the exercise of great initiative and persistence.” Such energy and work, the author noted, “would not be necessary for similarly qualified white buyers.” By qualifying the latter group with “similarly qualified,” Dr. Sargent emphasized that

²⁹³ “Now That the Smoke Has Cleared,” *Grosse Pointe News*, February 18, 1971. The *Grosse Pointe News* had complained about the GPHRC’s advertisements before, at least as early as 1969, when the editor refused to run one, feeling that it was “in bad taste.” See board meeting, November 4, 1969 and December 2, 1969, Box 2, Folder 6, GPCROP.

²⁹⁴ Memo of Working Procedure for Minority Home-Seekers and Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council Housing Committee and its Representatives, Box 1, Folder 3, GPCROP. Dated January 1971, but rough drafts of the same statement bear the dates of November 1970, and October 29, 1970.

discriminatory housing practices in the Pointes were due solely to racial and ethnic prejudice. He went on, underscoring this point, writing, “the present racial composition of our community is not accidental, but has come about through long-standing resistance to minority buyers by all parties involved in real estate transaction,” which included sellers, brokers, and lenders. Sargent referenced restrictive covenants explicitly, observing that their use “until recent years” had “created a community pattern which persists until the present day, partly by its own momentum.” Additional “subterfuges” such as “the infamous Point System, now happily defunct,” had contributed to patterns of segregation, as did “other covert, restrictive measures, which are still practiced.” Dr. Sargent concluded by expressing his fear and that of the Housing Committee that segregation in Grosse Pointe, “this potent, though invisible, barrier,” would continue unless there was meaningful, vigorous, and sincere action on the part of sellers, lending institutions, and community leaders to attract minority home-seekers.²⁹⁵

The increasing frustration with the slow pace of change led some members of the Human Relations Council, such as Reverend Albert A. Fenton, the chair of the Membership Committee in 1971, to rethink how long it would take for integration to take place. “The improvement of the racial climate of the Pointes,” Rev. Fenton wrote to the members of the Council, “is a process that will not end in our lifetimes.” Accurately describing the work of organizing for social change as “long and tedious” and “below the surface and unspectacular,” Rev. Fenton reminded the membership of the Human Relations Council that “the struggle for human dignity will not be won by faddists or hobbyists.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Douglas A. Sargent, MD, Statement of Open Housing Committee, September 20, 1973, Box 1, Folder 3, GPCROP.

²⁹⁶ Reverend Arnold A. Fenton to general membership, September 22, 1971, Box 1, Folder 7, GPCROP.

Following the 1967 riots, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council concluded that desegregation was not merely a matter of signaling welcome to potential home buyers from minority communities. Rather, they realized that communities such as Grosse Pointe that had established themselves as hostile to minority groups held little appeal to home buyers from those groups. Instead, they largely, and understandably, sought their homes elsewhere. Thus the Council considered how to encourage integration in the Pointes. One idea was to establish a public relations committee, “which would actively sell the Grosse Pointe community to the Negro community,” as “nowhere has there been a positive program developed with the specific intent of pointing out to the Negro and other minority groups the positive advantages of residence in Grosse Pointe.”²⁹⁷ One could imagine that, given its history, the reputation of Grosse Pointe was largely negative, rather than positive, for many Detroiters. Members of the Council recognized this. One, for example, wrote to the council president in September of 1967 that “at some point, the Negro must be enticed with the idea of living in Grosse Pointe.”²⁹⁸

Sally Brown, the chair of the Grosse Pointe Committee for Open Housing, a kindred organization working for integration that merged with the Human Relations Council in 1969, wrote a review of their committee’s work between 1966 and 1969.²⁹⁹ She noted the lessons the Committee had learned from their “experiences over the past three years in accompanying Negroes as they were seeking homes to buy” in Grosse Pointe. First, Brown wrote that many African American home-seekers were “genuinely interested” in the good schools, recreational facilities,

²⁹⁷ Will H. Kessler to Dr. Harry Meserve, re: Action Committee of the GPHRC, September 30, 1967, Box 1, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁹⁸ Will H. Kessler to Dr. Harry Meserve, re: Action Committee of the GPHRC, September 30, 1967, Box 1, Folder 5, GPCROP.

²⁹⁹ The two had been separate earlier because the Committee for Open Housing, which came out of the Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church, saw themselves as being an activist organization, or as “instigating” movement towards integration. The Human Relations Council had seen themselves as “reconcilers” rather than activists. See Grosse Pointe Committee for Open Housing meeting minutes, April 8, 1969, Box 2, Folder 6, GPCROP; Letter from Mrs. Andrew W.L. (Sally) Brown, May 27, 1966, Box 3, Folder 10, GPCROP.

and municipal services that the Pointes had to offer. However, this interest was undermined by the fact that, “lacking the assurance of an equal opportunity to buy property here, they are reluctant to commit time and effort to an endeavor that may prove fruitless and, in some instances, involve experiences which are unpleasant for them.” Second, integration would not be achieved unless African American real estate brokers were allowed to bring their clients to Grosse Pointe properties, and, third, those selling property in the Pointes should list their properties with brokers who supported open housing and who reached African American buyers.³⁰⁰

There was little faith in the brokers in Grosse Pointe who, while they might follow the letter of the law, would not go out of their way to recruit black home buyers. Part of the problem was that Grosse Pointe brokers feared that “their business would suffer were they to sell a home to a Negro and are therefore not eager to do so.” When the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council had invited members of the Grosse Pointe Real Estate Brokers Association, including Paul Maxon, to a board meeting on October 3, 1967, the brokers told the Council that it was not up to the brokers to create open housing in Grosse Pointe, but, rather, the people who lived there. The brokers of Grosse Pointe, they told the Council, were the “servants of the People.” Besides, they assured the Council, “the first agent to sell to a non-white would be put out of business.”³⁰¹

On the other hand, African American brokers had such negative experiences working in all-white or nearly all-white communities that “they feel it a waste of time and money to bring clients to Grosse Pointe.” Over three years, Sally Brown wrote, “society has experienced increasing pressures which encourage division and polarization of the races. Hence, while growing more difficult to attain, the goal of an integrated community has become vastly more crucial to the

³⁰⁰ Grosse Pointe Committee for Open Housing meeting minutes, April 8, 1969, Box 2, Folder 6, GPCROP; Letter from Mrs. Andrew W.L. (Sally) Brown, May 27, 1966, Box 3, Folder 10, GPCROP.

³⁰¹ Board meeting, October 3, 1967, Box 2, Folder 4, GPCROP.

health of the society as a whole.”³⁰² It was a vicious circle of distrust as far as the brokers were concerned. Several years later, in April of 1972, the Open Housing Committee of the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council attempted to organize a social event that mixed together the members of the Grosse Pointe Real Estate Board with black realtors in the city. The event was cancelled after sixty-nine realtors contacted “were not receptive” to the idea.³⁰³

Conclusion

Grosse Pointe was surrounded by a potent, though invisible, barrier, as noted by Dr. Sargent. In metropolitan Detroit, geography was imbued with political and social significance, and these urban boundaries were vigilantly policed and fervently, sometimes violently, enforced. In a basic sense, the story of housing is also a matter of labor, as the social tensions over race and housing in Detroit occurred due to the increasing demand for labor in the burgeoning industrial behemoth. As African Americans moved to Detroit in the war years, racial tensions grew, and occasionally grew violent, as shown in the 1943 Detroit riot. Shortly thereafter, in the midst of the Second World War and in the twilight years of restrictive covenants, the real estate brokers and property owners of Grosse Pointe organized to systematically protect their community from the conflicts present elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

The 1949 mayoral election between Edwards and Cobo showed that housing and race were not minor concerns in postwar Detroit. Slum clearance, public housing, and highway construction were major issues, and their racial and class component was a part of the conversation. Naturally, as neighborhoods were targeted as “blight,” it was city residents who had money, clout, and a voice who could resist such a designation. It was city residents who had neither money, clout, nor

³⁰² Mrs. Andrew W. L. (Sally) Brown, Grosse Pointe Committee for Open Housing letter, July 8, 1969, Box 1, Folder 6, GPCROP.

³⁰³ Sue Olson, invitation to Open Housing Committee, April 12, 1972, Box 1, Folder 7, GPCROP.

a voice who were cleared away.³⁰⁴ But by the 1960s, *de facto* segregation was no longer a routine phenomenon. The modern Civil Rights Movement stirred consciences. Even in staid, wealthy Grosse Pointe, citizens organized to dismantle racial segregation and discrimination. Housing was one of their main concerns, but so too was increasing understanding across racial lines through education, culture, sports, literature, talking, and meeting people from outside their community.

By the numbers of housing gained or neighborhoods integrated, the Grosse Pointe Human Relations Council was not successful. The Pointes continue to be largely white and, indeed, continue to have a reputation for dividing themselves from the city of Detroit, predominantly African American by the mid-1970s. Why did the GPHRC fail in their aims? They were several hundred strong. Given that they were Grosse Pointers, many of them held positions of influence: doctors, lawyers, judges, ministers, businessmen, and their spouses. They had a clear understanding of the problems of racism and discrimination: that it was multifaceted, and required not just work in housing but in education, commerce, employment, and many other fields, to fight against racial prejudice. They consistently were a voice in their community, while they existed, against segregation and discrimination, even as they provided real and concrete support to minority home-buyers. They were hurt when Dr. King was killed, and they worried over youth, whether it be casualties in Vietnam or casualties of a growing heroin epidemic in the city.

Maybe the problem of racial segregation was too large for one organization to take on. Or, it may be that, much as restrictive covenants required every property in a neighborhood to participate in order to be effective, so does a truly integrated society require that all neighbors in a community forswear prejudice, fear, and distrust of people from other races, ethnicities, religions, and nations of origin. It might also be that integration will never truly be successful until, in the

³⁰⁴ Biles, "Expressways Before the Interstates," 850.

spirit of protecting property values, individuals see themselves as having a financial stake in it, that integrated communities are an investment worth protecting.

CHAPTER 4 THE CITY THAT MIGHT BE: DOXIADIS AND THE URBAN DETROIT AREA RESEARCH PROJECT, 1965-1970

Dr. Doxiadis smiles when he discusses the common denominator of all cities, whether they be Detroit or Royal Oak: “They’re build for humans.”
Jerome Aumente³⁰⁵

During a flight from India to the United States in 1963, Walter Cisler, the chair of the Detroit Edison Company, conceived of the idea behind the Urban Detroit Area study: a forward-looking and comprehensive study of the metropolitan Detroit area in the year 2000. He talked with friends of his about this idea, including Clarence B. Hilberry, then-president of Wayne State University, Jerome P. Cavanaugh, then-mayor of Detroit, and a Greek urban planner named Constantinos Doxiadis. Doxiadis was internationally prominent, known for designing the capital city, Islamabad, in the new nation of Pakistan, following the partition of India in 1947. Cisler and Doxiadis had met each immediately after the Second World War, when both worked for the reconstruction of Europe, with Cisler on the United States-side of the Marshall Plan and Doxiadis on that of Greece.³⁰⁶

For Cisler, the motives behind such a comprehensive research project were practical. As the chair of the board of the area’s electrical provider, Cisler was interested in planning for future infrastructure needs in the 7,600 square miles served by his firm.³⁰⁷ By the mid-60s, Cisler had been involved in national and international projects and planning. In 1941 he served on the War Production Board in Washington and then in Europe, with the Supreme Allied Command, where

³⁰⁵ Jerome Aumente, “Urban Challenge: Can the Cities Survive: A Thorough, Constructive Series of Reports on 1967 Big City Problems,” *Detroit News*, Series I, Box 10, Folder 1, Developing Urban Detroit Area Research Project (Doxiadis) Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. (Hereafter DR.)

³⁰⁶ Information in this paragraph and the following from the foreword of Constantinos Doxiadis, *Emergence and Growth of an Urban Region, Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development* (Detroit: Detroit Edison Company, 1970), i.

³⁰⁷ Constantinos Doxiadis, *Emergence and Growth of an Urban Region, Volume 1: Analysis* (Detroit: Detroit Edison Company, 1966), 3.

he organized the restoration of electric, gas, and water facilities. During postwar recovery, notably under the Marshall Plan, Cisler was active in the recovery effort in Europe and Japan. Through the State Department, he was involved in the development of emerging nations. He had been in India, for instance, to conduct an energy study for the Indian government. “My endeavors,” he explained in 1965, “in helping nations to examine their energy resources and future requirements for effective economic progress has taught me the importance of approaching such problems in an orderly way, utilizing the skills of well-versed specialists in gathering the facts, analyzing them, establishing goalposts and setting realistic goals for the future.”³⁰⁸ Cisler’s interest in a comprehensive and systematic study of the greater Detroit region’s future infrastructure needs was a continuation of these postwar experiences planning and executing massive rebuilding efforts.

Doxiadis’s interests tended to the more abstract. He loved cities and understanding cities and planning cities, and he was the developer of an entire system of thought for understanding human settlements, which he called ekistics. Through ekistics Doxiadis hoped to move urban thought into the realm of science more than one of philosophy, but it also hoped to do so in a resolutely human-centered way. The Urban Detroit Area study was a chance for a deep and wide application of his urban thinking to one of the largest cities in the United States.

The resulting three-volume study and Doxiadis’s public statements about it are indicative of how he, as an urban planner, and those who supported him, including Detroit Edison and Wayne State University, understood the urban crisis and the future of Detroit. As the first two chapters have shown, Detroit from World War II to the 1960s was an urban area divided by class and race, where industrial decentralization and racial segregation were powerful social and economic forces shaping the lives of city residents. During the five-year long Urban Detroit Area research project

³⁰⁸ Walker Lee Cisler, Preface for the Detroit Edison Company, in Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, iii.

(from 1965 to 1970), planners were faced with an era of urban riots and uprisings, including Detroit in 1967.³⁰⁹ Remarkably, in his work, Doxiadis avoided discussions of racism, deindustrialization, and riots. His public comments reveal that he was not unconcerned or unsympathetic to those who lived with the consequences of racial discrimination and bigotry. Nonetheless, when it came to analyzing and planning Detroit's future, such social divisions and tensions were largely absent in Doxiadis's work.³¹⁰

Constantinos A. Doxiadis

The *Detroit News* in 1967 described Doxiadis as “the world-renowned Greek urban prophet” and in the Congressional Record by Congressman James H. Scheuer of New York the year before thus: “His work over five continents in the troubled cities of the world has placed him in a special pale of eminence – not only in his profession, but among humanitarians of the world. He has planned better urban environments for over 10 million people, and as provided housing – mostly low-cost – for over 1 million persons.”³¹¹ Even as Doxiadis founded a macro-level theory of urbanism that combined philosophy with prophecy, he was an accomplished practitioner. He planned the new capital for the new nation-state of Pakistan, Islamabad. Over twenty-years, he won over \$5 million in grants and contracts from the Ford Foundation. His relationship with the Ford Foundation was such that Ford staffer and chronicler Louis Winnick characterized this

³⁰⁹ The terminology around these events – whether one uses *riot* versus *uprising* versus *rebellion* – is often politically charged, especially in Detroit. Where one stands on this question is not, in the author's experience, determined by either one's ancestry or socioeconomic position, but often is indicative of one's politics. Thus it is noted that this dissertation will use the term *riot* out of common use, and not because it intends to comment on the motivation of those involved or out of opposition to *uprising* or *rebellion*. Rather, following E. P. Thompson, the author considers mobs and riots to be rational actions by rational agents, arising out of community conceptions of morality and justice.

³¹⁰ Doxiadis, incidentally, considered economic inequality as natural and inevitable.

³¹¹ Jerome Aumente, “Can the Cities Survive?,” *The Detroit News*, 1967, p. 44, Box 10, Folder 1, DR; Federal Role in Urban Affairs, US Senate Hearings, 1966, p. 1798, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

monetary flow as “the largest personal award in Foundation history,” even though all the money was directed towards appropriate nonprofit channels.³¹²

Doxiadis was not without his critics. There were those who saw him and his systems of ekistics as an urbanist swindler peddling so much snake-oil. Those with more nuanced criticisms admired his methods, even as they pointed out the blind spots his methods contained. Nonetheless, even his critics appreciated that Doxiadis was a relentless voice and advocate for addressing issues and problems of urbanism in the post-war world.

Appropriately enough for someone considered a voice for global urbanism, Doxiadis’s own life was often shaped by the global forces that shaped the 20th century: wars, revolutions, reconstruction, migrations. He was born in 1913 in the Greek community in Bulgaria, but his family fled to Athens after World War I broke out, as the Bulgarians and the Greeks found themselves on opposing sides during that terrible conflagration. The elder Doxiadis was a physician. He involved himself in issues of refugees and resettlement following the war, as the younger Doxiadis would be involved with postwar planning less than three decades later.³¹³

Constantinos Doxiadis attained his first degree in 1935 from the Athens Technical Institute in architecture-engineering. Afterwards, he went to Berlin for a post-graduate degree from the Berlin-Charlottenberg Technical Institute, where he received a doctorate in civil engineering in 1937. While in Germany he encountered the urbanist Walter Christaller, who had a large influence on Doxiadis’s thinking on cities.³¹⁴

³¹² Louis Winnick, “Ford History: Philanthropy’s Adaptation to the Urban Crisis,” 1989, 3, Box 575, Report 012158: Philanthropy’s Adaptation to the Urban Crisis, Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York. (Hereafter FFR).

³¹³ Winnick, p. 4, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR.

³¹⁴ Winnick, 4-5, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR. See 5-6 for a discussion of Christaller’s urban theories and their influence on Doxiadis.

After his two years in Germany, Doxiadis returned to Greece to become the director of studies in the town planning office of Athens. He then worked in regional planning. When the Second World War began, Greece was occupied first by Italy and then by Germany. Doxiadis joined the military, where he was put in charge of surveying damage from the war at the Ministry of Public Works. At the same time, he joined the Greek resistance. Acting at the head of a cell, he passed data he could access through his work to the British intelligence service. This, and his other activities during the war, resulted in the British awarding Doxiadis a military decoration. It had the more practical result of establishing his *bona fides* with the Allied forces.³¹⁵

With the peace, Doxiadis was became undersecretary and then Director General of the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction in Greece from 1945 to 1948. In 1946 he wrote a report titled *Ekistic Analysis*. In 1948, he became the Minister-Coordinator of the Greek Recovery Program—the coordinator of the Marshall Plan in Greece, a crucial position with connections that later brought Doxiadis to Detroit. According to a Ford Foundation staffer, it was at this point that Doxiadis gained an international reputation for talent and honesty. He represented Greece at several international meetings, such as 1945 peace conference in San Francisco and the 1947 United Nation (UN) International Conference on Housing, Planning, and Reconstruction. In 1948, he was placed as chairman of the UN Working Group on Housing Policies. The following year saw him as the head of the Greek delegation at the Greco-Italian War Reparation Conference.³¹⁶

In 1951, however, Doxiadis's life took a strange turn. He was forced out of office, while he was hospitalized for ulcers, due to a *coup d'état*. He and his family left for Queensland, Australia, where he was supposed to work in the housing and resettlement of immigrants. The plan

³¹⁵ Winnick, 6-7, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR. See also the “Biographical Note” at <http://www.doxiadis.org/ViewStaticPage.aspx?Valueid=4276>, accessed May 25, 2016.

³¹⁶ Winnick, 8, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR; “Biographical Note.”

fell through after the Doxiadis family arrived in Australia, where they became now stranded without funds, while Constantinos still was experiencing ill-health. The family, in an incongruous turn of events, took up tomato farming, searching for paper cups thrown out by restaurants in order to grow seedlings. This misadventure was relatively short-lived for the family, and they made their way back to Athens in 1953.³¹⁷

Once there Doxiadis opened his office of consulting engineers, Doxiadis Associates, with expertise in redevelopment and Marshall Plan administration. The office was successful, growing to hundreds of employees and branch offices globally, including one in Washington, DC. By 1963, Doxiadis Associates had projects in forty countries. Doxiadis and his colleagues continued to develop what they considered the science of human settlement, ekistics; and in 1955 they launched the journal *Ekistics*.³¹⁸ By 1958, Doxiadis founded the Athens Technological Organization (ATO), a nonprofit institution that housed the Athens Technical Institute, comprised of technical schools and the Athens Center of Ekistics. The latter included research, graduate training, symposia, publications, and a library devoted to the field.³¹⁹

Ekistics

A summary of what Doxiadis meant by *ekistics* is essential to understanding his approach to urban planning as it underpins his thinking on all cities, including Detroit.³²⁰ The word, as Doxiadis described to an audience in 1959, came from the Greek noun *ekos*, or habitat, and the verb *eko*, or to settle down, the same root of the words *economy* and *ecology*. Thus, “ekistics is the science of human settlements, which explores the nature, the origin, and the evolution of our

³¹⁷ Winnick, 10, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR.

³¹⁸ Winnick, 11, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR.

³¹⁹ Winnick, 12, Box 575, Report 012158, FFR.

³²⁰ Ekistics continues to be a field. See, for example, the *International Journal of Ekistics and the New Urban Agenda*.

species. It seeks to establish rules that underwrite the evolution of human settlement and to analyze and classify all the phenomena surrounding this evolution.”³²¹ Of particular note is that Doxiadis considered ekistics a field of *science*, rather than a theory or a philosophy. However, Doxiadis was always upfront that it was a science in its infancy. “We can ask ourselves what this science of Ekistics should be,” he informed his 1959 audience in Southampton. “Quite frankly I think it is too early to outline it in full detail.”³²²

Nonetheless, such a scientific understanding of human settlements became necessary in the postwar world, as cities were facing problems that no one, it seemed, had previously encountered or could solve. Planners had developed responses, ranging including “a new technique in design or by the use of different scales, or by working on our plans in cooperation with economic and social planners.” Such responses, Doxiadis argued, were not systematic, but ad hoc, with no set methodology. Therefore, they were not universally applicable but, instead, were rooted in “mostly the cities of the Western world and not all of those but really the Western cities after the industrial revolution.” This was, Doxiadis commented, a very narrow basis for understanding. “A single visit to new areas under development now will convince us that we do nothing but repeat solutions which may have been good for Western countries of the post-industrial era but whose application in the new areas show a complete lack of a scientific approach.”³²³

There were, as Doxiadis saw it, three fundamental types of urban problems: those that are eternal, those that are contemporary, and those that will develop in the future. The eternal problems included economic, social, political, technical and cultural challenges. At first glance this type of urban problem covers quite a range of territory, but Doxiadis is clearing the ground in order to

³²¹ Doxiadis, *Ekistics: The Science of Human Settlements*, Town and Country Planning School; Southampton, 1959, p. 18 (Reprint of a paper presented Wednesday, 2nd September, 1959), Box 10, Folder 10, DR.

³²² Doxiadis, *Ekistics: The Science of Human Settlements*, p. 18, Box 10, Folder 10, DR.

³²³ Doxiadis, *Ekistics: The Science of Human Settlements*, p. 17, Box 10, Folder 10, DR.

understand how the urban problems of the mid-20th century were different from problems that confronted cities throughout human history. Elaborating on his typology, a rarity for Doxiadis, he noted that social problems end up creating economic ones, “because social habit and tradition affect the supply of economic factors drastically.” In one example, Doxiadis mentioned rural to urban migration, which resulted in new city residents with rural habits and “the resulting friction that we see in the forms of slums and blighted areas.”³²⁴

The contemporary problems were of a different nature. These were the ones that occupied Doxiadis’s attention. Contemporary cities faced the problems of machines versus humans, of increasing discretionary incomes, and new family patterns; or, as he said in an address in Oslo the following year, “the unprecedented universal increase of population, the introduction of the machine into our lives, and the gradual socialization of the patterns of living.”³²⁵ The fundamental problem, which was central to his urban vision, was the increasing scale of cities. New technologies, from building techniques to transportation, meant that cities were built in a new way. “They can now become much bigger,” argued Doxiadis,

perhaps impossibly bigger, than before; it is also expressed in the new conception about other dimensions, other elements in the city, like highways, the streets, the squares, such buildings as garages, etc. But more than anything else, it has affected the psychology of man, who now feels like a displaced person within his city. He has lost his freedom of movement, he cannot walk freely, he cannot let his children move around the city because the machine is there, a constant menace.

It was this psychological impact, according to Doxiadis, that led to the misery of mid-20th century cities, the pervasive sense of displacement. At its root was the fact that cities were no longer built for human beings.³²⁶

³²⁴ Doxiadis, *Ekistics: The Science of Human Settlements*, p. 2, Box 10, Folder 10, DR.

³²⁵ Doxiadis, “Dynapolis, the City of the Future,” lecture at the Oslo Arkitektforening, Oslo, March 3, 1960, p. 2, printed Athens: Doxiadis Associates, Box 10, Folder 9, DR.

³²⁶ Doxiadis, *Ekistics: The Science of Human Settlements*, p. 15, Box 10, Folder 10, DR.

Eleven years later, in 1970, Doxiadis had a more thorough definition for ekistics, as he detailed in an article for *Science*. “Ekistics,” Doxiadis told readers, “starts with the premise that human settlements are susceptible of systematic investigation.” He once again emphasized that ekistics was systematic and scientific. He listed the five prescriptive principles that made up the field. First, human beings desired the maximum amount of contacts with the natural world, with other people, and with the works of human hands. This, Doxiadis asserted, “amounts to an operational definition of personal human freedom.” If this is true, then it seemed that Doxiadis conceived of human freedom, and thus nature, as needing to spread out. Otherwise, humans would feel “imprisoned” and need to “increase” their contacts with the world around us, which is to say, to “abandon the Garden of Eden” and seek to “conquer the cosmos.”³²⁷

The second principle of ekistics was minimizing of the effort it took for humans to achieve their “actual and potential contacts.” As we will see shortly, Doxiadis thought often about the amount of energy it took to navigate urban areas and how it was related to quality of life. Third, the “optimization of protective space,” by which Doxiadis meant the distance humans could maintain between themselves and other people, animals, and objects, while also maintaining the maximum number of contacts (the first principle) “without any kind of sensory or psychological discomfort.” This protective space began with the clothes humans wore and up to the walls of houses and the walls built around cities.³²⁸

The fourth principle was that humans needed the optimal relationships with the environment, which included nature, society, “shells” (that is, housing and buildings), and networks, the latter meaning anything from roads to telecommunications. “This is the principle,”

³²⁷ Doxiadis, “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements,” *Science*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 23 October 1970, Vol. 170, No. 3965, p. 393, Box 10, Folder 11, DR.

³²⁸ Doxiadis, “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements,” *Science*, pp. 393-394, Box 10, Folder 11, DR.

Doxiadis explained, “that leads to order, physiological and esthetic, and that influences architecture and, in many respects, art.” The fifth principle was the optimal synthesis of the preceding four principles, “dependent on time and space, on actual conditions, and on man’s ability to create a synthesis.” These principles were based on creating and managing meaningful and beneficial interactions and relationships. Thus it is no surprise that Doxiadis defined human settlements as “systems of energy mobilized by man.” Echoing his earlier concern that cities were dominated by machines and buildings, Doxiadis proposed in a 1970 article that “the answer to this problem is, I think, a city designed for human development.”³²⁹

Doxiadis straddled two views of cities. One was resolutely based on the future, in predicting where cities will go if conditions remain unchanged and where they had the potential to go if we acted in the present, for better or for worse. Doxiadis consistently argued for the better as he saw it. This first view, which we can call his visionary half, was complemented by the second, which was his wide experience in practice, in urban planning around the world. Often in his writing and talks he would draw on various examples from projects he had worked on. In an address to the Oslo Arkitekforening in 1960, Doxiadis drew on examples from Baghdad; Washington, DC; Philadelphia; Athens; Khartoum, Sudan; Beirut; Caracas, Venezuela; and Karachi, Pakistan. His interest was in identifying the abstract, universal structures of human settlements that could apply to all.³³⁰

An essential aspect of his urban vision was the belief that cities would only continue to grow in the future. His view here was intimately tied to the impact of the industrial revolution and Fordism, although Doxiadis did not use those terms. In 1960, Doxiadis argued, for instance, that

³²⁹ Doxiadis, “Ekistics, the Science of Human Settlements,” *Science*, p. 394, 395, 399, Box 10, Folder 11, DR.

³³⁰ Doxiadis, “Dynapolis, the City of the Future,” lecture at the Oslo Arkitekforening, Oslo, March 3, 1960, Box 10, Folder 9, DR. Cf. Carl Abbott’s exploration of future cities in science fiction, Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures*.

cities used to be only, at most, several hundred of thousands of people (here he is thinking of ancient Rome and Constantinople), because more than that “led to a loss of cohesion and identity.” By the mid-20th century, however, “the machine has made cities of about ten million people quite possible,” and made increased production and income possible. “The machine” had led to the Fordist city, as modern technology “has in fact brought large concentrations of people in the same area by reducing distances, by making possible multi-story structures and by introducing mass production for large numbers.”³³¹

There was, in Doxiadis’s view, no return from this level of urban concentration. It was tantamount to a revolutionary moment in urban history, in which city walls were broken and disregarded. Now, “the modern city is spreading all around endlessly and continuously.” Higher birth rates and migration from rural areas caused the urban population to expand even more, and “this added influx of people cause the cities to swell and expand over much larger areas than they occupy today.” This urban form Doxiadis identified as the Dynapolis, or the dynamic city.³³² By the mid-1960s, Dynapolis had given way in Doxiadis’s thinking to what he called the universal city. “This is not imagination,” he cautioned the annual meeting of the National League of Cities in 1966, “This is a realistic view of the future. Any careful study of the real forces surrounding our cities shows that within one generation’s time we are going to witness the emergence of a major continuous systems of metropolises and megalopolises.” By way of illustration, he pointed to the seemingly emerging conglomeration of Milwaukee to Chicago to Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh, an urban area 600 miles long.³³³

³³¹ Doxiadis, “Dynapolis, the City of the Future,” pp. 2-3, Box 10, Folder 9, DR.

³³² Doxiadis, “Dynapolis, the City of the Future,” p. 6, 16, Box 10, Folder 9, DR.

³³³ Doxiadis, “The City of Man and its Five Elements,” Lecture to the National League of Cities, 43rd Annual Congress of Cities, December 6, 1966, Las Vegas, Nevada, Box 10, Folder 7, DR.

While the emergence of this universal city was more or less inevitable, the form it would take depended on choices made in the present. Continuing the ad hoc solutions then being used to address urban problems, Doxiadis argued, was merely surgery that treated the symptoms but failed to address the underlying causes. Doing so was to allow cities to decline, while some people escaped to isolation, “leaving the others to struggle in the downtown areas which manifest the coming crisis.” Moreover, “present trends” suggested a society that was heading to “an autocratic system of complex networks, big buildings and fascist administration with the human values increasingly forgotten.”³³⁴ The following year, Doxiadis described the universal city in the *Saturday Review* as not the dynapolis, but the ecumenopolis.³³⁵

When Doxiadis considered emerging megalopolises, the Detroit metropolitan area was his main example, likely because of his work there beginning in 1965. His 1968 article, “The Emerging Great Lakes Megalopolis,” appeared in the *Proceedings of the IEEE*, the journal of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Building on the French geographer Jean Gottman’s 1961 study, *Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States*, Doxiadis proposed that the megalopolis developing in the Great Lakes region would surpass that on the east coast by the end of the century. A megalopolis, importantly, was not a continuous unbroken cityscape. Rather, it was “characterized by its large size in area and population, its high regional densities, the inclusion in it of several large centers strongly interacting with each other and with the surrounding region.” In the Great Lakes region, the potential megalopolis were the increasingly interconnected metropolitan clusters of Chicago-Milwaukee, Detroit, and Cleveland-Pittsburgh. As the Great Lakes are shared by the United States and Canada, the Great Lakes

³³⁴ Doxiadis, “The City of Man and its Five Elements,” Box 10, Folder 7, DR.

³³⁵ Doxiadis, “The Coming Era of Ecumenopolis,” *Saturday Review*, March 18, 1967, Box 10, Folder 8, DR.

megalopolis also could extend through Ontario, from Windsor to Hamilton and Toronto, and into Montreal, Quebec.³³⁶

The Urban Detroit Area Research Project

When Walter Cisler brought Constantinos Doxiadis on board to lead the Urban Detroit Area Research Project, the scale of the project was thus congruent with the latter's conception of a megalopolis. Whereas the city proper of Detroit is nearly 139 square miles, and the metropolitan area is 1,337 square miles, the Urban Detroit Area (UDA) was defined as 23,059 square miles, stretching from southwest Ontario through southeast Michigan and into northern Ohio.³³⁷ The large scale of the project did not alter the fact that the city of Detroit was considered the heart of the region, and therefore received a good proportion of the research project's attention. Nor did the large scale of the project mean that it was merely about structural analyses. Doxiadis often talked about human needs and human suffering, and Cisler himself wrote that he conceived of the project as more than just one of urban planning. It was intended to be of use to "all who are concerned with the advancement of human as well as economic values."³³⁸

That contemporary cities had become inhuman was one of Doxiadis's main concerns. "Man today had lost the battle for control of his cities," he began the first volume of the study. "As a result of this the cities are getting worse with every day that passes and man is more and more at a loss on what to do about them – he is in great danger of being tamed by the on-going forces which lead to his sufferings." Humans were fundamentally confused by their own creations, and

³³⁶ Doxiadis, "The Emerging Great Lakes Megalopolis," reprinted from the *Proceedings of the IEEE* [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers], Vol. 56, No. 4, April, 1968, pp. 402-424, Box 10, Folder 12, DR.

³³⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, iii. The metropolitan area as used here is defined as the tri-country area of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. The city of Detroit proper is within Wayne County.

³³⁸ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, iii.

therefore were unable to adequately address the growing problems of cities.³³⁹ Moreover, the decisions made in the present determine the future. Thus, “we commit ourselves everyday with thousands of decisions that, unless we provide a system to face the future of Detroit as soon as possible, will tie us and our descendants with thousands of chains.”³⁴⁰ Elsewhere in the study, cities are described as being “laid out on an improvised basis,” as “decisions tend to be made on a sporadic and uncoordinated basis, leading to helter-skelter construction and expansion to meet only current needs.”³⁴¹

The UDA Research Project was conceived as a thorough, systematic, and orderly investigation of the entire Detroit region, the whole urban system rather than an isolated part. It was not just concerned with five or ten years down the road. The year 2000 was chosen as a target, partly for symbolic reasons (to “fire the imagination of the people”), but also because it would be a generation ahead. It was long enough for fundamental change to occur, yet close enough in the future to make reasonable assumptions about technological, social, cultural, economic, and demographic developments.³⁴² The results of the five-year project were made public in three volumes. The first, released in 1966, was focused on a thorough analysis of existing conditions in the UDA. The second volume, released in 1967, detailed how all possible future alternative scenarios were computed and then the millions of projections filtered down into the one most optimal future scenario. Finally, the third volume, released in 1970, elaborated on the optimal future alternative and how the UDA could move towards that optimal future. Coming after 1967,

³³⁹Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, v. Doxiadis echoed this argument in the subsequent volumes. See, for instance, Constantinos Doxiadis, *Emergence and Growth of an Urban Region, Volume 2: Future Alternatives* (Detroit: Detroit Edison Company, 1967), iv; Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 172.

³⁴⁰ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, v.

³⁴¹ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 230.

³⁴² For instance, the population of the UDA was expected to double by 2000. Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 11.

the third volume changed its arguments and emphases slightly, with a new focus on racial segregation as requiring at least minimal attention.

The first volume described itself as “concerned primarily with an analysis of existing ekistic conditions,” and it truly was that.³⁴³ Beginning with North America as a whole, the volume addressed matters of geology, climate, water supplies, vegetation, population, economics, agriculture, mining, energy, manufacturing, and transportation.³⁴⁴ Its focus was then directed towards what is identified as the emerging Great Lakes Megalopolis. The term refers, not to a continuously build-up area, but rather clusters of urban and metropolitan areas with interconnected functions – in this case, Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland/Pittsburgh. Ten such megalopolises were identified as forming around the world, and the volume “anticipated that one of the more important of these will develop in the Great Lakes area of the United States.” Consequently, great attention was paid to income distribution, employment, and transportation networks.³⁴⁵ An overview of the Great Lakes Area was also provided, defined as Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Ontario, and parts of Pennsylvania and New York. Much like the section on North America in its entirety, the volume detailed the geography, climate, water supply, natural features, socio-economic features, transportation, and economic base of the region. Of particular note was the prominence of manufacturing in the region. The Detroit area especially was dependent on the manufacture of automobiles and other durable goods. Consequently, “the recent trend of decentralization in the automotive industry has had a marked effect” in the area.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ While Doxiadis was the technical coordinator of the research project, the resulting volumes were produced by a team of researchers; and not all sections were written by Doxiadis personally. When I refer to the volumes saying or describing something, it is to be understood that I mean the specific yet unidentified authors.

³⁴⁴ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 6-69.

³⁴⁵ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 75-100.

³⁴⁶ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 114-132. Discussion of decentralization on 132.

Only after these preliminaries did the volume address the Urban Detroit Area specifically. Arguing that an urban center transcended municipal borders and other visible boundaries due to its “large, complex, dynamic and influential” nature, the UDA was defined in generous terms. It extended 100 miles to the northwest, 100 to the north, 100 to the west (where it reached Chicago’s sphere of influence), 100 miles to the southwest (approaching Cincinnati’s sphere), 75 to the southeast (approaching Cleveland), and 75 mile to the east, into Canada. Thus it incorporated 25 counties in Michigan, 9 in northern Ohio, 3 in Ontario, with a total area of 25,059 square miles. Within the UDA was the metropolitan Detroit area, defined by the six counties of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Monroe, which together contained 52.9% of Michigan’s population.³⁴⁷

In examining the economic base of the UDA, the research project judged that it had not capitalized on its “inherent advantages.” With the Great Lakes and the proximity to Canada, one would have expected the UDA to have become a center of US-Canadian trade and the gateway for international trade for “the entire north central region of the United States.” However, for “what seems to have been accidental” reasons, the UDA instead became the heart of automotive manufacturing worldwide.³⁴⁸ The overinvestment in automotive manufacturing was “a mixed blessing,” especially considering, as the research project stressed many times, the automotive industry was decentralizing and moving away from Detroit. “Since the 1950s,” the study explained, “Detroit has been passing through a critical phase in its economic history. Several postwar developments, primarily a trend toward the decentralization of the automobile industry, have weakened the employment potential and caused some migration from the area.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 144, 156.

³⁴⁸ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 193, 310.

³⁴⁹ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 193.

In addition to decentralization, the postwar loss of defense contracts, increased automation, and the 1958 recession all took their toll on the automotive industry in the Urban Detroit Area. While in 1950 the UDA, including northern Ohio, accounted for 55% of all automotive employment in the United States, by 1960 it had dropped to 44%. Over those ten years, 97,000 automotive jobs were lost in the Michigan and Ohio sections of the UDA. While a record-breaking demand for automobiles began in 1960, automotive employment in the UDA from 1960 to 1964 dropped almost as much as it had in the 1950s in the UDA, by 93,000 jobs. While the automotive industry had accounted for 53% of manufacturing employment in the UDA in 1950, it had fallen to 33% in 1964. As if to emphasize how drastic of a change this was, a footnote was added that simply noted that the number of lost jobs was “certainly high for a period when the automotive industry has been experiencing record years in production and sales.”³⁵⁰

In the central region of the UDA, which was defined as the tri-country area of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb, the numbers were more severe. The amount of automotive employment in these three counties relative to the UDA overall fell from 71% in 1950 to 66% in 1960 and finally to 56% in 1964. The percentage of automotive employment relative to total manufacturing employment showed a similar downward shift in the central UDA from 60% to 46% to 33% in the same period. A drastic shift in employment, this downward movement was notable as the UDA, especially in Michigan, had grown earlier in the century largely due to the growth of the automotive industry. It had provided good-paying jobs, which in turned “attracted new residents, mainly semi-skilled and unskilled workers from other parts of the nation and the world.”³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 201, 209. Cf. Daniel Bell’s treatment of this dynamic in Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*.

³⁵¹ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 206.

The loss of those jobs had a significant impact on the metropolitan area. While skilled workers could still earn high wages, the decentralization of the industry led to a loss of stability and security for those working in it. Semi- and unskilled workers were affected, as were professionals whose employment was altered or threatened the changing nature of the automotive industry. The future shape of the UDA thus depended on “the extent of further decentralization,” as well as economic diversification, a more balanced distribution of economic activity throughout the area, as well as “higher levels of training and education attainment.” Unless businesses diversified and educational capacity was expanded, the “structural weaknesses of the UDA economy,” and the resulting “disadvantageous conditions,” would continue to become apparent.³⁵²

Nor were economic concerns the only ones confronting the UDA. Commercial decentralization, from the downtown business district to suburban shopping centers, posed problems, as did the state of transportation networks throughout the area. Indeed, as the latter volumes of the study demonstrated, transportation networks were crucial to Doxiadis’s understanding of urban systems. “Transportation networks are of great importance to ekistic evolution,” he asserted. “They are the arteries that nourish the cells. Their efficiency or inadequacy determines the pattern of movement and the distribution of the various forms of urban development.”³⁵³ Additionally, “the transformation of the United States from an urban to a metropolitan nation has come about quickly” and created a situation of governmental and administrative fragmentation. In the six counties constituting the metropolitan Detroit area, there were 221 separate and independent governments, including the 6 counties, 67 cities, 39 villages, 109 townships, and an additional 18 special districts. School districts were not included in these numbers. For the UDA overall, there were 1,112 governments. As industry and commercial

³⁵² Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 209, 211, 310.

³⁵³ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 233, 244.

activities decentralized from urban centers, so too had local governments decentralized.³⁵⁴ This first volume study, however, said nothing about racial segregation in the UDA.

Doxiadis's divorcing of the condition of urban spaces from those who inhabited is demonstrated in his 1966 testimony in front of a Senate hearing on the role of the federal government in urban affairs. "Our cities are weaker than in the past," Doxiadis informed the committee, chaired by John L. McClellan of Arkansas and members which included Robert Kennedy and Edmund Muskie of Maine. "They are gradually becoming irrational [...] They are shapeless, and ugly; the parking lot has come to replace public gardens and squares." Given that his testimony came after the Urban Detroit Area research study was already underway, and the first volume published, many of Doxiadis's examples came from Detroit. Nevertheless, in discussing the "holes and pits in the urban tissue," and those who fall into them, he stated, "we notice their color, their race, or their religion, and we connect the problems with these causes, when the real cause is the fact that we have allowed our cities to develop such pits in the first place."³⁵⁵

Doxiadis continued by noting that those who fall into the "pits in the urban tissue" were "the weakest economic groups" and that "this problem is connected with social and racial problems." Yet, the problem was not the social and racial problems, but "getting rid of these pits," which demanded that "we reverse our thinking." Part of that reversal of thought involved shifting resources away from cities, to create new settlements that could relieve the pressure from inner cities. Not doing so in a planned and thoughtful manner meant that it was done in a haphazard

³⁵⁴ Doxiadis, *Volume 1: Analysis*, 289, 291.

³⁵⁵ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization of the Committee on Government Operations United States Senate, 89th Congress, 2nd Session, December 2 and 5, 1966, Part 8, printed for the use of the Committee on Government Operations, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1967, pp. 1727-1730, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

manner, which had led to “the escape into the suburbs and new towns conceived not as parts of a whole settlement but as isolated units for a certain economic, social, or racial group.”³⁵⁶

Doxiadis told the Senate committee that addressing urban problems required immediate action, as it took decades to change urban trends. He brought up the patterns in Detroit as evidence, informing the senators that “study of the changing patters of land in farms around Detroit has demonstrated that many urban decisions have been taken by private people, industry, and authorities many years before actual construction started.”³⁵⁷ The solution proposed by Doxiadis was not the avoidance of cities, but embracing them, on a grand scale. The Ecumenopolis was unavoidable, so “our real challenge, if we are to create a better way of living, is not to avoid the universal city, but to make life in it human.” At stake was not just the quality of urban life. “If we do not achieve this in time,” Doxiadis warned, “then the present crisis will lead to disaster for man, to an inhuman, undemocratic society.” Decentralization was an illusion, as new settlements still existed in relation to city centers, and therefore continued to add pressure to these suffering areas.³⁵⁸

At this point in Doxiadis’s testimony, Robert Kennedy jumped in. “Could I just interrupt,” the senator inquired. “I know it is wrong of me, but I don’t understand some of this.” Kennedy asked if Doxiadis could use an example, such as from Detroit. “Yes,” the planner responded, “the city of Detroit now receives in its downtown area pressures of 7 million people who live within the city and within the broadest urban area.” All of them, even those in the broadest area, ultimately depended on Detroit’s downtown, and thus exerted pressure to various degrees on it. By the year 2000, Doxiadis predicted that 7 to 8 million more people would join the existing population in

³⁵⁶ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1730, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁵⁷ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1733, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁵⁸ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1738, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

exerting pressure on the center of Detroit. “If we continue these policies,” Doxiadis added, “we will kill our cities.” The solution was a twin urban center, to relieve that added pressure.

To this, Kennedy asked if suburbanization did not already provide this release function. Yet, despite suburbs, “the core city is disintegrating because industry is not coming in there and new buildings are not being constructed there. They are rather moving to the suburbs [...] where there is more wealth.” Doxiadis agreed that this was the case, but did not match quite what he was proposing, as those suburbs still relied on urban centers where companies, banks, and “all the services” were located.³⁵⁹ Here Kennedy launched his main critique: namely, if suburbs were shaped by class and racial exclusion, what would stop the same tendencies from shaping the new twin urban centers Doxiadis was proposing? Those with financial resources, and the taxes they paid, were moving out of city centers, “and the people who are moving into the city are the poorest of our population; namely, the Negro, so that the result is that the whole area becomes more and more stagnant.”³⁶⁰

“How are you going to deal with this?” Kennedy demanded of Doxiadis. How, Kennedy continued, did establishing a new city in the state of New York a hundred miles away from New York and housing General Motor’s new headquarters help those in New York City who were struggling with employment, struggling with hope, “and are gradually being strangled to death themselves? I speak of the ghetto areas of the city.” Doxiadis, not to put too fine a point on it, dodged Kennedy’s question. He said that the senator was right, adding vaguely that “unless we look at the whole system of cities we cannot solve any of their problems.” Kennedy offered some of his ideas on urban renewal, which centered on “trying to bring private enterprise into the ghetto

³⁵⁹ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, pp. 1746-1749, Box 10, Folder 13, DR. For a discussion of why this remains the case even after revolutions in communication and transportation, see Sassen, *The Global City*.

³⁶⁰ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1750, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

area,” arguing that that was “in the last analysis, going to be the only solution for the city.” “The private enterprise system” was, the senator added, “what has made this country as successful as it has been.” Doxiadis merely responded that all available resources should be used, but that there were parts of the city where “there is not hope of any profit.” In those areas, one could not rely on private enterprise, but rather “the Government must sacrifice funds to save the people and to save the whole structure.”³⁶¹ Doxiadis ended his comments by remarking that “The Demonstration Cities Projects,” which would become the Model Cities program, “have great meaning, I think, if properly carried out.” They only addressed parts of the city, however, and Doxiadis encouraged his listeners to consider how to help the whole urban region. “It is imperative for us to understand this.”³⁶²

After delivering his prepared comments, the committee members asked the urban planner a number of questions. “To be fair and honest and realistic with ourselves,” Senator Abraham Ribicoff, of Connecticut, prefaced his question, “the American city has been complicated by the fact that there has been a great influx of Negroes, and an exodus of whites.” Was this, he inquired of Doxiadis, “a basically different problem physically, socially, economically, and psychologically” than that faced in the slums of Rome, London, and Paris. Doxiadis conceded that it was, “but only in a tertiary way,” as “it is not the color that creates the problems but the great difference in incomes.” In this answer, Doxiadis was thinking in global terms, including his work in Africa and the Middle East. The true problem was that cities allow areas to develop that are like “open sores” and into which “the weakest economic groups flow,” to which “we have the racial problem added as a new dimension.” “I would say,” Doxiadis answered further, “certainly that

³⁶¹ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, pp. 1751, 1758-1759, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁶² Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1761, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

where we have racial differences, the problem is more aggravated, because you see the difference, where in other areas you cannot.”³⁶³

Senator Ribicoff followed up with a question about industrial decentralization, especially in the context of Doxiadis’s plan to create new urban centers. “The Negro and the poorer groups,” Ribicoff observed, “who don’t have automobiles and don’t have means of public transportation, live in the core city,” and thus trying to travel to “a job of the most menial task or type” might take hours. ‘Now what,’ the senator asked, “do we do in the interim in finding employment or work for the people in the core cities, when industry is making an exodus into the suburbs at the present time?” Acknowledging the difficulty of the problem, Doxiadis repeated that the solution required examining “the urban structure as a whole, as a system.” A program that created 50,000 new jobs might not accomplish much if you have a million people “belonging only to the weakest social, racial, and economic groups in the center of the city,” and that population continues to grow year after year. To grasp the ever-evolving dynamics of cities, Doxiadis urged the senators, “unless we understand that we are entering a new era beyond the era of the cities, into the era of the universal city formed by a system of cities, we will be wrong in our action.”³⁶⁴

When Ribicoff fretted that too much federal money was being poured into urban areas, Kennedy jumped back in with the observation that it was “absolutely essential that the free enterprise system [. . .] take a role in the future of the city.” Doxiadis responded that it was not clear “exactly what and how” urban areas were changing and operating around the world, and therefore businesses distrusted old urban centers, before reiterating that he considered the main challenges as related to increasing populations and increasing pressures inside the central cities. To this, Kennedy rejoined, “I emphasize that the fact that the cities are in such financial difficulty at the

³⁶³ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1775, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁶⁴ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, pp. 1775, 1785, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

present, largely due to the great influx of lower income people and the outflow of the middle-class white into the suburbs.”³⁶⁵

Here Kennedy entered into a prolonged statement on the need to “rebuild those areas, and make it attractive for industry to come into that area.” He mused that “our philosophy in the past has been mistaken,” and lamented the lack of results by welfare payments, public housing, and job training. The latter, he added, “train[ed] people for jobs that are not available in the ghetto, so that if they get trained they move out of the ghetto into other areas, and if they don’t get trained, they stay there and go on welfare.” If the federal government continued its current policies, Kennedy concluded, which he characterized as pouring funds into cities, “we are going to get so far into the depth of a cavern that we will just never be able to extricate ourselves.” Again, Doxiadis repeated the need to understand the urban system as a whole, avoiding Kennedy’s remarks directed towards welfare and political philosophy, and instead, in line with his overall approach, Doxiadis consistently circled back to this key point.³⁶⁶

The second volume, published the following year, aimed to comprehensively examine the possible futures of the UDA: “the alternative solutions that were studied, classified, evaluated and selected for projections to the year 2000,” while reiterating the research project’s focus on human values, “man’s happiness and safety,” as well as economic ones. Qualifying their proposals with a disclaimer that it was the start of a process, and not a “definite and final solution,” the research project hoped to start a conversation on methodology and applications not just for the Detroit area, but “cities throughout the world.”³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1791, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁶⁶ Federal Role in Urban Affairs, p. 1792, Box 10, Folder 13, DR.

³⁶⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, iii-iv.

With a mathematical formula never made explicit to readers, Doxiadis's basic equation combined five elements (nature, man, society, shells (buildings), and networks) with five perspectives (economic, social, political, technological, and cultural) for a possible maximum of 33,554,431 combinations.³⁶⁸ Given this number of possible alternative developments for an urban system, the research project developed the IDEA method – the Isolation of Dimension and Elimination of Alternatives – to evaluate and screen out “weaker” alternatives according to an established criteria. The study, however, acknowledged that this method required “a great number of assumptions for the future” and that, if the assumptions did not materialize, then the outcomes would be different.³⁶⁹

From a purely Doxiadian perspective, the project argued that there was no goal for a city better than that Aristotle declared: happiness and safety. To reach this, the five elements of nature, man, society, shells, and networks were broken down. The resulting goals revolved around the preservation of natural resources, population densities, and networks that provided for the maximum of human needs with the minimum of disturbances.³⁷⁰ Before detailing the alternatives, the volume briefly reiterated the specific history of the Detroit area. “It is worthwhile,” the researchers wrote, “to look into the problems which the exceptional and unique development of the automotive industry has created for Detroit.” Despite being the automotive capital of the world, and the automotive industry being responsible for the city's population and income growth, the reliance on a single industry had created challenges for the area. The automotive industry's domination of the area's financial and labor resources, to name just one obstacle, “resulted in the atrophic development of the other sectors of activity, particularly services.”³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 26.

³⁶⁹ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 17, 19, 23-24.

³⁷⁰ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 29-30.

³⁷¹ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 65.

Furthermore, the dominance of automotive manufacturing shaped the city itself. It led to an influx of blue-collar workers and did not attract service and professional workers to the same degree. Manufacturing centered near Detroit, giving the city an industrial environment “with limited service facilities and unattractive housing.” The city grew low and horizontally, with parts of the city so far from the downtown that services could not be administered efficiently. With the advent of suburbanization, residents with high and middle incomes left the city. Those left behind had lower incomes and fewer employment opportunities. The result was that parts of the city became overcrowded, and others “fell into disrepair and deteriorated into slum areas.”³⁷² The project rarely mentioned racial segregation and that, principally, after the 1967 riots in Detroit. Even then there was not sufficiently critical analysis of the forces that concentrated city residents in over-priced, aging housing while simultaneously denying them credit or well-paid jobs. While the study occasionally attempted to address the creation of inner-city slums, it often only touched on how these changes occurred, but not why.

Similarly, the study notes that, out of 43,060 acres of land in the city of Detroit, 4,018, or roughly 10%, were considered blighted. These, readers were told, corresponded to the housing stock in the city that was built before 1930. Moreover, the volume quotes a Detroit City Plan Commission report that these areas “fail to qualify for conventional or governmentally insured mortgages.” No explanation was provided for these phenomena, nor was racial segregation and discrimination mentioned. Thus the volume danced around the mechanisms that created racial segregation in cities, as detailed in our first chapter, in which African Americans were concentrated in aging housing stock in inner cities and denied access to credit. Instead, the research project

³⁷² Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 67.

casually and unqualifiedly commented that “when an American family feels it can afford a better house, it moves to a better neighborhood.”³⁷³

Returning to the millions of possible alternative futures for the UDA, the volume then further explained the IDEA method, in which fifty million alternatives were developed and then each put through eight rounds of elimination. The progressive rounds of elimination narrowed the field of urban futures to 11,000, then 300, followed by 28. The addition of further criteria raised this number back up to 40 and then narrowed it to a final round of the top seven optimum futures for the area. The final round of elimination, however, Doxiadis noted, “requires very detailed investigation.” In one of Doxiadis’s characteristic asides, he assured the reader that “past, present, and future are connected to form a meaningful whole by which ‘the future takes shape on the merits of the past,’” recalling to the reader “what was written thousands of years ago in the palace of Priam of Troy.”³⁷⁴

One of the most novel and distinctive proposals of the UDA research project was then introduced: a twin urban center to complement downtown Detroit. The idea arose out of Doxiadis’s conviction that urban renewal was merely surgical, addressing symptoms but not causes. Indeed, “the possibility of relieving the existing center has proved completely wrong.” Whether planned or occurring naturally, “in both cases it has failed to save the downtown area from pressures.” Thus, the creation of a new urban center of “equal or higher order” to Detroit in the UDA would help relieve the pressures weighing down on the old urban center. Nine possible locations were considered for such a center, including Bay City, Flint, Toledo, and Port Huron.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 68, 70. For how racial segregation historically operated, see Hirsch, *Second Ghetto*; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.

³⁷⁴ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 135-136.

³⁷⁵ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 157-158, 175.

Such a twin urban center would be supported by the expanding manufacturing economy in the UDA as, in a unexplained reversal from the first volume, the second assured readers that “all indications show that the decentralization trend of the automotive industry has just about run its course.” Even while cautioning that “by the year 2000 radical changes could take place in the industrial structure of the region,” the research project predicted that manufacturing employment in the UDA would increase from 950,000 in 1960 to 1,260,000 in 2000. Nonetheless, the project predicted that the increase in industrial employment would be located completely outside of Detroit. Half of new industrial employment would be in a secondary industrial center in the UDA outside of Detroit. “This,” the study explained, “reflects the existing trend of industries to relocated outside the Detroit region.”³⁷⁶

A set of fourteen criteria, including a breakdown of population between Detroit and the new proposed twin urban area, were used to further refine the alternative future scenarios generated by the research project. How the criteria were ranked in this process reflected biases of the research project. “Scenic attractiveness” was one category of evaluation. It was simply assumed that low density areas were more attractive than high density areas. Further, “for areas which do not present attractive features high permissible densities were assumed.” Nevertheless, through this process, the research project arrived at a final output for the most optimal future for the UDA, known as Alternative 120. The third and final volume of the project was devoted to describing this alternative future.³⁷⁷

Before the study could be released, Detroit, like so many other cities in the United States, experienced an urban disorder rooted in anger and frustration over the continuing racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans. These cataclysmic events were such

³⁷⁶ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 160, 189-190.

³⁷⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 2: Future Alternatives*, 238, 241, 261, 264, 303.

that, while the first two volumes of the UDA research project never mentioned racial inequality in urban America, the third volume conceded that racial and economic segregation were forces that needed to be addressed.

Whether called a riot, an uprising, or a rebellion, the events in Detroit during the long, hot summer of 1967 have cast a long shadow over the Motor City, 20th century liberalism, and American race relations. Beginning with a police raid on a blind pig in the early morning hours of Sunday, July 23, the unrest in Detroit spread from a crowd watching arrests on 12th Street and Clairmount Avenue at 4 o'clock in the morning to three thousand throwing bottles and rocks at only a few hundred police officers.³⁷⁸ By noon, Hubert Locke, the administrative assistant to the police commissioner, told the latter that police had lost control and that it was a "lost cause." By that afternoon looting and arson were reported, and the National Guard had been called to the city. By the evening, a curfew had been imposed, sniper fire directed towards fire fighters was reported, and all the city's gas stations were shut down. At midnight, Michigan Governor George Romney declared Detroit and nearby communities Highland Park, Ecorse, and River Rouge to be in states of emergency.³⁷⁹

On Monday Mayor Cavanaugh and Governor Romney asked for the deployment of federal troops to Detroit, yet a bureaucratic two-step kept the request in limbo for six hours. The US Attorney General first told Romney that such a request had to be "formally" submitted. When Romney sent a telegram recommending immediate deployment, the Attorney General responded that he had to "request" troops, not "recommend" them. When the Deputy Secretary of Defense

³⁷⁸ A key text to understanding anger towards police brutality against African American Detroiters is Alex Elkins, "Liberals and 'Get-Tough' Policing in Postwar Detroit," in Stone, *Detroit 1967*, 106-116. See also Thompson, *Whose Detroit*; Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanaugh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007; originally published 1989), 95-125.

³⁷⁹ This account, and that in the following paragraphs, is taken from the comprehensive timeline in the companion book to the Detroit Historical Society's exhibit on the 50th anniversary of 1967. Stone, *Detroit 1967*, 119-136. See also the accounts in Fine, *Violence in the Model City*; Widick, *City of Race and Class Violence*; Bunge, *Fitzgerald*.

arrived later in the day, he announced that there was “insufficient evidence” that federal troops were required. By midnight, after two full days of unrest, Hubert Locke described “veteran police officers” who “were convinced that they were engaged in the worst urban guerilla warfare witnessed in the United States in the twentieth century.”

Perhaps that siege-mentality explains the indiscriminate use of violence used on the part of police officers and the National Guard. Brutal and gratuitous violence by police, such as shooting of three unarmed men and the beating of other residents at the Algiers Motel in the early morning of Wednesday, July 26, joined together with the reports of snipers, arson, and looting.³⁸⁰ By Thursday morning, 1,671 people were being held in custody by Detroit police, and on Friday the National Guard began to withdraw from the city. Curfews remained in effect over the weekend, and would only be lifted on the following Tuesday. The National Guard only fully left the city the following Friday. Over the course of the week, unrest had spread to cover over a hundred square miles. Two thousand five hundred and nine buildings were damaged, accompanied by a loss of \$36 million in insured property. Over seventeen thousand members of law enforcement were present in the city, which included the five thousand federal troops deployed by President Johnson at the request of the governor. Seven thousand two hundred and thirty one people were arrested, and forty-three died.³⁸¹

All this occurred in what had been considered the “model city” for race relations in the United States. “For years,” a *Washington Post* editorial lamented on July 25, “Detroit has been the American model of intelligence and courage applied to the governance of a huge industrial city.”³⁸²

³⁸⁰ For the Algiers Motel case, see Danielle L. McGuire, “Murder at the Algiers Motel,” in Stone, *Detroit 1967*, 173-183; John Hersey, *The Algiers Motel Incident* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 271-290.

³⁸¹ Thomas Sugrue, “Foreword,” in Stone, *Detroit 1967*, ix.

³⁸² Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 1.

Yet, a Kerner Commission staffer later reported that not a single black Detroit interviewee reported being happy with conditions in the city before the riot.³⁸³ While Detroit was still smoldering, on July 27, President Johnson announced the creation of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. While Detroit was considered the worst, over a hundred American cities experienced riots over the course of the summer of 1967.³⁸⁴ The commission, popularly called the Kerner Commission after its chair, Illinois Democratic governor Otto Kerner, released its report in March, 1968. “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white,” the report famously concluded, “separate and unequal.” In the course of their investigations into urban conditions in the United States, the eleven members of the commission “came to feel that America was in the midst of its greatest domestic crisis since the days of the Civil War,” in the words of commission member and Oklahoma Democratic senator Fred Harris.³⁸⁵

A Concept for the UDA’s Future Development

The era of urban disorders permeated the third Doxiadis volume in a way it did not in the first two. The idea of an “urban crisis” had been treated academically, but it became, in the third volume, a real and threatening presence. “The urban crisis is an universal phenomenon,” the introduction began, stating that “the situation has reached threatening proportions and is becoming more menacing every day.” The crisis, the introduction continued, was not just a problem in the slums. It was not a problem of affordable housing, or systems of transportations, or in the quality of air and water. It was “a crisis of the whole system.” With those who argued that there was no crisis or that cities were not dying, the research project responded, “we do not agree simply because

³⁸³ Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 39.

³⁸⁴ According to Sidney Fine, the civil unrest in Detroit in 1967 was the worst in the 20th century; Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 154, 291. For information on the Kerner Commission, see Steven M Gillon, *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unraveling of American Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), ix-x.

³⁸⁵ Gillon, *Separate and Unequal*, xii, 101, 49.

many cities all over the world continue to deteriorate, and because death has indeed already struck large or small parts of these cities.”³⁸⁶

This begged the question, however, of what the causes of the urban crisis were. It could not be that cities had grown too large, as human beings could adequately run large governments, corporations, and institutions. Nor did too rapid growth seem a satisfactory answer, as human beings had demonstrated that they could rapidly organize and operate armies, governments, and corporations. Rather, the research project located the crisis in two forces. The first was that cities had grown out of balance. The rate of growth of population, energy, and economy did not correspond with one another. The second was that cities were growing in complexity, but the physical and institutional structures of cities had not grown to adequately serve that new and increasing complexity. In the study, the race and class structure of Detroit and its uneven political development remained an unexplored facet of that complexity.³⁸⁷

In addition to the causes of the crisis, the research project argued, there were four reasons why humankind was unable to control the crisis. The first was that the conditions of crisis were addressed via different disciplinary silos, with agents tackling portions of the whole in isolation from one another, which the research team compared to “refusing to see that man himself is a single organism which cannot be looked at separately as body or senses or mind.” The second reason was that researchers and policymakers looked at the crisis in the wrong areas and at the wrong scale. This in turn was due to a belief that cities were only physically built-up areas or confined within municipal boundaries. Instead, ekistics defined a city as the “kinetic field” within which a human can “move within a certain area, within a certain time-span and always within the

³⁸⁶ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 3.

³⁸⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 4. See, among others, Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Thompson, *Whose Detroit?*

same day.” The third reason was thinking within too narrow of a time-frame—in one, five, or ten year increments. Instead, the research project suggested seventy years for parts of the city and double that, 140 to 150 years, for the entire city. The fourth reason was a too narrow conception of the future. Instead, a four-fold understanding of the future was proposed involving the constant past, the declining past, the continuing past, and the created future. The most important was the last, which was “the ability of man to create the future.” Without this, the only possibility was stagnation.³⁸⁸

The bulk of the third volume was given to elaborating the most optimal future alternative for the UDA, Alternative 120. Building off the idea of a twin urban center, Alternative 120 proposed, “among other things, a new twin urban center to Detroit on the St. Clair River in the vicinity of Port Huron, Michigan.” With a projected population of one million, the new city would be as integrated in the UDA as Detroit was. Further, it would “relieve the pressures now exerted on Detroit and permit revitalization and remodeling of its suffering and declining areas.” In addition, the final alternative planned for a continuing population decline in Detroit’s central city. In reference to out-migration to suburban communities, the third volume concluded, “the shift of the more affluent economic forces from the city to these communities is the principal phenomenon having an adverse effect on the city.”³⁸⁹

The third and final research volume warned that, “what it does not present are specialized aspects of economic, social, racial and institutional problems and ways to solve.” “This research project,” it continued, “is very concerned with the human settlement as a whole,” but that to address all problems at all scales was beyond “the capabilities of any group within a reasonable period of time.” Instead, the project hoped to provide an understanding of “the geographical and

³⁸⁸ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 5-6.

³⁸⁹ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, iv.

functional components” of the overall urban system, which in turn would provide insights into other problems, whether they “economic, social, racial, political, technological or cultural.”³⁹⁰ This was a different tone from the first two volumes of the UDA research project. Not only was there a new need to justify not looking at social problems, the introduction introduced the element of race, a category absent from the first two volumes. What the third volume did not explicitly mention was the Detroit riots, but nonetheless the research project articulated “the conviction that Detroit is faced with a great urban crisis which is becoming more and more acute.”³⁹¹

The first two volumes, while not explicitly addressing racial inequalities, did discuss economic inequalities, albeit obliquely. This, too, changed in the third volume. Not only had the population of the UDA grown from 4.7 million in 1940 to 7.1 million in 1960, but “social and economic barriers have also developed with the flight of the more privileged sections of the population to the suburbs.”³⁹² The result was the concentration of the lowest incomes in the central city. Unlike earlier volumes, the third acknowledged that there were barriers, and not merely economic ones, that kept certain city residents in the inner city. In keeping with the first two volumes, the third identified “trends of decentralization” as having “resulted in a sharp decline of employment in the automobile industry since 1960, a decline which has not been counterbalanced by non-durable manufacturing activities.” The result was an overall decline in manufacturing employment, which was “indeed an unusual trend for the economy of UDA.”³⁹³ It was a trend that also underwrote the growing inequality that the volume finally acknowledged.

Nonetheless, while the percentage manufacturing constitute of total employment in the central region fell from 48% in 1950 to 40% in 1960 and then 39% in 1965, the numbers in the

³⁹⁰ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 9.

³⁹¹ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 19.

³⁹² Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 23.

³⁹³ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 56.

central region of Detroit were still higher than those in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. The effects of decentralization and automation, however, were still felt, even among skilled workers. Between 1963 and 1969, 119 industrial establishments moved out of the Detroit central city. A growing service sector absorbed some unemployed industrial workers, but service jobs were located in the suburbs, which were “relatively inaccessible to the lower income, mainly non-white workers of Detroit.”³⁹⁴ They also required a different skillset, let alone higher levels of education within social services or clerical work, which was something the study did not explore. Also unexplored was the growth in female employment or women’s disproportionate share of public and service sector work. This also had implications for the subject of the research project.³⁹⁵

Besides unequal access to outlying metropolitan areas, one of the problems of decentralization, whether it was industrial, commercial, or residential, was that it meant more energy had to be expended to navigate the metropolis. “Confusion begins,” the study reported, “when there are too many automobiles and industrial plants, resulting in a revolutionary increase in energy available to people as a community and as individuals. They spread their installations far out and create confused patterns in the countryside and within the urban areas.” This related back to the increasing complexity of urban systems that was beyond the control or understanding of those who had build them or lived in them. Regardless, “these problems have not arisen by chance; they are the result of forces at work over long periods of time.”³⁹⁶ And yet, automobiles and transportation infrastructure explained *how* cities became decentralized, but not *why*.

³⁹⁴ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 65, 67, 88.

³⁹⁵ Alice Kessler-Harris, *Gendering Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), especially 284-399; Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall, Linda Gordon, and Susan M. Reverby, eds., *America's Working Women: A Documentary History, 1600 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

³⁹⁶ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 119-120.

The history of the Detroit presented by the research project underscored this point. The moment that city became the automotive capital of the world, between 1910 and 1930, also contained the seeds of the outmigration of the well-off population. By the 1920, the movement of high-income residents to suburbs such as the Grosse Pointes, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, and Dearborn “assumed the dimension of an exodus.”³⁹⁷ This outward movement was counteracted by immigration from Europe and upward migration from the South, with the latter becoming increasingly more important over the decades. In 1910, European immigrants in the central city outnumbered nonwhite migrants from the south four to one, although the ratio evened out between 1920 and 1930 and reversed by World War II. With this demographic shift, the research project noted, matter-of-factly, the total income of the central city declined. It gave no explanation why the incomes of black southerners would be lower than European immigrants in the same central urban area. At the same time, commercial and service activities began leaving the central city, as well.³⁹⁸

Between 1950 and 1960, this outward migration reached the automotive industry, which “began decentralizing its operations to new locations, some even outside UDA.” The nail in the coffin, so to speak, was the construction of the highways, which “became the channels of decentralization while at the same time they completely broke up the physical structure of the central area.” Middle-income city residents also moved away, so that the central city became the largely the residence of “the lowest income groups of non-whites.” This was, the study remarked, “the most characteristic phenomenon of the 1950-1960 phase.” With the loss of income came “the

³⁹⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 135. See also Jacob Dean Hall, “The Myth of the Motor City: Urban Politics, Public Policy, and the Suburbanization of Detroit's Automobile Industry, 1878-1937” (University of Iowa, 2013).

³⁹⁸ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 137. See also Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983). Note that *central city* refers to a subsection of the city overall.

creation of numerous social problems in the ghettos.” In the following decade, “per capita income of residents will drop even further and the area will acquire all the characteristics of a ghetto.” This section marked the only time the central city was described using that term in all three volumes.³⁹⁹

As if afraid that too much attention was being paid to social issues at the expense of the abstract, structural focal points of ekistics, the volume at several moments repeated its caution that it and the research project as a whole could not adequately address all the sundry specific challenges facing urban systems. “There are urgent problems,” the volume conceded, “such as human relations, poverty, social welfare, etc. These are grave problems which must receive immediate, substantial and continuing attention. They are not, however,” the volume continued, “directly caused by the city nor is their solution intrinsically related to the overall structural problems of the city. Thus they are dealt with only indirectly in this volume.” For the research project, their proposed improvements to the urban system were designed to help alleviate and contribute to solving all these other problems.⁴⁰⁰

Still, the research project drew a distinction between “human problems” and “urban problems,” and lamented the “confusion” that blurred the two together. “Man looks at the suffering of people in the cities,” the study sought to explain, “and speaks of their problems as urban ones.” But these so-called urban ills were not *necessarily* urban in nature. Rather, they were the results of low incomes, and “if the same people, of very low incomes, lived in the countryside, they would be faced with the same problems, perhaps even greater ones.” Perhaps that would be true of some city residents, but it entirely ignored – if, indeed, the authors were aware of – the economic and legal structures of segregation under which black city residents were charged exorbitant rents for

³⁹⁹ For a fuller explanation of the history of the term “ghetto” and its connotations within the US, see Duneier, *Ghetto*. Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 138, 142. For a historical treatment of the dynamic being discussed, see Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

⁴⁰⁰ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 111.

dilapidated and overcrowded housing, because they could not, were not allowed to, find housing elsewhere, regardless of income. This segregation led to other ills, such as the epidemic of rat bites among children in the inner cities, which was also the focus of a public health campaign by President Johnson in cities nationwide. One imagines they might have been, on the contrary, better off in the countryside after all.

Thus the inability to see the workings of racial segregation in urban areas, rooted in a belief that it was more or less natural, worked against the best intentions of those who sought to address the urban crisis. If one accepts that nonwhite city residents naturally had lower incomes, then it follows that they would have lower quality housing, and that naturally they would concentrate in the same inner city communities, either out of preference or out of economic necessity. Yet such a belief that it was natural for nonwhites to earn lower incomes or that they would naturally segregate suggests an underlying racial bias that shaped the entire study. This is not to say that the UDA research project or other planners and policy creator thought segregation was desirable. Often, the opposite was the case. Rather, it is to underline that they did not understand the origins of segregation, and they were willing to allow assumptions and even prejudices guide how they approached it.⁴⁰¹

The research project acknowledged that these problems existed but then explained why their study did not specifically address them. They were not “concerned with all problems here, but primarily with those which cause people to suffer because of the urban system in which they are living.” This was a point that Doxiadis made several times, such as when he gave testimony in Congress regarding the problems facing American cities in the late 1960s. When explicitly asked about certain problems, like segregation, he agreed that they should be addressed, but his

⁴⁰¹ For the history of the treatment of segregation in the social sciences, beginning with Gunnar Myrdal’s *The American Dilemma* (1944), including its shortcomings and blind spots, see Duneier, *Ghetto*.

understanding of cities encompassed a more abstract, structural view of the urban system. He was more interested in the relationship between population densities and transportation networks, which he saw as being unique to the urban system and not to other more general problems. Racism and other social ills, on other hand, might be manifested *in* cities, but they were not *of* the city, and occurred independent of cities as well. This assumed, however, that all racism was the same, and that there was nothing particular and nor any unique forms or variants of racial inequality, some of which, I would argue, *are* specific to urban systems. Further, Doxiadis argued that cities were created by humans, yet somehow he believed that they were immune to the biases and prejudices of their human creators; that is, that cities were purer forms than societies or politics.

Nonetheless, there was a new-found sensitivity to racial inequality in the third volume. In discussing the demographics of Detroit, the volume included maps with the distribution of population according to race; and it noted that the nonwhite population of the central region of Detroit in 1960 was three times as large as that in 1940. In actual numbers, the non-white population increased from 155,000 in 1940 to 495,000 in 1960. Of this population, 87.3% was concentrated in the central city, and 76.2% in what the research project identified as the critical area. Within the critical area, the non-white population had increased from 12.5% in 1940 to 53.1% in 1960, while the corresponding numbers for the central region overall were 8.9% and 28.4%, respectively. Furthermore, the per capita incomes of non-white residents in the critical area were roughly 60% of their white neighbors, or \$935 and \$1500 respectively. Areas of the city that were predominantly nonwhite were, the project concluded, “not only spreading but intensifying.” At the same time, some areas had a non-white population that had declined between 1950 and 1960, “largely as a result of land clearance and urban renewal.”⁴⁰² Despite this discussion of racial

⁴⁰² Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 61, 64, 84, 86.

demographics in Detroit, no explanation was offered for why the non-white population was distributed in this way, nor why non-white communities were targeted for land clearance and urban renewal.

The increased focus on racial inequalities in the city led the research project to comment that “one of the greatest problems in all American cities today is segregation and the growing conflict among racial groups.” The analysis continued, in seeming contradiction to the basic contours of American history, as well as those of Detroit, by explaining that racial conflict was growing as “the inhabitants of large settlements today have many more contacts with other people and consequently encounter more differences and potential conflicts.” Segregation was the tool by which city residents avoided “contacts they do not like.” While it might start out informally, segregation became more rigid over time. With the construction of highways in Detroit, “social segregation has become a much more critical problem because these physical structures break up the unity of the city.” The social prejudices of the city were manifested in concrete.

To argue that racial conflicts were growing in urban areas during the 1960s due to city residents confronting each other’s differences for, presumably, the first time, is to misunderstand urban racial inequalities on two fronts. On the one hand, it is to identify racial frustration as the result of personal, or interpersonal, bigotry and prejudice. To suggest that African American Detroiters in the 1960s felt frustrated by the differences between themselves and their white neighbors, rather than the systematic and pervasive practices of segregation and discrimination, is to minimize and dismiss the desire for civil rights in northern cities. On the other hand, it also fundamentally misunderstands, or is willingly blind to, the history of slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, Jim Crow and lynching throughout the United States, or Detroit’s own history of conflicts over housing or the 1943 riot.

This analysis also put forward to an idealized answer to those conflicts. The study comments that an imbalanced racial distribution of the population “intensifies the overall problem and leads to a lack of communication and understanding among social groups,” suggesting that the problem is just a failure of communication and not of power and profit. Similarly, the research project warned that the task of addressing racial segregation was “extremely difficult” and needed to be “pursued with caution and patience.” The utmost consideration was to be given to “the reduction of conflicts” and the “improvement of communication and understanding among social groups,” as if the demand for desegregation, in 1970, was too much, too soon. The implication was that the conflict was the fault of those asking for, or frustrated by the lack of, change.⁴⁰³

Running through discussions of race in the UDA research study was the underlying belief that it was not so much a problem of racial inequality that caused urban disorder as it was economic inequality and lack of economic opportunity. While encouraging the improvement of communication and understanding between social groups, the research project assured readers that “as the economic condition of the less privileged groups improve and the economic gap is reduced, social taboos may have less relevance in the future.”⁴⁰⁴ In a similar vein, elsewhere the authors argued that not all city residents had the same ability to choose what contacts they wish to make, but “this is not due to racial discrimination alone but also to economic discrimination.”⁴⁰⁵

Conclusion

The Urban Detroit Area research project was one of Doxiadis last projects. He passed away in 1975, five years after the third volume was published, from ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease, after

⁴⁰³ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 150, 378.

⁴⁰⁴ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 150, 378.

⁴⁰⁵ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 150. The historical literature detailing how segregation was the result of deliberate policies on the part of the federal government, banks, loaning institutions, and realtors is growing, and includes among others, Hirsch, *Second Ghetto*; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*; Gillon, *Separate and Unequal*.

a three-year fight. He was in his early sixties.⁴⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the UDA research project stands as a testament of his love and concern for the future of cities and the system of ekistics he developed to explain and plan them. The critiques forwarded in this chapter should not overshadow his considerable understanding of the macro-processes governing urban systems, nor his openness to the possibilities of the future. Driverless cars, underground highways, high-speed trains, and factories contained within mountains were ideas that excited him. He believed they pointed the way to future cities that were vitally designed for human life and health.

The point is not that Doxiadis and the UDA research team got some things wrong. The point, rather, is that to someone with as much experience and knowledge as Doxiadis, how race and class operated as divisions and boundaries within the metropolitan area were not seen as important as the city was concerned. In other words, classism and racism were not spatialized. They happened, but they happened anywhere; and so they just happened to also happen in the city. As the first two chapter argued, this was not an objective view, but thoroughly subjective. For those discriminated against, segregation occurred in specific spaces. For those who enforced segregation, it, too, occurred in a specific space. Similarly, for the workers at the River Rouge complex, their jobs and communities were rooted in particular spaces, and, in fact, those jobs helped create and constitute their communities. To say that racial and class inequalities occurred outside of space, or independent of geography, is to reveal a worldview in which those inequalities are, while intellectually recognized, nonetheless unexperienced and unacknowledged.

The UDA research project did not ask what the human causes, or political forces, were that created conditions of inequality in cities. Rather, the inequalities are accepted in and of themselves. Thus, while decentralization was a problem facing Detroit, it was not questioned at any point why

⁴⁰⁶ "Biographical Note," <http://www.doxiadis.org/ViewStaticPage.aspx?Valueid=4276>, accessed May 25, 2016.

residents and businesses and industries were decentralizing. That automobiles and highways allowed people to move further away from downtowns did not mean that they necessarily would do so or even would want to do so. Perhaps these human causes were legitimately thought to be irrelevant, but it might be because the study was funded by a major regional business. Such a discussion might have been deemed inappropriate or too controversial given the context. Or, perhaps, it was taken for granted that readers would know the context of racial and class tension in the city—that it was an open secret that did not need to be explicitly referenced.

One reason social ills fit uneasily within Doxiadis's framework was the result of scale. The smallest scale used in the UDA research project was 4-6 square miles.⁴⁰⁷ Using the concept of ekistics, Doxiadis took a large regional perspective, and the details could only be so finely-grained. The UDA research project freely admitted that they had made a certain set of assumptions and that these assumptions might be wrong. If they were, then the results for the UDA would be different than they had forecast. Additionally, the research project straddled the line between trying to accept how people wanted to live with what would be the optimal scenario. Given that people wanted to live outside of Detroit, Doxiadis proposed a twin urban center for them. Given the tendency towards decentralization in so many facets of urban life, building another entire city does not intuitively seem a desirable or achievable goal. Yet, one could argue that Doxiadis fully accepted the premise of decentralization and suburbanization – that people no longer wanted to live in Detroit – and formulated a solution that was still predicated on being connected to an urban system.

In any case, it was not for the existing city residents who lived in Detroit that the UDA research project planned for in the 1960s. Rather, they planned for imagined residents in an imagined city.⁴⁰⁸ The goal was not how to improve life for the real residents, but how to attract the

⁴⁰⁷ Doxiadis, *Volume 3: A Concept for Future Development*, 301.

⁴⁰⁸ Which does not preempt creative and human-centered imaginings. See Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures*.

kind of city residents – high-income, white – whom the planners saw as desirable and valuable to the future prosperity of the city. Even as problems of inequality and barriers were identified, there was an inability to confront why those problems existed.

While the UDA research project was invested in the Detroit region and paid close attention to its dynamics, they nonetheless understood Detroit to be a case study, as a stand-in for other cities facing similar problems. In a way, this further explained the lack of interest in the experiences of city residents or those who had to navigate the city on daily basis. What was of interest was the built environment, transportation networks, and people in the aggregate, as data or sociological phenomena. What is singularly lacking in the three volumes of the UDA research project was people, certainly as seen or understood as individual human beings, an ironic turn given that Doxiadis emphasized the need for a human city. Planners, policy makers, and politicians were and are able to ignore existing city residents, and what they are living through and experience, because, in a sense, they did not and do not exist for them. If they do, it is as a problem to be solved.

CHAPTER 5 FROM DETROIT TO WASHINGTON: THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO THE URBAN CRISIS AND THE FIGHT FOR MODEL CITIES, 1966-1970

The attractiveness of cities is not gotten by subtraction. It builds up from lots and lots of different bits and details, lots of different bits of money, lots of different notions, all coming out of the concern, the affection, and the ideas of lots and lots of different people. The amenity of cities cannot possibly be planned or bought wholesale.

Jane Jacobs, speech at the fifth monthly women doers luncheon, sponsored by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, the White House, Washington, DC, June 16, 1964⁴⁰⁹

President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society was the most ambitious legislative reform since Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, and cities were at the heart of it. Johnson announced the Great Society during a speech in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the spring of 1964, declaring that "it demands the end to poverty and racial injustice – to which we are totally committed in our time," and that "in the next forty years we must rebuild the entire urban United States." "Our society will never be great," Johnson argued in his speech, "until our cities are great. Today the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities and not beyond their borders."⁴¹⁰

Having grown up in the rural hill country of central Texas, Johnson knew and understood poverty, and was consequently far from indifferent from those who lived with it and around it. He worked building roads and as a janitor to put himself through college, and later taught impoverished Mexican students in rural south Texas.⁴¹¹ The rediscovery of poverty in the United States, heralded by Michael Harrington's 1962 widely-read study *The Other America*, coincided with the increasing concern over the so-called urban crisis – the overlapping and entangled

⁴⁰⁹ Jane Jacobs, "A Great Unbalance," in Samuel and Nathan Storrington Zipp, eds, *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (New York: Random House, 2016), 145-148.

⁴¹⁰ Bruce J. Schulman, ed., *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 191-196; Joshua Zeitz, *Building the Great Society: Inside Lyndon Johnson's White House* (New York: Viking, 2018), 197.

⁴¹¹ LBJ often referred to these autobiographical facts, but for a succinct treatment see Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990; originally 1981), 132, 144-145, 166-173.

conditions of major cities in the United States that included segregation, poverty, poor housing, unemployment, crime, health, and juvenile delinquency, among other things.⁴¹² Thus, in the wake of declaring war on poverty in his 1964 State of the Union address, President Johnson oversaw the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964; the Housing Acts of 1964 and 1965; the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1965; the National Capital Transportation Act of 1965; the Demonstration Cities Act of 1966 (known as Model Cities); and the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968.⁴¹³ As much as these programs might be considered the heart of the Great Society, they also were a continuation of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

While the Johnson administration declared war on poverty and oversaw the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the details of the Great Society legislation often failed to appreciate or fill in the details. As historian Robert Dallek later described the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, "neither the President who sponsored it, the director-designate who would administer it, nor the congressmen who passed it really knew what they had done."⁴¹⁴ This failure is reflected in the Model Cities legislation, in which the policies enacted to benefit city residents do not seem to address the actual conditions facing urban residents in the decades following the Second World War. The reasons for this are varied, ranging from the faulty understanding of the architects of the legislation to the compromises the Johnson administration had to make in order to get such sweeping reforms passed through Congress. Regardless, it is

⁴¹² Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967; originally published 1962). Definition and dating of the public awareness of the urban crisis in the mid-60s based on Roger Biles, *The Fate of Cities: Urban America and the Federal Government, 1945-2000* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2011), 111. Thomas Sugrue, as did others before him, has argued that "the rusting of the Rust Belt" "began, unheralded, in the 1950s." See Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*. See also Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*; Faue, *Rethinking the American Labor Movement*, 113-138. For Lyndon B. Johnson's background, see Caro, *Path to Power*.

⁴¹³ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 112. Note that the terms "Demonstration Cities" and "Model Cities" are used interchangeably in reference to the same legislation.

⁴¹⁴ Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 111.

evident that the plans meant to aid cities fundamentally failed to grasp the driving forces of the urban crisis and therefore failed to offer meaningful solutions.

In this moment the postwar city was the site of experiments in urban forms. Planners, experts, and technocrats strove to address the changes in cities since the war—population growth, suburbanization, industrial restructuring. These plans were not useless or irrelevant. While they might not have succeeded in solving the problems confronted by cities in the United States, they made sincere efforts to take the best knowledge and insights in urban problems and challenges and create solutions. The perception of what constituted social ills and what society should do about them, however, revealed the worldviews of those policy makers. As historian Tracy Neumann has argued, the visions for industrial cities following the Second World War were often postindustrial visions.⁴¹⁵ As such, they often failed to include in any real way the industrial working classes, just as they similarly failed to address racial inequalities.

While this chapter focuses on national conversations and federal policy, it still revolves around Detroit in several ways. First, it intends to demonstrate that Detroit was not unique in the challenges it faced after the war. Many other cities in the United States confronted similar conditions. Second, as one of the recipients of Model Cities aid, the discussion of the ideals and the shortcomings of the Model Cities legislation had concrete local significance. In different ways, Detroit played a central role in the history of federal urban policy and in the Model Cities program. Indeed, the idea originated with UAW President Walter Reuther, neatly connecting Model Cities with Detroit and the labor movement. This link, however, makes it that much more ironic that legislation like Model Cities was unable to address unemployment and job loss in industrial cities.

⁴¹⁵ See Neumann, *Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America*.

Even when these urban vision originated with working-class city residents at their center, it did not last. The policies soon morphed into postindustrial urban visions.

The Social Urban Vision of Walter Reuther

That Model Cities originated with Walter Reuther is a consequence of the UAW leader's immense interest in creating mass affordable housing. This was true during the war, when he was involved in adequate housing for defense workers. It was true in the mid-1950s, as well, when Reuther helped create the Citizens Redevelopment Committee, which brought Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the famed Bauhaus architect, to Detroit to design the city's Lafayette Park community. For Reuther, housing it was not merely a physical structure but rather a means to "rebuild the whole inner cores of our great cities and produce in those inner cores an attractive, healthy, wholesome living environment that will be so exciting that everyone will want to live there." In a similar way to Constantinos Doxiadis, Reuther argued that a revitalized and whole urban environment would mean that "the racial thing will get lost in the shuffle." Later, Reuther would champion federal support for mass-produced prefabricated housing in an alliance with former Michigan governor George Romney, who served as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under Richard Nixon.⁴¹⁶

It was not surprising to find Reuther, in the spring of 1965, encouraging President Johnson to organize a planning committee to select cities for a program to "demonstrate" the wide-range of Great Society programs and their efficacy. It would be, Reuther wrote to the president, a "Marshall Plan for the Cities."⁴¹⁷ Working with his friend and architect Oskar Stonorov, Reuther's

⁴¹⁶ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 402. See also <http://www.miesdetroit.org/Design> for more information on the planning of Lafayette Park (accessed April 15, 2018). Information on Reuther's support comes from the research of Kristin M. Szylvian, who presented it at the Reuther Library, November 8, 2017. See also the overview of "Operation Breakthrough" in Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 170. Reuther's quote on "the racial thing" comes from John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther years, 1935-1970* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 407.

⁴¹⁷ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 134.

original proposal, in the words of his biographer Nelson Lichtenstein, “perfectly targeted LBJ’s Rooseveltian ambitions,” following the Watts riots of 1965. Conceived as an “urban TVA,” the duo proposed building entire communities on tracts of urban land, seven hundred to a thousand acres in size, where one could find “new technologies of housing construction and prefabrication, new types of schools, old-age centers, and recreational facilities,” to create a “physically beautiful and socially sound America.”⁴¹⁸

Based on this description, one can imagine Walter Reuther’s urban vision was ran contrary to the urbanist movement in the mid-1960s. People like Jane Jacobs and sociologist William White were moving away from overly planned urban environments. “Their appreciation,” as Lichtenstein phrased it, “of an organic and complex urban synthesis evoked little sympathy from the UAW president.” As one Johnson aide, Harry McPherson, recalled, Reuther was for “bull-dozing and rebuilding.”⁴¹⁹ Nonetheless, Johnson found Reuther’s vision of a “Marshall Plan for the cities” compelling. He met with Reuther on September 17, 1965, to hash out a fuller plan from the labor leader’s original proposal to used six cities—Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, DC, Los Angeles, and Houston—as demonstrations of a new federal approach to aging cities. Following the meeting, Johnson appointed a task force to work out the details to implement Reuther’s idea. The nine members included Whitney Young of the Urban League, Charles Haar of Harvard Law School, and Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut, as well as Reuther. As the taskforce moved from idea to fleshed-out plan, it was Reuther, in the words of one committee member, who supplied “the vision, drive and sometimes mere rhetoric that has kept us moving.”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 403; Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 407. The Tennessee Valley Authority was a flagship New Deal program, the first and largest federal regional planning initiative, and which continues to operate to the present.

⁴¹⁹ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 402.

⁴²⁰ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 134-135; Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 408.

Reuther was not the first prominent Detroitier to bring the attention of the federal government to the plight of American cities. As historian Roger Biles described, “Mayor Frank Murphy of Detroit took the lead in pleading the case of urban America” to the Hoover administration. In doing so, Murphy argued for increased government spending as the pathway to saving cities, countering those who urged a balanced budget. Such a thing “isn’t a god, a sacred thing that is to be accomplished at all costs. It is not right to shatter living conditions and bring human beings to want and misery to achieve such an objective.” “To sacrifice everything,” Murphy concluded, “to balance the budget is fanaticism.” The Detroit mayor invited twenty-six big city mayors in 1932 to petition the federal government for a \$5 billion public works program. This initiative failed, but it did serve as the foundation for the US Conference of Mayors, membership in which was open to mayors of cities with other 50,000 residents. Murphy’s plan in many ways prefigured the Great Society’s urban initiative.⁴²¹

Reuther was not just an advocate in the spirit of Mayor Frank Murphy. Reuther also organized a nonprofit, the Metropolitan Detroit Citizens Redevelopment Authority, to organize and facilitate Model Cities funding to the city. He served as the Authority’s chair. His mission, as he understood it, was “rebuilding the inner core of Detroit . . . so that people living in a slum can move into neighborhoods worth of citizens of the Great Society.”⁴²² Moreover, President Johnson leaned on Reuther’s position as a prominent liberal voice in order to defend Great Society programs. For instance, on January 27, 1966, LBJ aide Joe Califano sent the president a memo referring to an “extremely unfair” *Washington Post* editorial from the day before. He informed the president that he had called Reuther in order to have the AFL-CIO make a public statement in

⁴²¹ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 4.

⁴²² Reuther quoted in Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 403.

support of Demonstration Cities.⁴²³ The US president listened to and relied on Reuther, and the UAW president gave public and visible shows of support for the Johnson presidency. At the UAW convention in the spring of 1966, Reuther presented Johnson with the union's Social Justice Award.⁴²⁴ While Reuther might have been outside the urbanist trends of the 1960s as represented by those like Jane Jacobs, he was a go-to authority on urban affairs for the Johnson administration.

Creating Model Cities

In contrast to the ensuing debate over urban policy, the expanding war in Vietnam was a major focus of President Johnson's 1966 State of the Union address, but he did not ignore domestic issues. "There are men who cry out that we must sacrifice," President Johnson calmly and deliberately pronounced, scanning his entire audience. "Well, let us rather ask them who will they sacrifice?" Would they sacrifice children seeking learning, the sick seeking medical care, "or the families who dwell in squalor now brightened by the hope of home?" Will they, he inquired, "sacrifice opportunity for the distressed, the beauty of our land, the hope of our poor?"⁴²⁵ The Great Society, he stated, meant growth, justice, and liberation. He argued for ending racial discrimination and expanding the war on poverty, for helping "that other nation within a nation, the poor whose distress has now captured the conscious of America." It meant addressing rural poverty but also helping to "rebuild entire sections of neighborhoods containing in some cases as many as 100,000 people." Uniting private interest with the power of the federal government, Lyndon Johnson urged that the country "press forward with the task of providing homes and shops,

⁴²³ Memorandum, Joe Califano to Johnson, January 27, 1966, Box 2, Folder 1, Legislative Background and Domestic Crisis File, Model Cities, 1966, LBJ Library. (Hereafter MC.)

⁴²⁴ Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 403.

⁴²⁵ Lyndon B. Johnson, State of the Union, January 12, 1966, Box 2, Folder 5, MC. Footage of this SOTU address can be found online, posted by the LBJ Library, at <https://youtu.be/YAqNMmFMWWc> (accessed April 16, 2018).

parks and hospitals, and all the other parts of a flourishing community where our people can come to live the good life.”⁴²⁶

In his January 26, 1966 presidential address to Congress on cities, President Johnson made a rousing call for a response to the urban crisis. “What we may only dimly perceive,” the address went, “is the gravity of the choice before us: whether we shall make our cities livable for ourselves and our posterity, or by timidity and neglect damn them to fester and decay.”⁴²⁷ While words do not necessarily translate into action, especially within the realm of politics, the rhetoric used by the Johnson administration in regards to the urban crisis were revealing. It is clear that they understood that race and class were at the root of who suffered in cities and who did not. “The special problem of the poor and the Negro” and the “the flight to the suburbs of more fortunate men and women” were listed as part of the crisis.⁴²⁸ Johnson mentioned the “social and psychological effects of relocating the poor” that had arisen from urban renewal and noted that they were “the unavoidable consequences of every urban renewal project, demanding as much concern as physical redevelopment.”⁴²⁹ Even the conflicting tendencies of federal policy were acknowledged in Johnson’s address: “the goals of major federal programs have often been conflicted, some working for the revitalization of the central city, some accelerating suburban growth, some building and some destroying urban communities.” He recognized that those who were impoverished and non-whites suffered disproportionately, that those who could fled to suburban communities, and that the response of the federal government up to this point had been inchoate and disorderly.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ Lyndon B. Johnson, State of the Union, January 12, 1966, Box 2, Folder 5, MC.

⁴²⁷ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC. Written by Harry McPherson, edited by Jack Valenti.

⁴²⁸ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴²⁹ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁰ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

The response of the Johnson administration was clear. In the Demonstration City program, there would be a focus on entire neighborhoods and their impact on the entire city. There would be a focus on the total environment and the use of available social programming, “so that the human cost of relocation is reduced and new opportunities for work and training are offered.”⁴³¹ There would be more housing, with a focus on creating equal opportunity for housing for those of different races. There would be the “maximum occasion for employing residents of the demonstration area in all phases of the program” and the fostering of “local initiative and widespread citizen participation.”⁴³² Modern technologies would be used, and there should be “attention to man’s need for open spaces and attractive landscaping.”⁴³³ Returning to the statement that relocation had been destructive in human terms, Johnson stated that the program “should make relocation housing available at cost commensurate with the incomes of those displaced by the project,” as well as offering “counseling services, moving expenses, and small business loans [as well as] assistance in job placement and retraining.”⁴³⁴

Johnson argued that the development authority should include “a broad cross-section of community leadership” and the municipality should provide “adequate municipal appropriations and services.” The program was to be “predominantly residential” and “consistent with existing development plans.”⁴³⁵ Moving from the more practical matters, Johnson insisted that the outcome would be intangible and hard to measure: that of hope, “that the city is not beyond reach of redemption by men of good will; that through cooperation, hard work, wise planning, and the sacrifice of codes and practices that make widespread renewal impossibly expensive today, it is

⁴³¹ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³² January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³³ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁴ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁵ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

possible to reverse the city's decline."⁴³⁶ While the impact would ultimately be beyond the cost in dollar amounts, Johnson reassured his listeners that the benefits would be for "the ultimate relief of the general taxpayer, as well as for city administrators, land developers, and for the urban poor." In the context of rising costs of municipal services and declining property values, Johnson reminded his audience, the estimated federal spending was for the common good.⁴³⁷

At this point, Johnson returned to the theme of the suburbs. He reminded his listeners that the "reality of urban life" was that the suburbs and the city were intertwined, "what happens in the central city, or the suburb, is certain to affect the quality of life in the other."⁴³⁸ Much like Doxiadis had argued, Johnson understood cities and suburbs to part of one large regional network. Further, "at the center of the cities' housing problem lies racial discrimination" – as clear-cut a denunciation as one could wish. "Crowded miles of inadequate dwellings – poorly maintained and frequently overpriced – are the Negro American's lot in many of our cities [...] Where housing is poor, schools are generally poor, unemployment is widespread, family life is threatened, and the community's welfare burden is steadily magnified. These are the links in the chain of racial discrimination."⁴³⁹ Johnson does not, however, argue for a causal relationship. The relationship between these issues was not so much a chain, with an end and a beginning, but a web.

Fundamentally, the basic assumption of Demonstration Cities was that the physical landscape influenced human behavior. Johnson proclaimed a new approach to urban design, insisting that "they [cities] must also provide a rational and harmonious environment, with integrated transportation systems, attractive community buildings, and open spaces free from

⁴³⁶ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁷ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁸ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴³⁹ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

pollution.”⁴⁴⁰ Another fundamental idea behind Demonstration Cities emerged relatively soon, in which the “the rebirth of our cities” meant “the possibility of retaining middle-income families in the city, and even attracting some to return.”⁴⁴¹ The aims of the federal program, thus, had certain class assumptions about urban renewal. Creating middle-income opportunities for city residents – the poor and the non-white – were not necessarily its focus. Retaining and attracting middle-income families – those who already had middle-income positions – was. By using a term like “middle-income,” however, and not “middle-class,” the gate remained open for the inclusion of unionized industrial workers, who would have been characterized in some cases as “middle-income working-class.”

Rhetorically the rebirth of American cities was for all city residents. In a passage cut from the President Johnson’s Congressional address, but used in a January 26, 1966, press release, the dream of cities was expanded. The ideal future of cities was “to rebuild where this is hopeless blight, to renew where there is decay and ugliness, to refresh the spirit of men and women grown weary with jobless anxiety, to restore old communities and to bring forth new ones where children will be proud to say, ‘That is my home.’” Contrary to cities of ugliness and hopelessness, where the only dream is escape, Johnson proposed cities full of life, joy, beauty, prosperity, and vitality.⁴⁴²

The Demonstration Cities bill delivered to Congress declared that “The Congress hereby finds and declares that improving the quality of urban life is the most critical domestic problem facing the United States.”⁴⁴³ The language incorporated those below a middle-income. The

⁴⁴⁰ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴⁴¹ January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC.

⁴⁴² January 1966 Presidential Address, Box 2, Folder 1, MC, and Office of the White House Press Secretary, “Remarks of the President on the Message to the Congress on American Cities,” January 26, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

⁴⁴³ Section 2, Demonstration Cities Bill, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

legislation aimed to increase the supply of “adequate housing for low- and moderate-income people,” while attempting to “make marked progress in serving the poor and disadvantaged people living in slum and blighted areas with a view to reducing educational disadvantages, disease, and enforced idleness.”⁴⁴⁴ Who was responsible for the “enforcing” was not named. The legislation sought to contribute to “good access to industrial or other centers of employment,” as well as “encourage good community relations and counteract the segregation of housing by race or income.”⁴⁴⁵

The program called on cities to submit proposals for federal funds, which would come from the recently-created Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program emphasized targeting urban blight and slums, segregation, and lack of housing, offering up to 80% of funds for projects that addressed these urban ills via a regional plan. The basic idea was local control of a vast array of federal resources used to target interlocking urban problems, which would demonstrate the power of various federal programs and agencies working in tandem rather than at cross-purposes.⁴⁴⁶

The draft legislation received mixed press, including negative responses such as the editorial that Harry McPherson forwarded to Joe Califano on February 12, 1966. The editorial, written by public conservative and open segregationist James J. Kilpatrick for the *Washington Evening Star*, was from two days earlier. “Have I lost touch with reality?” McPherson wryly asked Califano. In his op-ed, “Urban Crisis and Its Solution,” Kilpatrick concluded that Demonstration Cities “is largely a dream.” Kilpatrick’s objections were manifold, but they were indicative of conservative reactions to Johnson’s Great Society, revolving around fears of federal overreach and a

⁴⁴⁴ Demonstration Cities Bill, pp. 2-3, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

⁴⁴⁵ Demonstration Cities Bill, pp. 4-5, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

⁴⁴⁶ Charles M. Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream* (Lexington, KY: Phi Press, 2015), 74.

misunderstanding of human nature. They also underlined the conflicted position of urban America a few decades after the Second World War.⁴⁴⁷

Kilpatrick was not completely dismissive of Johnson's address on Demonstration Cities. "If it lost touch with reality," Kilpatrick wrote of the speech, "it was nonetheless a good message in many respects, filled with bright hope and grave warning." Kilpatrick disapproved on two accounts: first, that the Constitution does not give the Federal government the authority to pursue such legislation, and, second, that it does not account for human nature. Putting aside the first objection – more ably dealt with legal scholars and, presumably, by the legal counsel of the Johnson administration – Kilpatrick's defense of the second objection rested on a number of biases. "It has to be said," Kilpatrick assured his readers, "realistically, that mankind never has known a free society that was not characterized by gaps between the haves and have-nots. To the extent that these gaps are diminished arbitrarily by the compulsions of the state, freedom itself is diminished." Such abstractions gave way to concrete examples: "Johnson is annoyed that the affluent have fled to the suburbs. If he cannot drag them back to the cities, he will see that disadvantaged families are transplanted by their side."⁴⁴⁸

Kilpatrick's irony does not mask that he understood the legislation as intended to punish the affluent by forcing them to encounter the disadvantaged. Conceiving as freedom as the freedom to discriminate, in addition to being free of governmental coercion, it became clear that Kilpatrick's argument also centered on racial matters. Kilpatrick continued that Johnson "is aroused by the prejudice that prevents some white owners from selling their property to potential

⁴⁴⁷ Memorandum, Harry McPherson to Joe Califano, February 12, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, MC. See the *New York Times* obituary for James J. Kilpatrick, "James J. Kilpatrick, Conservative Voice in Print and on TV, Dies at 89," August 16, 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/08/17/us/17kilpatrick.html. Accessed May 16, 2016.

⁴⁴⁸ James J. Kilpatrick, "Urban Crisis and Its Solution," *The Evening Star*, Thursday, February 10, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

Negro buyers. So he will make them sell.” Even while granting that prejudice existed, Kilpatrick dismissed it with the qualification of “some,” as if residential segregation was a minor eccentricity on the part of a handful of prejudiced individuals. The real social threat, instead, was the social uplift that Johnson proposed though “enough compulsion, and enough money, and a sufficiency of rules and regulations and certificates.”⁴⁴⁹

It was the means, not the ends, that caused Kilpatrick’s ire with Demonstration Cities. He referred to “the genuinely noble aims of Johnson,” but chided the President that, instead of “beneficent compulsions,” his aims should be fulfilled via “ambition, and personal incentive, and local zeal.” According to Kilpatrick, the legislation would undermine those very values by providing rent supplements, subsidies, and “federal domination.” Thus, while “the crisis of the American city is real,” the proposed solution was, at least as far as conservative thinking went, fantasy.⁴⁵⁰

The Johnson administration developed responses to these conservative critiques. It is difficult, however, to disentangle the conservative critiques from those based in both openly and concealed racist and segregationist thinking. While Kilpatrick, later in his life, disavowed his early stances on race relations, he publicly argued against the equality of black Americans and white Americans. He also was one of the main public proponents of southern state resistance to federal civil rights policies, legislation, and court decisions. Could one separate a purportedly free-market rationale from a racial one for white homeowners who resisted selling to a black buyer? It was true that such a sale often lowered property values in a given neighborhood and thus economic

⁴⁴⁹ James J. Kilpatrick, “Urban Crisis and Its Solution,” *The Evening Star*, Thursday, February 10, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, MC. For an overview of conservative responses to the federal government, see the first three chapters of Robert A. Caro, *Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), especially 78-105.

⁴⁵⁰ James J. Kilpatrick, “Urban Crisis and Its Solution,” *The Evening Star*, Thursday, February 10, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, MC.

reasoning considered such a sale as inefficient even if unfair. But such a view artificially decontextualizes the sale, ignoring the structural racism in the housing market. Why, we might ask, did the ancestry of the homeowner affect the value of the property? What social factors reinforced this phenomenon? And why was it so widespread as to be second-nature to all home-sellers and home-buyers in the United States during the better part of the twentieth century?

Even in the face of conservative critiques, the Demonstration Cities program had a number of influential supporters: the US Conference of Mayors, the American Institute of Architects, the National Housing Conference, the National Governors Conference, the NAACP, Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the AFL-CIO and, specifically, the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department.⁴⁵¹ The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council formally resolved that “of all the programs presenting being advanced to deal with urban ills the one that offers the most promise is the ‘demonstration cities’ concept.” The resolution criticized “the piecemeal programs of slum clearance and urban renewal of the last three decades, which seem to do little more than redistribute the focal points of urban blight.” The Demonstration Cities program, with “the goal of creating good city environments,” sought to bring a full program involving “all that we know about improving the *quality* of urban life,” and would focus on “city planning, job training, welfare, health, education, social services, and recreation.”⁴⁵²

Twenty mayors testified to Congress in the spring of 1966 in support of the bill, many of whom came from cities facing variations of the urban crisis, including Detroit’s Jerome Cavanaugh. Other mayors included Hugh Addonizio of Newark, Walton Bachrach of Cincinnati, J. D. Braman of Seattle, Richard Daley of Chicago, Louis DePascale of Hoboken, John Lindsey of New York City, Ralph Locher of Cleveland, James H. J. Tate of Philadelphia, and James Walsh

⁴⁵¹ HUD Brochure, “Model Cities,” Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

⁴⁵² HUD Brochure, “Model Cities,” Box 2, Folder 3, MC. Emphasis in original.

of Scranton. Mayor John E. Babiarez of Wilmington, Delaware, who intended to testified, was prevented from doing so after spraining his ankle, but a representative from Delaware delivered his testimony for him.⁴⁵³

Mayor Tate of Philadelphia was vociferous in his support, writing a letter Senator John J. Sparkman, and forwarding a copy of HUD director Robert Weaver. He criticized the testimony of the Chairman of the Washington Committee of the National Association of the Real Estate Boards, Alan L. Emlen, before the Senate Sub-Committee on Housing, which had opposed Demonstration Cities. “Private investment and business interest,” Tate argued, “had abdicated their responsibilities to the communities in which they live and from which they derive their resources by their withdrawal from the blighted and deteriorated areas of our major cities, leaving behind a reservoir of poverty, torment, turmoil, and distress, in times which would otherwise be described as a period of affluence.” Many Americans, including elected officials, city authorities, the national administration, and Congress, knew “that without urban renewal our cities would long since have been laid waste and our people reduced to a level of poverty and hardship unconscionable in the day and age in which we live.” The argument that the federal government was interfering in the realm of private businesses was undermined, in Mayor Tate’s view, by the simple fact that private businesses had given up on the urban realm a while ago. If they had not, there would be no need for the federal government to intervene. The recent past had “shown that private investment resources would never have begun to meet the needs of our deteriorating cities” were it not for the resources available through urban renewal programs. While critical of private investment, Mayor Tate argument for urban renewal programs was that they encouraged new investment. In

⁴⁵³ HUD Brochure, “Model Cities,” Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

Philadelphia, for instance, Tate recounted how every dollar of public investment led to \$4 to \$6, or more, of private investment.⁴⁵⁴

Even given the last fifteen to twenty years of urban renewal had not eradicated the problem, as Mayor Tate argued that the president, Congress, mayors, and “every responsible organization” knew. “The scope and scale of our urban renewal efforts to this date,” Tate pressed, “have not reached into the blighted cores of our large metropolitan areas and the poverty sections of our cities.” Alan Emlen, therefore, “does not speak for the vast majority of sound and responsible businessmen represented in the real estate industry of this country.” The Philadelphia Board of Realtors supported Demonstration Cities, as had the Home Builders of America. Far from speaking on behalf of the real estate industry, Mayor Tate noted that Emlen’s position was politically motivated. He was previously the treasurer of the Pennsylvania Republican State Committee and “very active and vocal in GOP affairs.”⁴⁵⁵

Tate reaffirmed that many individuals and organizations, “Republican and Democratic alike,” were in support of the Demonstration Cities program. Mayors of major cities thought that Demonstration Cities was not only desirable, but “that it is essential to the rebirth of our cities.” The strength of the program was that it was not only concerned with the physical city, but with “social, economic, and cultural growth and opportunity,” too. The opposition, Tate concluded, was “a reflection of a school of thought long since rejected by the people of this country in their assessment of the needs of our cities and our hopes and aspirations for strength and growth in the future.” As Mayor Tate made clear, Emlen did not represent the views of individuals and organizations, regardless of political persuasion, who were involved in urban affairs. In a parting

⁴⁵⁴ James H. Tate, Mayor, to Honorable John J. Sparkman, May 6, 1966, Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

⁴⁵⁵ James H. Tate, Mayor, to Honorable John J. Sparkman, May 6, 1966, Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

shot, Mayor Tate did not even grant that Emlen spoke for Philadelphia Board of Realtors, of which he was the past president.⁴⁵⁶

For all the “noble aims” of the Demonstration Cities legislation, the law made claims that had, on close inspection, little support. Despite being aware of the urban crisis, and recognizing that the federal government should act to curtail it, those involved did not understand how the crisis had originated or its long-term effects. The Harlem riot of 1964 and the Watts riot of 1965 were present in the architects’ minds. Joseph Califano, wrote a memo on June 29 to Donald E. Nicoll, the administrative assistant of Maine Senator Edmund Muskie, who was to deliver the opening statement on the Demonstration Cities bill in the Senate, underscoring this point: “The object of our proposal is to prevent, if possible, a repetition of the Watts-type riots in the 20-25 ‘crisis cities’ this summer.” The bill was to show the benefits of a coordinated federal-local program on social and physical problems of cities, “and clearly to identify the President with a more effective and efficient use of Federal resources in support of community action to improve the quality of living in our cities.”⁴⁵⁷

In fact, the riots of 1964 were fundamental to the outlook of President Johnson’s Task Force on Housing and Urban Affairs, assembled in the spring of 1964 and chaired by Robert C. Wood, a MIT political scientist. In Wood’s recollection, the term *urban crisis* was used by the task force due to the urban disorders that summer. It held its first meeting in Washington in the middle of July after the riot began in Harlem, following the shooting of a fifteen-year-old African American by a white police officer. The ensuing angry and violent protests moved from Manhattan

⁴⁵⁶ James H. Tate, Mayor, to Honorable John J. Sparkman, May 6, 1966, Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

⁴⁵⁷ Califano to Nicoll, June 29, 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

to Brooklyn, and then saw echoes in Rochester, NY, a Chicago suburb, three New Jersey cities, and Philadelphia. The developing crisis was much on the minds of members of Congress.⁴⁵⁸

Another way that the urban revolts and Civil Rights fed into the development of the Demonstration Cities project was the name of the program itself. The transformation from Demonstration Cities to Model Cities was far from innocent. The first indication that the name could be flipped into a criticism came early in September, 1966, when HUD staffer Sidney Spector send fellow HUD worker Harry Hall Wilson the following message: “Dan Smoot has been twisting the name of the bill for propaganda purposes. Smoot is telling his audiences that the purpose of the bill is to provide funds for Civil Rights ‘Demonstrations’ in the cities and thus the name, Demonstration Cities Bill.”⁴⁵⁹ The spin of the conservative commentator Smoot was not isolated. Earlier in the spring of 1966, HUD Secretary Robert Weaver communicated concerns to President Johnson over the connotations of “demonstrations” in the mid-60s: “Congressman Robert Stephens is concerned about the title ‘Demonstration Cities’ because he feels it suggests the image of racial conflict in the South.”⁴⁶⁰ By October, Representative Paul A. Fino, admonished that “This program is a tool of black power . . . I can just imagine what kind of city demonstrations black power has in mind. They will demonstrate how to burn down shops and loot liquor stores. They will demonstrate how to throw Molotov cocktails at police cars . . . Oh, yes, I can imagine the kind of demonstration program black power has in mind. Demonstration conflagration. Demonstration incineration.”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 121-122.

⁴⁵⁹ Sidney Spector to Harry Hall Wilson, HUD memo, September 10, 1966, p. 2, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁶⁰ Robert C. Weaver to Lyndon B. Johnson, May 22, 1966, Box 2, Folder 3, MC.

⁴⁶¹ *Congressional Record*, 89th Congress, 2nd session, October 13, 1966, 112, pt. 20:26628. Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 139; Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 408.

Fino was on the more extreme end of the spectrum, but even supporters of Johnson and the program framed it in terms of urban disturbances, as shown in a memo from Califano. The Three-City Pilot Project, he wrote, was “an accelerated program to combat poverty in selected cities” as a way of showcasing the benefits of the full Demonstration Cities program. Califano explicitly mentioned neighborhoods “within a Watts, Harlem, or similarly distressed sub-area” as the ideal targets of a program. The small-scale was desired, because cities like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles were too complicated, and the pilot needed to show results within half a year.⁴⁶² Nonetheless, while those involved with the project constantly referred to poverty and unemployment, they did not seem to recognize or acknowledge its causes. In one memo to Johnson, Charles Schultze solely emphasized the need for job finding and job training, seemingly indicating that city residents were impoverished simply because they lacked training or were incapable of finding jobs on their own, not that jobs did not exist.

Not all the supporters of Demonstration Cities seemed so unaware of the issues facing city residents. The opening statement by Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine shared a remarkable similarity to the analysis found in an essay by a radical black Detroit auto worker, James Boggs, although the politics of the two were fundamentally different. Beginning on a literary note – “from the Book of Job, to Charles Dickens, to James Baldwin, we have read the ills of cities” – Muskie quickly launched into a full exploration of distressed cities. Nor did Muskie focus solely on large metropolitan areas. “We all know,” he told the senators, “of the ‘other side of the tracks’ in smaller cities, where unemployment comes first and prosperity arrives last.” It was in the “slum and blighted areas of our cities” where unemployment struck hardest and where city residents lived in “dilapidated, overcrowded, or unsafe and unsanitary dwellings.” Muskie summoned the memories

⁴⁶² Memo to Califano, “Three-City Pilot Project Draft 7/5/66,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

of Watts in his statement and public welfare, right after comments on unemployment and unsafe structures: “It is in these areas of unrest that public welfare payments are concentrated – 24 percent of the population of Watts, for example, was on public assistance at the time of the riot.” The problem of American cities was the problem of unemployment, poverty, the lack of sanitation and safety, crime, and education. “Whatever its size,” Muskie asserted, “wherever its location in this land of ours, the city is a problem which grows as our nation grows, a problem which belongs to all of us, a problem which all of us must join in solving.” It was an explicitly collective problem, as “we are, increasingly, a nation of urban dwellers,” with 70 percent of Americans living in metropolitan areas.⁴⁶³

Then Muskie delivered a description of inner cities that, despite coming from a different perspective, echoed that of various city residents. The two halves of contemporary cities were

crowded, decaying, and blighted areas and the surrounding, too often formless, suburban sprawl. [...] The more affluent members of society, who still use the city for business and entertainment, but who have used modern transportation to escape the problems of living in the city, now battle traffic problems, suffer through smog, recoil at riots in the slums and feel more uneasy over the dangers of urban life. Too often, for the poor, for those of modest means, and for the rich, our cities have become nightmares rather than dreams.⁴⁶⁴

Compare this description to that of James and Grace Lee Boggs. James was a black factory worker who had grown up in the Jim Crow share-cropper South. He was a labor activist, Marxist, and an early proponent of Black Power. Grace Lee, of Chinese ancestry, was also a Marxist, and held a PhD in philosophy. In a co-written 1966 article published in the *Monthly Review*, the Boggs noted that in the year 1970 it was projected that African Americans would constitute the majority population in fifty large American cities. They then argued that the historical tendency of majority rule in American cities to be a means of upward mobility for immigrants to the US would not work

⁴⁶³ Edmund S. Muskie, Opening Statement on S.3708 Demonstration Cities, August 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁶⁴ Muskie, Opening Statement, August 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

the same for African Americans, against whom racism was too “deeply imbedded in the American psyche from top to bottom, and from right to left.” According to the Boggs,

the accumulated problems of the inner city will become increasingly insoluble and . . . the city itself will remain the dangerous society, [...] rendered socially unnecessary by the technological revolution of automation and cybernation, policed by a growing occupation army that has been mobilized and empowered to resort to any means necessary to safeguard the interests of the absentee landlords, merchants, politicians, and administrators, to whom the city belongs by law but who do not belong in the city and who themselves are afraid to walk its streets.”⁴⁶⁵

Arguing that the civil disorders of 1964 in Harlem, Philadelphia, Rochester, and New York, as well as Watts in 1965, were not just battles *in* cities but battles *for* cities, the Boggs pinpointed unemployment caused by technological change, issues around policing, and, crucially, the economic relationship between “landlords, merchants, politicians, and administrators” and the city. Those who profited from the city did not go into the city out of fear of those who lived there. Muskie described a similar situation, but noted that even those in the suburbs were negatively affected by this relationship.

James and Grace Lee Boggs were concerned with city residents and particularly the poor and the black. Muskie and other supporters of Demonstration Cities were careful to keep race out of their comments, references to Watts and Harlem notwithstanding. Muskie was clear that he saw cities as a problem for all Americans, including those wealthy enough to live in traffic and smog-filled suburbs. Moreover, Muskie insisted that “our awareness of the problems of the city is not new,” recalling the turn-of-the-century cities in Maine, where new looms, lights, and modes of transportation brought both optimism and new problems in their wake.

⁴⁶⁵ James and Grace Lee Boggs, “The City Is the Black Man’s Land,” *Monthly Review*, April 1966, reproduced in Stephen M. Ward, ed., *Pages From a Black Radical’s Notebook: A James Boggs Reader* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 162.

Senator Muskie's point was a fair reminder that the postwar urban crisis did not appear *sui generis*, but was a continuation of the concern of cities rooted in the Gilded and Progressive ages. Ranging from the textile towns of New England, of which Lawrence and Lowell are but two examples to the streets of Chicago where Jane Addams and Hull House were but an example of the settlement house movement, the city as a place of crime, poverty, and racialized others has loomed large in the American imagination for well over a century.⁴⁶⁶ Muskie's description and critique of technological innovation aptly echoed fellow Maine citizen Henry David Thoreau's criticisms of a century earlier: "What is the advantage of travelling at 60 miles an hour if we are as discontented at the end of the journey?"⁴⁶⁷

Listing reasons why urban renewals had not helped cities in the past, Muskie noted that a fundamental issue was the "vicious circle" of the "financial crisis of cities":

The more determined the city's efforts to raise funds to meet the need for increased services, the more likely that effort drives its economically affluent citizens to the nearby suburbs. Similarly, the greater burden the city places on industry within its borders the less opportunity to attract and hold the industry and commerce its economy requires. So the city becomes, increasingly, the home for the economically deprived, those least able to bear the cost of municipal services."

This downward economic spiral formed a core dynamic of cities in crisis. Those who left cities were those with the means to do so. But in leaving, the cities tax revenues dropped just as a relatively larger number of residents required. Thus, the worst off cities were those least able to adequately address their problems.

As Muskie argued, the combined forces of mixed priorities, unclear leadership and authority, gaps in programs, and lack of resources "all prevent us from building and rebuilding

⁴⁶⁶ For Lawrence and other textile towns, see Bruce Watson, *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). For Jane Addams, Hull House, and settlement houses in general, see Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Signet Classic, 1981).

⁴⁶⁷ For one instance, "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us." Henry David Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience* (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005), 76.

cities our urban citizens deserve and all of us need.” He emphasized that the urban crisis was a concern for all Americans, not just those who lived in the economically-deprived inner city and he framed the problem as one of citizenship. Much as Doxiadis had argued that inner cities and suburbs were part of the same urban network, Muskie asserted that one could not flee the urban crisis. Cities, and those who lived in them, did not exist in a vacuum separate from other Americans. Because President Johnson recognized these problems, Muskie stated, the president convened a task force to address the problems of urban life. Through this arose the Demonstration Cities program.⁴⁶⁸

A convincing analysis of the problem of urban areas did not lead to agreement on the best means to solve the issues. Unsurprisingly, funding the Demonstration Cities program caused a fierce fight in Congress. One op-ed by Norman Miller spelled out the situation: “Almost everybody on Capitol Hill thinks Lyndon Johnson’s plan to rebuild slums in ‘demonstration cities’ is a great idea. Yet the President’s plan, his most important domestic legislative proposal, is in grave danger of being defeated by the Democratic dominated Congress.”⁴⁶⁹ Immediately afterward, Miller raised the specter of urban revolt, writing that “With mass violence erupting anew in Negro ghettos across the country, Republicans and Democrats alike look to the demonstration cities concept as the most promising response to the slum-dwellers’ angry cries for help.”⁴⁷⁰ The issue was the program gave \$2.3 billion to sixty-six cities over six years. One Democrat in the House called it “too big and too little,” with that \$2.3 billion being stretched far. In fact, the bill did not specify a figure. It only noted that funding would be available in “such sums as may be necessary,” while the \$2.3 billion figure was based on administration promises. City administrators, for their

⁴⁶⁸ Muskie, Opening Statement, August 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁶⁹ Norman C. Miller, “Demonstration Cities: Johnson’s Rebuilding Plan Runs Into Trouble in Congress,” Thursday, July 28, 1966m Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷⁰ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

part, had hopes that the figure might turn out to be \$5 or \$9 billion over the life of the program. Offering aid to only a handful of major cities would lead to dwindling support, hence the sixty cities. Mayors dreaded the requirements it took to be accepted for the program, and they feared that other federal funding would no longer be available if it was accepted, cancelling out any benefit, financially, to a given city.⁴⁷¹

Yet, the Johnson Administration could not put much more into the budget with the costs of the Vietnam War rising. In a 1966, memo to the president, following the State of the Union address, Califano noted that the estimated cost per year was around one billion dollars, which was not included “formally in your message because of the uncertainty of the Vietnam situation,” an important reminder of how foreign policy intertwined with domestic policy.⁴⁷² This was true even after the program passed, as shown by a 1967 UPI ticker tape bulletin that read “President Johnson’s chief liaison with state governments indicated that federal money for Model Cities programs may be delayed until the end of the Vietnam War.” The chief liaison was Farris Bryant, former governor of Florida and chair of the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, responded to a question at the 21st Southern Conference of the Council of State Governments in Louisville, Kentucky, regarding funding for Model Cities by saying, “You tell me when Ho Chi Minh stops, and I’ll tell you when we start.”⁴⁷³ While the memory of the Johnson administration’s domestic policies is often unable to escape the legacy of the Vietnam War, it was also the case that the Great Society was, ultimately, subservient to global Cold War politics.

⁴⁷¹ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷² Memorandum, Joe Califano to Johnson, January 27, 1966, Box 2, Folder, MC.

⁴⁷³ Gaither to Califano, Thursday, July 20, 1967, and attached UPI announcement, Box 22, Folder 2, Office Files of James Gaither, LBJ Library. (Hereafter Gaither.)

The House subcommittee on housing considered in early June of whittling the program down to \$12 million for “planning grants.” Vice President Humphrey and HUD Secretary Weaver intervened, but the proposed slashing had the unintended benefit of getting cities to unite in support of the original program, although demands for more funding continued. A further \$600 million was added to the bill, but, as Housing subcommittee Chairman Barrett, a Democrat from Philadelphia, announced, the “addition of the extra \$600 million makes it all the more likely that the House, fearful of approving an expensive new program that will fuel inflationary pressures, will reject the bill outright or drastically cut it back to provide only a small sum for planning.” As an US Conference of Mayor’s official noted, “no bill would be better than token planning grants for a program with an uncertain future.”⁴⁷⁴

The bill contained provisions that did not garner the support of urban officials. The program increased the Federal housing program and government insurance, to use one example, to promote the development of “new towns” in rural areas. As Norman Miller bluntly phrased it, mayors saw this as “a major threat to their desperate efforts to retain and attract middle-class white homeowners so entire cities don’t turn into massive black ghettos.”⁴⁷⁵ Whiteness and middle-class status blended together with homeownership, whereas blackness conflated with the ghetto, but not as enforced segregation, but as a slum. Behind it all lurked the threat of urban revolt, the “mass violence erupting anew in Negro ghettos” that Miller referenced at the beginning of the op-ed. In the struggle over “new town” aid, Wisconsin Democratic Representative Henry Reuss, who had supported the bill through the House subcommittee, argued that challenged the “new town” aid

⁴⁷⁴ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷⁵ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

was “an act of apostasy,” and that he would withdraw his support for the entire bill if mayors challenged the compromise.⁴⁷⁶

The key opposition to the bill came from a coalition of Republicans and Dixiecrats. “The bill is anathema to almost all Southern Democrats,” Miller noted, “because to qualify for demonstration grants cities would have to present plans for demonstration projects that would ‘counteract the segregation of housing by race or income.’”⁴⁷⁷ Republicans, on the other hand, fretted over the financial aspect of the bill. Representative William Widnall of New Jersey, for instance, criticized the threat of inflation due to the bill and described it as “conceived in ignorance and based on half-truths.” Opposition also came from Democrats from rural and suburban areas that did not see any benefit from the bill, and which were also in unsafe districts. Many had been beneficiaries of anti-Goldwater sentiments in 1964, and they now faced Republican challengers.⁴⁷⁸ A member of the House from Texas, Representative de la Garza, told HUD staffers later that fall that Demonstration Cities was “a northern big city bill.”⁴⁷⁹

On Tuesday, July 26, the Senate Housing subcommittee moved to strip the bill down to a pilot program, with a maximum amount of \$900 million attached to it. The extra \$600 million promised to cities had been pruned down to \$250 million. The administration indicated its approval of the bill’s movement but not the limits on funding. The senators on the subcommittee responded that they would resist any pressure to increase the funding. They reasoned that “it’s necessary to establish firm limits on demonstration cities so that Congress can order changes if the program isn’t working right after two years.” Even public supporters of the bill, like Senator Muskie, disapproved of any bill that allowed a six-year blank check. The administration was forced to

⁴⁷⁶ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷⁷ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷⁸ Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁷⁹ Sidney Spector to Henry Wilson, HUD memo, September 10, 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

negotiate the demands of the Senate, House, and the US Conference of Mayors. Without the support of the latter, it was clear that the administration would be “in the impossible position of advocating a program the cities don’t want.” A two-year program would threatened just that. As an US Conference of Mayors official observed, cities would not undertake new projects if they lacked “the assurance from Congress that we’ll get the kind of money the President has promised.”⁴⁸⁰ The hesitancy of mayors did not go far in Congress: “If that’s really the mayors’ attitude,” responded a Senate Democrat who helped design the compromise, “the hell with them – they won’t get any bill at all.”⁴⁸¹

Not all analyses in favor of the bill were necessarily concerned with the plight of inner-city residents. Some indeed considered the ills of the city as a contagion that needed to be prevented from spreading outside and quickly. “Our cities are being submerged by a rising tide of confluent forces – diseases and despair, joblessness and hopelessness, excessive dependency on welfare payments and the grim threats of crime, disorder and delinquency,” a group of seventeen businessmen wrote in a statement in support of Demonstration Cities. They continued, “These forces flow strongest for the city slums, from whence they spread relentlessly to threaten the quality of life in every quarter.” Representing another interpretation that understood cities and their surrounding areas linked together, this statement revealed that some supported the legislation out of self-interest.⁴⁸²

On Thursday, November 3, 1966, the bill was signed at 1:00pm, with organized labor well-represented. Walter Reuther was present, as were other members of the UAW and the AFL-CIO,

⁴⁸⁰ Official quoted in Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁸¹ Senator quoted in Miller, “Demonstration Cities,” Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

⁴⁸² “Dependency on welfare” is a reasonable guess, as original reads “excessive dependenvt zcwelfare.” Draft statement signed by 17 businessmen in support of Demonstration Cities, Monday, October 10, 1966, Box 2, Folder 4, MC.

including its Housing Department. One notable representative of the AFL-CIO was Jack Conway, who had worked as Walter Reuther's assistant since 1946, until serving as Robert Weaver's deputy administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) under President Kennedy.⁴⁸³ Members of unions representing carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, masons, electricians, and other building and construction trades were in attendance, which might indicate their ties to the Democratic Party as much as hope the rise in construction brought by the Model Cities program. Other unions, which did not necessarily benefit directly from the bill, also signaled their support by accepting the president's invitation to attend, such as garment and clothing workers, meat cutters and butchers, machinists, and steelworkers. In total, 172 invitations were sent out to business, religious, community leaders as well as union officials. Henry Ford II and David Rockefeller also were included. Nonetheless, the twenty-two union officials, representing 12.7% of the total, formed a larger percentage of the crowd than the fourteen mayors or two corporate vice-presidents.⁴⁸⁴

The president spoke for six minutes. He commented on the Model Cities program and the importance of employment for the future success of American cities. "It does us no good," Lyndon Johnson argued, "to give workers new skills if they are unable to find any job." The ultimate goal was, he continued, to create the conditions so that "our unemployed citizens can come off the welfare rolls and get onto the payrolls." Providing employment was an integral aspect of reviving inner cities, and Johnson presented Model Cities as the means to do so.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸³ After working as Walter Reuther's assistant since 1946, Jack Conway served as Robert Weaver's deputy administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) under President Kennedy. Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 90.

⁴⁸⁴ Invitation to bill signing, November 1, 1966, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁴⁸⁵ "Remarks of the President Upon Signing S.3708 – Demonstration Cities Act S. 2947 – Clean Water Restoration Act of 1966," November 3, 1966, Box 2, Folder 6, MC. The full text of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 is available as a PDF through the Government Publishing Office at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-80/pdf/STATUTE-80-Pg1255.pdf>. Accessed April 10, 2018.

A month after signing the bill, Robert C. Weaver, the secretary of Housing and Urban Development sent a memo to Joe Califano, along with an article by William Steif from the *Washington Daily*, titled “There’s a Sleeper in the Model Cities Law.” Based largely on an interview with William G. Coleman, the executive director of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Steif argued that the Model Cities legislation was designed to further metropolitan governance, which had “long been the goal of city planners – and often have come under attack from conservatives who oppose any kind of centralized authority.” Characterizing repeatedly the powers granted to area-wide agencies in the Model Cities legislation as a “sleeper provision,” the article reported that the metropolitan-wide agencies would be able to overview the actions and decision of local governments.⁴⁸⁶ It immediately qualified this statement with Coleman noting that there would be no power of veto. Nonetheless they would have a “surprising amount of impact.” Municipal arenas affected could be “open-space land, hospitals, airports, libraries, water works, sewage works, highways, transportation facilities and water development and land conservation.” Thus, Coleman concluded, “cities, towns, sanitation districts, school districts” and other municipal units would have to start working together.⁴⁸⁷

Sending the article to Califano, Weaver asserted that Coleman, “seems to have a built-in problem with the Demonstration Cities program.” This was not the first time that Coleman had made public statements intended to stir up problems for the bill. When the bill was first introduced, he had written “an extremely critical analysis of the proposal” independent of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. That analysis was then used by opponents of the bill. Weaver was concerned that Coleman was now trying to associate Model Cities with the idea of a

⁴⁸⁶ The size of area-wide agencies was defined as areas having populations of 50,000 or more, of which there were 231 in the US at the time.

⁴⁸⁷ William Steif, “Review Power for Area Agencies: There’s a Sleeper in the Model Cities Law,” *Washington Daily News*, Tuesday, November 2[9], 1966, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

“metropolitan government,” a criticism that also was launched by Congressman Fino. Further, Weaver found “little validity in fact and only peripheral support in the language of the statute” and its legislative history to support such an interpretation. Regardless, Weaver could only recommend the White House ignore Coleman. “To make an issue of this would,” Weaver concluded, “build it up into an issue which is far greater than its importance.”⁴⁸⁸

Even as Weaver dismissed the importance of Coleman’s opposition, it revealed the mindset of Model Cities opponents on the Hill. The fear, fundamentally and unsurprisingly, was that local governance would be subsumed by increasing scales of government, resulting in diminishing control over local affairs. The irony resided in that this would only happen if a metropolitan area desired to receive federal funding as delineated in the Model Cities program and not in any direct way, as a metro agency would not have any veto, or otherwise formal power, over the plans of local governments. It was rooted in a distrust of a perceived Faustian bargain, a slow erosion of local control bought with the promise of increasing amounts of federal funding and, consequently, increasing federal control. There were those who reached this position from a disregard for cities and their residents, but there were also those who loved cities and their residents who reached similar conclusions. Urban renewal alone had cost cities and their citizens much in the name of expertise and rational planning. It is important to keep in mind the different reasoning undergirding similar conclusions regarding policy and legislation.

Federal Metro Governments

A small yet vocal opposition to Model Cities arose regarding the belief that the federal government, and HUD in particular, would take over local governments and render local and state levels of governance unnecessary. The reasoning that led members of Congress to this conclusion,

⁴⁸⁸ Robert C. Weaver to Joseph A. Califano, Jr., December 3, 1966, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

however, were not uniform, and the emphasis ranged from budget deficits to both pro- and anti-civil rights sentiments. Minority views of the House Committee on Banking and Currency accompanying the Demonstration Cities bill are a case in point. “If passed,” the fourteen-page dissent asserted,

it will still give away much of the national legislative controls belonging to the Congress and also those local controls which belong to the communities of the Nation. It will use the power of the Federal purse to first stultify the local knowledge essential to the working of a much needed demonstration city program, and, second, to ratify the mistakes, faulty planning, and misleading promises of the Department which has insisted on its proposals in the face of their manifest impossibilities.

However, the authors were quick to state that they did not disagree with the ideas motivating the bill: “the minority endorses the concept of demonstration cities, its breadth, and its sweep as revealed in the findings and declaration of purpose.” It was the means, rather than the ends, which raised questions for them. The federal government, according to these critics, was using the lure of funds to garner support for a poorly thought-out program which required local government to give up power that were right theirs.⁴⁸⁹

Of the critics, eight authors, all of whom were Republican, submitted additional responses that further distinguished their concerns from one another and the general objection to the program they presented as a group. It was a fairly diverse group, outside of their shared objection and party affiliation. Paul A. Fino, “a dapper cigar-smoking man with a carefully trimmed mustache,” was a moderate Republican representing an Italian and Irish working-class district in the Bronx. He opposed school busing and the war on poverty, but he also supported Medicare and called for increasing Social Security.⁴⁹⁰ Florence P. Dwyer, a congresswoman from New Jersey, opposed the

⁴⁸⁹ Minority Views, Report of the Committee on Banking and Currency, US House of Representatives, Report no. 1931, September 1, 1966, p. 135, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁴⁹⁰ Dennis Hevesi, “Paul Fino, Politician Who Battled Lindsay, Dies at 95,” June 18, 2009, *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/19/nyregion/19fino.html>. Accessed April 8, 2018. After serving in the House for eight terms, he became a New York Supreme Court justice known for his stiff sentencing

bill and later helped bring the Equal Rights Amendment to the House floor in 1970.⁴⁹¹ William “Bill” E. Brock was a vice-president for a candy company before serving in the House, later the Senate, and finally as Secretary of Labor under Ronald Reagan.⁴⁹² Burt L. Talcott, a congressman from California, was a journeyman carpenter, and German prisoner-of-war during World War II, before becoming a lawyer.⁴⁹³ Delwin “Del” Morgan Clawson was elected to Congress after serving as mayor of Compton, California.⁴⁹⁴ Albert W. Johnson came to the House from Pennsylvania.⁴⁹⁵ John William Stanton, a moderate Republican from Ohio, served in Congress from 1965 until 1983, when he became a counselor to the president of the World Bank.⁴⁹⁶ Chester L. Mize, a businessman who also owned cattle and agricultural interests, represented Kansas.⁴⁹⁷

Together, these eight members of the House wrote that Demonstration Cities would not be “worth the havoc that would be caused by a program conceived in wishful thinking, based on half truths, and executed with more pride than skill.”⁴⁹⁸ The authors worried that HUD was leading cities and towns to think that they would get funding through the program, when realistically only a handful could possibly be funded. The program, then, was creating unrealistic expectations that would end in either disappointment or, worse, failure. The only other option would be an

⁴⁹¹ “Dwyer, Florence Price,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000587>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹² “Brock, William Emerson, III,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000851>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹³ “Talcott, Burt Lacklen,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000022>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹⁴ “Clawson, Delwin Morgan,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=C000476>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹⁵ “Johnson, Albert Walter,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=J000115>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹⁶ The Washington Post, “John William Stanton, 78, Influential in House, Advised World Bank,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 15, 2002. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2002-04-15/news/0204150105_1_world-bank-mr-stanton-ohio-republican. “Stanton, John William,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S000804>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹⁷ “Mize, Chester Louis,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000832>, accessed April 8, 2018.

⁴⁹⁸ Minority Views, Report of the Committee on Banking and Currency, US House of Representatives, Report no. 1931, September 1, 1966, p. 135, Legislative History – Model Cities, Box 2, Folder 6 – Passage and Signature, LBJ Library.

uncontrollable flow of funding that was not voted on or approved by Congress. “The myriad problems confronting our cities desperately need to be solved,” the minority report argued, “To do so well will require the best in engineering and economic thinking – not the juggled arithmetic put forward by the Department as its panacea.”⁴⁹⁹ That juggled arithmetic promised Federal funds “to every nook and cranny” of the country, and the authors found neither sense nor honesty in those promises. Of particular ire was a provision that would increase the percentage of federal aid to a local project if additional HUD criteria were met, found under Title II – Planned Metropolitan Development.

The minority view encompassed more than the expected criticisms regarding federal budgets and expenditures, and the report soon moved from budget concerns to more abstract fears about unspecified planners and experts. Model Cities raised “once again” a situation involving “ivory-tower specialists” who were “secure and isolated in their cloistered retreats.” They “read the latest news dispatches on violent demonstrations, and too hastily produced a solution – ideal in concept – but short on practicality and void of impact intelligence.”⁵⁰⁰ In addition to impractical specialists, the report raised the specter of urban riots as a synecdoche of the urban crisis, repeating the linguistic link between “demonstrations,” casually associating riots with marches and picket lines.

What is it that these secluded and isolated experts proposed, concerned as they were with riots and full of faulty plans and inadequate solutions? The federal government’s continuing “intrusion into community life which it obviously hopes to expand,” via the Department of Housing and Urban Development.⁵⁰¹ If passed, Demonstration Cities, they argued, would create a

⁴⁹⁹ Minority Views, p. 136, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵⁰⁰ Minority Views, p. 136-137, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵⁰¹ Minority Views, p. 137, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

system of government in which “HUD officials from the Secretary on down, with billions of dollars at their disposal, will have more power over urban *and suburban* life than any mayor or *Governor* in the country.”⁵⁰² Perhaps alarmist, but fears of federal usurpation of local and state-level powers, along with concerns over federal spending, have been bread-and-butter American politics. The fear that the federal government was seeking via Demonstration Cities to not only meddle in urban affairs but, even more significantly attempt to control suburban communities. This fear was rooted in the belief that the federal government would not help cities at all; rather, it would reduce suburban communities to the condition plaguing central cities. The fear, as it were, was that a sinking tide would lower all boats.

The mechanism for this harm to suburban communities was to be, according to the minority report, was what it referred to as Federal-metro government. Just as the authors explained that they were not opposed to the ultimate goals of Demonstrations Cities, so they wrote that they agreed that “the welfare of the Nation and of its people is directly dependent upon the sound and orderly development and the effective organization and functioning of the metropolitan areas in which two-thirds of its people live and work.”⁵⁰³ The authors acknowledged that metropolitan areas were rapidly expanding, and required updated plans and programs to address that growth. The authors conceded that the nature of this rapid growth and the complicated overlapping of governance in metropolitan areas was a hindrance to effective government and wasteful. Using President Johnson’s own words, they noted that government could be “blind to the reality of urban life.” They further echoed with LBJ’s statement that “What happens in the central city, or the suburbs, is certain to affect the quality of life in the other.”⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰² Minority Views, p. 139, Box 2, Folder 6, MC. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁰³ Minority Views, p. 139, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵⁰⁴ Minority Views, p. 139, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

Yet, having agreed to all the above, the authors found themselves incapable of supporting Title II of Demonstration Cities, in which metropolitan cooperation is addressed. It would, as the authors titled a subsection of their report, create a “new level of government”:

The proposed metro development title of this bill would serve to divide the country into new Federal community development districts – a new administrative or political unit that would look to the Federal Government rather than the States, cities, or other localities for guidance. Title II would place the shadow of HUD over every metropolitan area in our country. Virtually every local governmental division of any magnitude, in areas accepting supplemental Federal aid, would be subject to review by the Secretary of HUD. This, more than any other proposal ever to come before our committee, drastically would reshape our Federal form of government.⁵⁰⁵

Proper attention, the authors worried, had not been paid attention to this aspect of the Demonstration Cities legislation, as the potential good that federal aid could provide had dominated the conversation. With that aid came, however, came significant strings. As far as the authors were concerned, the mastermind behind those strings was HUD Secretary Robert C. Weaver, the first African American to hold a Cabinet-level position.

Opposition to HUD Secretary Weaver did not originate under Johnson’s presidency, but earlier under the Kennedy administration, when he was appointed administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA).⁵⁰⁶ An economist educated at Harvard, with two books to his name (*Negro Labor* (1946) and *The Negro Ghetto* (1948)), Weaver had worked in the Public Works Administration, the United States Housing Authority, the War Manpower Commission, and the War Production Board. At the time of his appointment, he was the vice-chairman of the New York City Housing and Redevelopment Board as well as the chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. An advocate for integration who supported public housing and regional planning, Weaver garnered opposition for his allegedly leftist politics

⁵⁰⁵ Minority Views, p. 140, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵⁰⁶ On December 31, 1960.

and certainly for his pro-civil-rights stance. During his 1961 Senate confirmation hearings, A. Willis Robertson (Democrat, Virginia) raised questions about Weaver's involvement with Communist groups during the 1930s. William Blakely (Democrat, Texas), noted that Weaver's books had received positive reviews in left-wing publications. President Kennedy had to submit a letter affirming Weaver's loyalty before witnesses could give testimony. After a congressional fight in early 1962 left Kennedy without his desired cabinet-level position on urban affairs - widely believed to be Weaver's once created - Kennedy declared his intention of creating the new cabinet position and that it would, indeed, go to Weaver. "They're [Republicans and Dixiecrats] against it because Weaver's a Negro," the president complained in private, "and I'd like to see them say it."⁵⁰⁷

"Secretary Weaver," the 1966 minority report continued, "and his successors would have substantial control over local metropolitanwide location, financing, and scheduling of any public facility projects that have areawide impact."⁵⁰⁸ It would mean, in effect, that Weaver "could impose his judgment" over parking facilities, traffic control equipment, municipal buildings, recreation parks, "and even local public school facilities."⁵⁰⁹ As the authors emphasized how Demonstration Cities might affect suburbs as well as cities, so they emphasized that even local schools could come under the purview of the HUD secretary, only twelve years after *Brown v. Board of Education* ordered their desegregation. Fears of federal influence was rooted in fears of enforcing integration.

Any local project would have to meet "the criteria established by the Secretary." The report continued, "if this language doesn't embrace practically every normal function of local

⁵⁰⁷ Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 90-92, 100-101.

⁵⁰⁸ Minority Views, p. 141, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵⁰⁹ Minority Views, p. 141, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

government, we don't know what does."⁵¹⁰ The authors paused to acknowledge that, in hearings, Weaver had "denied that title II of the bill is aimed at creating metro governments throughout our country." They were not prepared to take his word as the bill and HUD clearly sought to "encourage" metropolitan plans and programs for "coordinating" local development, and "if this isn't the clearest definition of what constitutes the ultimate in metro government, we wish the Secretary would tell us what is." Not only were the federal government, and Weaver, untrustworthy, but even words like *encourage* and *coordinating* were given sinister interpretations.⁵¹¹

The language the authors used make it clear that they simply did not trust the motives of HUD or its secretary, and it is difficult to untangle their arguments about the bill from the man who would have authority over the program, as they often refer to Weaver personally. Consider their criticism of Section 205 of the bill, in which it is stated that the HUD Secretary would determine the awarding of grants based on evidence that a local project meets the requirements of a previous section. One criterium mentioned is "the establishment and consistent administration of zoning codes, subdivision regulations, and similar land-use and density controls." For the authors, this raised significant questions, especially whether only communities who followed the view of federal planners on matters that were largely related to housing, such as "zoning codes, subdivision regulations, and similar land-use and density controls." The question, the authors asserted, answered itself.⁵¹² Those who feared metropolitan governance because of the dominance of central cities, feared to be at the expense of suburbs, would "wake up and find their fears were

⁵¹⁰ Minority Views, p. 141, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵¹¹ Minority Views, p. 141-142, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵¹² Minority Views, p. 142-143, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

misplaced. Under the Federal-Metro concept, all true power will reside not with the city, but with the Secretary of HUD.”⁵¹³

While the authors took the clarity of their argument for granted, their suspicions over the meaning and general usage of the word “consistent” spoke to a broader distrust towards the bill and HUD. While they hinted at their distrust of Weaver specifically, they also assured the reader later in the report that “We will not assert our displeasure with Title II with the hackneyed warning that these are powers that might be entrusted to Secretary Weaver, but not to his future successors in office. On the contrary, we will be bold enough to say that they should not be entrusted to *any* Secretary of HUD, including the incumbent.”⁵¹⁴ It was also clear that, even with fears of large social expenditures and federal usurpation of local governance, there was more going on than these arguments as evidenced by the authors’ preoccupations with suburbs and schools, the sites of significant anti-integration sentiments.

The minority report then quoted Secretary Weaver providing the obvious rebuttal to these fears: no one had to accept or even ask for federal funding via the Demonstration Cities program, and therefore would not have to meet any of the criteria laid out in the bill. Even here the authors accused Weaver of an “old tried and true carrot-and-stick approach,” in which the HUD Secretary punished those who did not want to participate in the program by not including. Doing so, the authors argued, meant that grants would not be based on local need, but rather upon “fealty” to HUD.⁵¹⁵ Later, the authors returned to this point, writing that they anticipated the argument that “if local communities don’t want to comply, they don’t have to ask for the supplementary Federal grants.” As far as the authors were concerned, it simply meant that “rewards for compliance”

⁵¹³ Minority Views, p. 143, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵¹⁴ Minority Views, p. 146, Box 2, Folder 6, MC. Emphasis in original.

⁵¹⁵ Minority Views, p. 143-144, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

would become “*penalties for noncompliance.*” They emphasized by repeating, “Incentives of today will become the penalties of tomorrow. Today’s incentives will be tomorrow’s penalties.” The authors then ominously concluded that, when local communities are penalized for not complying with the Federal-metro standards, “the die will have been cast.”⁵¹⁶

As an alternative, the authors called for a “reasonable solution,” as they, once again, stressed that something had to be done about cities and metropolitan planning. The authors recommended S. 561, from the previous year, a bill in which grant-in-aids required areawide or regional planning as a prerequisite, but which “would rely on commonsense and good will to persuade local governing bodies to accept planning decisions; it would not be mandatory.”⁵¹⁷ The main difference, it seems, was that local bodies could choose not to accept the resulting regional planning in the earlier bill while still accepting the funding. Under Demonstration Cities, if the funding was accepted, so were the planning decisions. Moreover, the alternative bill left planning at the local and state levels. Title II of the Model Cities bill meant that “such metropolitanwide plans would be under the thumb of the Secretary of HUD, leading inevitably to the creation of Federal-Metro government throughout our Nation.”⁵¹⁸

The minority view report was the creation of a range of dissenting voices and the arguments for not supporting Demonstration Cities varied. While all those who signed the report had to, to some degree, support the argument therein, their individual opinions, included as addenda, made clear that their emphases were different. One of the final sections, entitled “You *Can* Fight City Hall,” worried about how local communities could fight decisions made through the program. Where could one protest a zoning decision or the placement of a highway? “Certainly not to their

⁵¹⁶ Minority Views, p. 146, Box 2, Folder 6, MC. Emphasis in original.

⁵¹⁷ Minority Views, p. 144, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵¹⁸ Minority Views, p. 145, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

local town council or to their mayor – or their Representative in Congress,” the report answered.⁵¹⁹ Here, fears over local control lost their partisan-flavor, as this was a trans-partisan complaint over urban renewal, whether it was Robert Moses in New York City or the destruction of Detroit’s black neighborhoods for the construction of urban highways.⁵²⁰ This is a theme that Florence P. Dwyer in particular took up in her statement, and one to which we will return shortly.

The group report concluded by insisting that “all of this should alarm any community wishing to preserve its independence.” Then, somewhat contradictory, the authors argued that the program as outlined could not address the problems of cities as they were because “to do the job as it should be done, we need planning not so much on the local level as we do on the national level.” By national planning, the authors must have meant something that was not HUD, to which along with Model Cities they concluded by calling “economic coercion.”⁵²¹

Other minority views were not always in the same vein. William B. Widnall, a congressman from New Jersey, did not sign off on the group report, but submitted his own supplemental response. In it, he criticized urban renewal as having been used to benefit property developers at the expense of middle- and low-income housing. In fact, he connected the abuses of urban renewal directly to the urban upheavals of the mid- to late 1960s. Widnall lamented that attempts to reform urban renewal had been met with the response that it had to stay “flexible.” “Flexibility for what?” Widnall queried. “Do they mean the kind of flexibility that has constructed luxury high rise apartments and promoted commercial downtown renewal at the expense of the low- and moderate-income citizens left behind in the ghettos? Do they mean the kind of flexibility

⁵¹⁹ Minority Views, p. 146, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵²⁰ See Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975); Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin*; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

⁵²¹ Minority Views, p. 147, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

that has fostered the explosive situations in city after city that we face this summer?”⁵²² The country did not need to take six years, Widnall argued, to demonstrate that thousands of cities needed better housing for low- and moderate-income residents. “Let them restrict urban renewal grants to those cities who are interested in housing the poor instead of accommodating the rich,” Widnall continued. “Had we kept our urban renewal program on the right track all these years, possibly millions of our citizens of all races and backgrounds would not be living in fear of their very lives and properties this summer.”⁵²³

Paul A. Fino, who represented working-class white ethnics in the Bronx, had the most explicit objections to Demonstration Cities. Likely, he was where the concerns over suburbs and schools originated in the group report. He began by defending his urban *bona fides*, writing that “when I oppose this bill, I oppose it as a Representative from a 100 percent urban New York City constituency.” He then immediately argued that the bill would give Secretary Weaver “*dictatorial* powers over city living patterns.”⁵²⁴ Under a section entitled “Threat to Neighborhood Schools,” Fino wrote that his “people know what Dr. Weaver wants this control for.” The answer was for “so-called ‘open occupancy’” and to give the US Education Commissioner Howe “the tools to undermine the neighborhood school in the name of ‘racial balance.’” Despite having “heard a lot of talk about the need to head off the ‘explosion’ of the ghettos,” Fino argued that Demonstration Cities was “obvious demagoguery.” “All this bill is *really* designed to do,” Fino informed his readers, “is force Federal control on our cities: to make them accept Federal social criteria straight from the backroom social planners down at HUD or the Office of Education.” For Fino, Model

⁵²² “Supplemental Views of Congressman William B. Widnall,” Report of the Committee on Banking and Currency, US House of Representatives, Report no. 1931, September 1, 1966, p. 149, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵²³ “Supplemental Views of Congressman William B. Widnall,” p. 150, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵²⁴ “Supplemental Views of Congressman Paul A. Fino,” p. 151, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

Cities was not about helping cities at all. Rather, it was a legislative trick through which the federal government could enforce social planning, by which Fino meant integration.⁵²⁵

Fino then accused President Johnson of wanting “control, pure and simple,” The bill was designed to “give him massive powers over our cities.” Obscurely, Fino connected this with “the string of Asian ‘brush-fire’ wars the President expects to fight because of Asian ‘poverty’.” If nothing else, his response suggested that Fino was not only suspicious of the motivations of Secretary Weaver and HUD but of the entire Johnson administration. Fino then quoted James J. Kilpatrick, the conservative opinion writer, describing the bill as a “trojan horse.” If people knew what was in the bill, they would “hang its sponsors.” Fino conceded that the language was a bit extreme, but that did not stop him from placing in the Congressional Record the view that those sponsoring a bill that he objected to, because he accused it of facilitating a dictatorial desire for racial balance, should be hung.⁵²⁶

Fino broke down his objections further. Demonstration Cities was an “economic pistol to the heads of our cities – all in the name of social coercion.” The coercion was to force “conformity and compliance” to criteria that included busing school children in order to achieve school integration and housing policies that sought “economic integration.” Pointedly, Fino characterized those seeking busing as “ridicul[ing] the suburban way of life.” He quoted the US Commissioner of Education as saying “that he intends to take aim on those ‘fortunate white families who flee to the suburbs to escape integrated schools.’” Without a hint or recognition of irony, Fino asserted that “such racism is a stain on the Federal Government” and that the Commissioner sought to violate the 1966 Civil Rights Act.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 151, , Box 2, Folder 6, MC. Emphases in original.

⁵²⁶ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 152, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵²⁷ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 152-154, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

In addition to his fears of “racial balance” in neighborhood schools, Fino was concerned about “economic integration” in terms of housing. The bill would give “the Secretary power to force” housing with rent assistance “in neighborhoods where they don’t want it.” The congressman feared that “Dr. Weaver can draw up local ‘civil rights’ laws” under the provisions of the bill, which would impact both suburban housing and schools. He concluded that “this program is not aimed at meeting the needs of the tense ghettos – that is only propaganda. Nowhere in the bill is there a section giving precedence in ‘demonstration city’ grants to high-tension neighborhoods suffering the most extreme socioeconomic pressure [...] The administration wants to play with other neighborhoods where it can implement Dr. Howe’s school ideas and Dr. Weaver’s rent supplement economic integration ideas.”⁵²⁸

Finally, Fino returned to the impending “metrogovernment,” his preferred term for what the bill calls a “Federal review board.” If local communities do not agree to “hand away their sovereignty,” then Fino considered it likely that requests for federal funding would be rejected. Thus, “He [Secretary Weaver] can make airport grants hostages for areawide school districting mixing slum children with suburban children in schools paid for by high taxing of the suburbs.” Referring to a July 3 *Washington Post* article to support his suspicions, he asserted that the Johnson administration wanted to use the federal government to “provide the lever for Negroes to crack the suburbs.” “Suburbs would be asked to build scattered low-income housing and work out areawide plans for school integration.”⁵²⁹ Not mentioned by Fino is that this was the plan supported at the National Mayors Conference in Dallas a month earlier. He then concluded by once again mentioning Secretary Weaver and Commissioner Howe, saying that the US needed a plan that did

⁵²⁸ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 154, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵²⁹ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 155, Box 2, Folder 6, MC. The article cited is Gerald Grant, “Battle for Schools’ Desegregation is about to Shift to Northern Cities,” *The Washington Post*, A1, July 3, 1966,

not put them “in the saddle in every courthouse and at the head of the table at every town meeting or board of education meeting the America.”⁵³⁰

Bill Brock, the previous business vice-president and later Secretary of Labor, reaffirmed the group report in his statement, emphasizing that “it becomes patently clear that the motivation of this bill is founded upon a basic lack of faith in local government and represents solely a stronger device to control it.” Brock attacked the entire premise of the bill, including the idea that cities were in trouble, as being anti-local governance. “Do you honestly believe that all local and State officials of these United States are either inefficient, incompetent, or corrupt?” Brock implored his Congressional colleagues. “Do you honestly believe that they don’t care, that they are not doing the best possible job with the resources available for the people in their area?” If cities were indeed in trouble, Brock concluded, it was likely only because of excessive taxation on the part of Washington, and therefore further funding, such as Demonstration Cities, would only worsen their problems.⁵³¹

The crux of Brock’s argument was that federal aid had become too complicated. The Model Cities program streamlined the grant-writing process, so that a local project could apply once to the program in order to access all the disparate federal aid programs and agencies available. Brock’s conclusion was that cities “cannot effectively utilize many of these programs” and that perhaps it was “time to pause and reevaluate our past efforts.” Employing even more rhetorical questions, Brock continued:

When the bill takes four pages just to list those areas in which national controls and standards must be substituted for local judgment and initiative, doesn’t this ring a small bell? If our local communities are unable or unwilling to establish reasonable criteria, as this language implies, then perhaps we had best reexamine the root structure of America.

⁵³⁰ “Paul A. Fino,” p. 156, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵³¹ “Additional Views of Representative Bill Brock,” p. 162, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

Thus Brock moved from the logistics of the Demonstration City legislation to the entire structure of American governance. He wondered whether “we will cease to earn the title of a great, or even a free, society.” Given that LBJ’s social programs were titled collectively The Great Society, Brock’s choice of words was no accident.⁵³²

Burt L. Talcott submitted his individual views, which echo those of Bill Brock, but his ire was directed more to Title IV, “Land Development and New Communities,” an amendment to the National Housing Act. The amendment addressed small matters of mortgage insurance and sewage infrastructure. Somewhat oddly, Congressman Talcott took the opportunity to lambast “federal suburbs” and “government towns.” They were, Talcott wrote, “the most devastating encroachment by the Federal central bureaucracy upon the functions of local government, private enterprise, and individual freedom yet concocted by the Federal planners.” Far from being “a lesson in democracy,” they were rather “benevolent dictatorships.” Strangely, Talcott described the proposed communities as “artificial.” He was dismayed that “for the first time we are going to have our people told where to live and under what conditions.”⁵³³

In contrast Paul Fino were the views of Seymour Halpern, a Republican representative from Queens who was, as his *New York Times* obituary phrased it, “distinctly liberal.”⁵³⁴ The broadness of the Model Cities program was, Halpern acknowledged, concerning, but “I feel the seriousness of the urban ills which plague our cities warrants consideration of the massive programs outlined in this critical legislation.” So while he held reservations, Halpern also considered it doubtful that the federal government would seek to limit local governments. He asserted that “the

⁵³² “Bill Brock,” p. 163, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵³³ “Individual view of Congressman Burt L. Talcott,” p.164, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵³⁴ Robert McG. Thomas, Jr., “Seymour Halpern, 83, Dies; Served Queens in Congress,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1997. <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/11/nyregion/seymour-halpern-83-dies-served-queens-in-congress.html>. Accessed April 9, 2018. “Halpern, Seymour,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000085>. Accessed April 9, 2018.

local voice, I am certain, will be heard.” Taking up the concept of metropolitan planning directly, Halpern argued that it would make the process “more immediate, more effective, and more efficient.” Indeed, “the metropolitan planning title will serve to decentralize and speed administration of the federally aided urban projects.”⁵³⁵

The additional views of Florence Dwyer were of note as she seemed to follow what one could term the Jane Jacobs’ view of urban renewal: namely, that local control is vital. The reasoning was not the coded racial and class prejudice apparent in Paul Fino’s arguments. As far as Jane Jacobs was concerned, one of the clearest signs of a healthy city was racial and economic integration. The problem was, instead, that large-scale projects, even by the most well-intentioned planners, tended to harm neighborhoods, especially those that could not defend themselves. These were the neighborhoods where those without social, economic, or political power lived. Based on her individual report on Demonstration Cities, Representative Dwyer shared a similar point-of-view.

Dwyer began her report by saying that the weaknesses of the bill were discussed in the minority report, “with which I generally concur.” She repeated its concerns over the vagueness of the language and argued that the problems of cities were so important and urgent that it was worth doing well. In her estimation, the Demonstration Cities legislation was not good enough. It opened a flood of money that would be under the control and discretion of the HUD secretary, meaning that city planning and development would be largely under the direction of one individual. She was not, she continued, anti-urban-renewal, but specified that it can be done well and it can be done poorly. She saw local control as the issue. “All too often,” she argued, “the people of a community have been the missing ingredient in urban renewal.” Despite the clear interest that local

⁵³⁵ “Separate Views of Representative Seymour Halpern on Proposed Amendment to S. 3708,” p. 157, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

residents and citizens have in being part of the planning process, Dwyer noted, too often development agencies sought to discourage citizen interest and participation. The consequences have been profound, and not necessarily positive:

To many who have experienced it, urban renewal has not been an unmixed blessing. And the lower down the income scale these people have been the more they have been hurt. [...] The record is discouragingly full of documented reports of hardship, dislocation, disruption, higher rents, vacant land, Negro removal, new slums, the unnecessary destruction of viable neighborhoods, and a host of other ills resulting directly from badly planned and mishandled projects.⁵³⁶

The contrast with Fino's response is striking. Whereas Fino feared how urban renewal as pursued by Demonstration Cities might unfairly affect anyone who did not live in a slum, Dwyer recognized that urban renewal projects often harmed those who do live in economically distressed urban areas. Thus she recommended that all urban renewal projects be voted on as a referendum in communities of 150,000 or less – an amendment that failed to receive support. Where Dwyer and other writers of the group report, including Fino, agreed is that they saw a general lack of trust of “the people”.⁵³⁷

Conclusion

The opposition to the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966 did not succeed in defeating the bill, although it made it a tight race. The 89th Congress passed the bill, but not before trimming it severely. The original concept had aid targeting only six cities: Washington, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston, and Los Angeles. Perhaps if aid had flown to only those six cities, the bill could have lived up to its intention to demonstrate what a city could accomplish via a coordinated array of services and aids from the federal government. When the bill passed, the number had grown elevenfold, to 66 cities. As the *New York Times* diagnosed, after the number

⁵³⁶ “Additional Views of Representative Florence P. Dwyer,” p. 159-160, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

⁵³⁷ “Florence P. Dwyer,” p. 161, Box 2, Folder 6, MC.

of beneficiaries grew well into the double-digits, “Eventually the money was shoveled around only a half-inch deep anywhere. The program was destined to fail.”⁵³⁸ As the architect of the Model Cities program, Charles Haar, wrote in his memoirs, “No legislation, despite its merits, is assured without votes, and to acquire them for Model Cities President Johnson knew he needed to add more cities as potential recipients.” Not only were the funds diluted via the growing number of cities included, but the sums requested were enormous. Mayor John Lindsay of New York City alone asked for \$50 billion, noting that the city would likely need more. Detroit asked for \$15 billion, even as Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh argued that \$250 billion would be required to adequately address the urban crisis in the United States. “Slowly, the original idea was expanded further, diluting the effectiveness of federal funds,” Haar observed, “. . . intended by Reuther’s original letter to the President.”⁵³⁹

While lower than the sums mentioned in the previous paragraph, the surviving bill, which had originally asked for \$2.3 billion, still allocated \$900 million to cities to help develop and implement plans for revitalization. The sixty-six cities that benefited were broken down into six large cities (over 500,000), ten medium cities (250,000 to 500,000), and fifty small cities (less than 250,000), and called for full citizen participation. It was, urban historian Roger Biles commented, “arguably his [Johnson’s] most arduous struggle with the Eighty-ninth Congress.”⁵⁴⁰

One of the core lessons of the Civil Rights Movement in the history of the United States is the tension within local and national control. Just as states’ rights had been used since before the Civil War to justify the institution of slavery and, following the Civil War, to decry the tyranny of

⁵³⁸ Zeitz, *Building the Great Society: Inside Lyndon Johnson's White House*, 198; Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 171.

⁵³⁹ Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream*, 73-75; Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 138.

⁵⁴⁰ Julian E. Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 227; Biles, *The Fate of Cities*, 135-136, 139.

Abraham Lincoln and the federal government, so the argument of states' rights had been used since the Civil War to defend local race codes, segregation, discrimination, and Jim Crow practices. It was the argument used in Little Rock, Arkansas, when the Supreme Court's ruling was disregarded. It was to a greater extent used even when federal troops were sent in to enforce desegregation. It was used in the Deep South when it came to the disfranchisement of African American voters and desegregation of public facilities, especially when Kennedy and then Johnson gave their support to the civil rights movement.

Thus, in 1966, when these views of those who opposed the Demonstration Cities bill deployed the language of local governance versus federal control, it was hard to ignore the prevalent contemporary use of that language to defend racial prejudice and discrimination. The explicit references to school busing and integrated suburbs only served to reinforce this interpretation. While it was possible that the authors of these dissenting views did not consciously echo these racialized arguments, it is impossible to imagine that the Johnson administration did not interpret them in just that light. If some of the opponents to the Model Cities program were rooted in racial and class biases, however, the next chapter will explore the ways that the Model Cities program itself was also founded upon racial and class assumptions regarding cities and their residents.

CHAPTER 6 THE URBAN IMAGINARY OF THE GREAT SOCIETY, 1967-1968

How strange that Lyndon Johnson, so homespun and regional – the unabashed son of rural Texas – could become the nation’s advocate for the old and decaying central cities.

Charles M. Haar⁵⁴¹

The political fight over Model Cities recounted in the previous chapter was contentious and revealed deep fault lines between liberal and conservative understandings of racial and class geography in American cities. It was not just the opponents of the legislation, however, who worked with flawed racial and class assumptions. The Model City legislation itself, while well-meaning, misunderstood racial and class divisions in urban spaces, and as a consequence it inadequately addressed urban conflict. By examining the ways that key members of the Johnson administration understood urban challenges and conceived of solutions, this chapter explores the place that the urban crisis occupied in the thought of federal policy makers in the Great Society.

This chapter represents the far distance from the first chapters of this study, metaphorically as well as more literally. The discussion of how federal policy makers thought of the problems of black and working-class city residents is the complement to the earlier chapters that focus on how some of those problems manifested in metropolitan Detroit. As the chapters have moved up geographic scales – from communities to the greater metropolitan region to the federal level – so too have urban issues become more abstract and generic. Federal policy makers rooted their discussions in data and observations, including observational trips to distressed urban areas. In addition to first-hand observation, however, federal policy makers filtered their empirical research through their own racial and class biases. When it came to, say, treatments of the civil disorders and black anger in the late 1960s, one could imagine that some authors of reports or speeches wrote not out of their own biases but in order to accommodate those of their audiences. Yet, still, these

⁵⁴¹ Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream*, 192.

treatments of cities and the response by the Model Cities program reveal how members of the Great Society thought about and understood the urban crisis.

Four Johnson administration texts form the main focus of this chapter. Beginning with a speech by Lyndon Johnson, the chapter will address how the president approached the war on poverty and the Great Society. Then, the urban vision and imagination of the architect of the Model Cities program, Charles Haar, will be described. In his secret memo to the president, Haar described four possible futures for American cities that were used to guide policy decisions regarding urban questions. Third, a 1968 Center for Community Planning (housed in the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) booklet, *A City for Man*, sought to explain the Model Cities program to its readers. Finally, the chapter will conclude with two speeches delivered by the Assistant Secretary for Model Cities, H. Ralph Taylor, who tried to explain what *citizen participation* was and what it was not.

Taken together, these different administration perspectives on Model Cities specifically and urban affairs broadly help reveal the thinking of those directing the Great Society. All sought to improve the quality of life for urban residents as they did for all Americans. However, their understandings of the lived experiences within cities could be limited, their treatment of serious urban problems could be amiss, and their treatment of city residents could be patronizing. It is this distance between what the Great Society aimed for – and the aim was high – and what administration members failed to see that helps illuminate what urban thinking in the twilight of mid-century liberalism got right, and where it went astray.

American's Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty, 1967

That the Johnson presidency understood the Model Cities program to be part and parcel of a larger war on poverty permeates the administration's speeches and statements. Consider Lyndon

Johnson's March 14, 1967, address to congress, "Message on America's Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty." Johnson began by quoting Jacob Riis, whose 1890 book of photojournalism *How the Other Half Lives* continues to be a classic of anti-poverty literature unto today.⁵⁴² "The slum is as old as civilization," Riis wrote in 1902, and those who lost the race of civilization gave up hope and ambition, until "they are the victims, not the masters of their environment; and it is a bad master." Riis' words were not only applicable to the United States in 1902, Johnson continued, but to the US in the 1960s as well.⁵⁴³

"The basic conditions of life for the poor must, and can," the president argued, "be changed." Social security, public assistance programs, and fair labor standards all contributed to Johnson's "total strategy against poverty," and he encouraged adding additional measures in education, health, jobs and job training, housing, public assistance, transportation, recreation, and clean air and water. It was no coincidence that Johnson originally referred to New Deal measures. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a political hero, and LBJ consciously positioned himself as FDR's heir.⁵⁴⁴ These measures, Johnson stated, were not mere handouts. Those who would benefit from the proposed programs against poverty were "capable of helping themselves if given an opportunity to do so." For Johnson, it was the opportunity to improve one's position that counted.⁵⁴⁵

Yet, the more that was done to address poverty in the United States, the more the size of the problem became apparent. Gains had been made, the president observed, "but we have also

⁵⁴² Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011).

⁵⁴³ Lyndon B. Johnson, "Message on America's Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty," p. 1, March 14, 1967, Box 3, Model Cities Folder, Office Files of Irving Sprague, LBJ Library. (Hereafter Sprague.)

⁵⁴⁴ Charles Haar frequently mentions this in his memoir of working in the LBJ administration. Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream*.

⁵⁴⁵ Lyndon B. Johnson, "Message on America's Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty," p. 2, March 14, 1967, Box 3, Model Cities Folder, Sprague.

come to see how profound are the problems that confront us, how deeply ingrained are the customs and practices that must be changed, how stubbornly the heritage of poverty persists from generation to generation.” Warning his hearers not to give into pessimism, Johnson instead encouraged his listeners to embrace “a sober determination to carry through.” At the same time, Johnson recognized and acknowledged the controversy caused by his Great Society programs. He considered it inevitable, as he was proposing a “fundamental change” to how the federal government responded to poverty. Waiting, however, was not an option for the president. Change was required immediately, not in some vague future. “America had to pull the drowning man out of the water,” as far as Johnson was concerned, “and talk about it later.”⁵⁴⁶

In addition to being a powerful rhetorical moment, Johnson’s analogy summed up his approach to his administration overall. On one hand, the Johnson administration would keep avoiding program details, and occasionally leave in ambiguous or even contradictory language, in order to help the passage of bills through Congress. “The attitude of the president,” LBJ administration insider Charles Haar recalled, “was simply to pass a bill through first and worry about the details of implementation later.” On the other hand, Johnson encouraged taskforces to develop experimental solutions and programs. This strategy allowed for flexibility and creativity, but it also meant that mistakes and errors would be made. Johnson recognized this, and accepted it as the cost of trying to push the federal government in a new direction.⁵⁴⁷

Describing the Indescribable

The future of American cities in the late 60s, while unknown, was not unforeseen. For the Great Society, one vision came from Harvard Law professor and architect of the Model Cities

⁵⁴⁶ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Message on America’s Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty,” p. 4, March 14, 1967, Box 3, Model Cities Folder, Sprague.

⁵⁴⁷ Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson’s Reshaping of the American Dream*, 191, 212.

program, Charles M. Haar. He was a significant advisor to Lyndon Johnson and his administration. In August of 1967, he wrote a confidential memo to Johnson in which he described the likely futures of American cities. The memo was intended to sketch the results of different policy decisions, with the aim of guiding Great Society decision on urban affairs. “President Johnson,” Haar recalled in his memoir, “considered each of these possibility during intense discussion with his advisers.” Thus, it provides a window into the thinking of key Johnson advisor on urban affairs; that it was taken seriously by LBJ and other advisors only underscores that these scenarios found resonance among policy makers in the Great Society.⁵⁴⁸

Born in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1920, Haar and his family immigrated to the United States when he was six months old. After serving the Pacific theater during the Second World War, he received his law degree from Harvard in 1948. He joined the faculty in 1952 and remained until 1991. At Harvard in the 1950s, Haar was at the head of the newly-emerging field of land-use law. In 1958 he wrote *Land-Use Planning: A Casebook on the Use, Misuse and Re-Use of Urban Land*, an influential text. He advised John F. Kennedy on urban planning and policy during his campaign, and he helped LBJ craft Great Society programs. Haar also served a chair of LBJ’s National Task Force on the Preservation of Natural Beauty in 1964, a position that led him organizing the first White House conference on the environment.

President Johnson afterwards appointed Haar as chair on a commission on the creation and organization of a housing department, which became the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Johnson then assigned him to a task force through which he became the primary architect of the Model Cities program, including drafting the legislation. He later served as the first assistant secretary for metropolitan development in HUD. Later in life Haar led the

⁵⁴⁸ Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson’s Reshaping of the American Dream*, 98.

cleanup of Boston Harbor in 1983, following a pollution lawsuit in which he was a court-appointed master. The case demonstrated for Haar the necessity of the judiciary in intervening in the tragedy of the commons. In addition, he wrote numerous articles and books from the 1950s through the 2000s. As the *New York Times* wrote in his obituary, “Mr. Haar advocated robust government regulation of, and intervention in, urban development.”⁵⁴⁹

In his confidential memo, “Describing the Indescribable in Metropolitan Development: A Scenario in Four Parts,” Haar provided four “illustrations,” “painted in broad brush strokes.” The first scenario described the future Haar considered the most likely based on contemporary urban trends, with the title “The Armed Fortress.” In this vision, urban disorders would become routine. White Americans would abandon the civil rights movement, treating “the Negro revolution as a civil war that must be stamped out or contained.” White Americans would therefore isolate themselves in suburbia. Northern and Southern cities would become centers of “black power,” and “the white humane impulse [would be] lost amid the rising demands of middle-class whites that streets be made safe and the order of the Republic secured.” Coupled with continuing violence in the cities and white backlash in the suburbs, as Haar imagined them, federal budgets would become constrained, perhaps through an expansion of the war in Vietnam, or tax cuts, or the use of

⁵⁴⁹ Background information in this paragraph from J. M. Lawrence, “Charles Haar; Harvard Law Professor Advised Presidents,” *Boston Globe*, January 29, 2012, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/obituaries/2012/01/29/charles-haar-harvard-law-professor-advised-presidents/kUv7hrXD8d7lUnFLvkupeO/story.html>, accessed July 11, 2018; David W. Dunlap, “Charles M. Haar Dies at 91; Used Courts to Clean Boston Harbor,” *The New York Times*, January 17, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/us/charles-m-haar-91-dies-used-courts-to-clean-boston-harbor.html>, accessed July 11, 2018; “Charles M. Haar: 1920-2012, A Pioneer Who Explored New Lands in Law,” *Harvard Law Today*, July 1, 2012, <https://today.law.harvard.edu/charles-m-haar-1920-2012/>, accessed July 11, 2018; “Land-use Law Pioneer, Charles M. Haar, 91,” *The Harvard Gazette*, January 18, 2012, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2012/01/land-use-law-pioneer-charles-m-haar-91/>, accessed July 11, 2018; Robert H. Freilich, “A Tribute to Charles M. Haar,” *The Urban Lawyer* 44, no. 2 (2012). See also Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream*.

surpluses in the pursuit of space exploration. Regardless, the War on Poverty and the Model Cities program would be dismantled by a Congress concerned with inflation or deficits, or both.⁵⁵⁰

With less resources, he continued, “resentment in the ghetto flares higher.” Mayors would have to focus on containing riots rather than addressing their causes. In this scenario, police forces would grow larger, and “they [would] take on the characteristics of occupying armies in the ghettos.” Whites who still lived in the central city, fearing violence, would flee to suburbs, as do downtown institutions and businesses. The remaining non-white city residents would become “an alien population carrying on guerilla warfare with police and national guardsmen.” One result of the “white exodus,” Haar argued, would be that housing would become available as they move out, allowing for more class stratification among black city residents: middle-class and working-class African Americans, also “anxious to flee the violence of the ghetto,” would move away from the impoverished.⁵⁵¹

In Haar’s first scenario, cities would become centers of black political power, as they become homes to black majorities, but this is a Pyrrhic victory: “[D]rained of the institutions and businesses that once provided job opportunities, the central city exists as an angry and unstable mixture of middle class Negroes who have scant hope of escaping to suburbia, plus a vast host of lower-class Negroes who can only stew in their own resentment in an environment which has little to offer them in social services and economic opportunity.” The white power structure, which had “sacrificed its capital investment in Downtown institutions,” would have no interest in helping to improve the quality of life in central cities. Only federal aid, “which can hop over the white

⁵⁵⁰ “Describing the Indescribable in Metropolitan Development: A Scenario in Four Parts,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, Office Files of Harry McPherson, LBJ Library. (Hereafter McPherson.) See also Haar’s discussion of this memo in his memoir, Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson's Reshaping of the American Dream*, 98-111.

⁵⁵¹ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

suburbs,” could help cities, but, given this scenario, the forces in Congress would likely decline such a path.⁵⁵²

Finally, Haar concluded, with cities impoverished and the federal government unwilling to act, state governments would intervene. They would take over critical functions like policing and hospitals. Nationally, “Reagan Republicans” would become politically dominate. Their appeal would lie with “white families with a newly vested interest in maintaining the suburban status quo. Their platform stresses larger police forces, an end to fair housing laws, cuts in the welfare budget, and state supervision over central city finances.” Such was the envisioned urban future in the United States in 1967 by one of its foremost urban thinkers. Fifty years later, a number of details in this speculative sketch ring accurate.⁵⁵³

Haar’s second scenario, “the Pacified Ghetto,” was preferable only insofar as it was less violent. Convinced that urban disorders of the late 1960s were caused largely by black power politics, Haar asked the reader to “imagine” that Stokely Carmichael, Floyd McKissick, “and others along the ‘black power’ spectrum [would] come to the conclusion that the Model Cities and related programs [could] provide the mechanism whereby Negroes stand to gain political and economic leverage in the central cities.” Equating black power with violence, the author imagined a future in which “the Civil Rights movement realigns itself around the theme of using Federal dollars to build unified, politically responsible black communities.” The policies of the Johnson administration were within the realm of political responsibility; those who dissented were outside of responsible politics.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁵³ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁵⁴ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

Compared to Haar's first scenario, in which the Vietnam War or other factors led to a restricted federal budget, the second scenario was one in which big-city mayors and "a now-united Negro movement" form a force behind "a greatly enlarged Model Cities campaign," which would be financially feasible with the end of the war. With "massive expenditures in the ghetto" the quality of life would rise, schools would improve, and residences would be rehabilitated. Unemployment would decline via social services and job training. Unlike the Armed Fortress scenario, with its rigid segregation, the Pacified Ghetto "remains a place to which whites from the suburbs travel for commerce and culture."⁵⁵⁵

Politically, central cities would become the locus for black political power. With an "increased capacity to operate the levers of the political system," a black congressional bloc would form to advocate and gain benefits for their constituents. This development, explicitly tied to following the Johnson administration and comprised of middle-class African Americans, Haar characterized as "the positive results of 'black power' ideology." However, as the white business community would desire to maintain their influence over the cities, they would support the creation of metropolitan governments, or else support state intervention in city functions. Haar presented this as a positive development, as it would lead to better planning and negotiation over the form of metropolitan areas while maintaining support for Model Cities programs in central cities.⁵⁵⁶

While suburban whites still would travel to the city, the demographic flow would not be a two-way street. This scenario ended with "a pacified Negro community reaping the benefits of massive Federal aid through the Model Cities program," and the development of a separate-but-equal metropolitan space. "The price paid by the Negroes," the white paper predicted, "for political domination of the central city and improved housing and service conditions [would be] exclusion

⁵⁵⁵ "Describing the Indescribable," August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁵⁶ "Describing the Indescribable," August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

from the suburbs and from realization of the ideal of a single family home on a plot of grass.” On the other side, the price paid by the white suburbs for keeping the black community contained in the central city would be paying taxes to support central city programs like Model Cities. It would be a tithe to “preserve their freedom to keep their communities exclusionary.”⁵⁵⁷

While this short-term status quo might have some limited benefits over the urban crises of the late 1960s, it would not be able to last long. City residents would continue to be cut off from employment opportunities in the suburbs, creating a pool of unemployed residents which would, in turn, suppress the wages offered by the remaining employers in the city. Segregated school would lead to decreasing quality of education in the city. A growing black middle-class, described as “articulate,” would begin to advocate for “access to suburban housing.”⁵⁵⁸

The first two cases were Haar’s worst-case scenarios, but they were the ones that he considered the most likely, given contemporary policies and attitudes. The latter two scenarios provided a view of a more hopeful, even idealistic, future, but the report cautioned the reader that serious, even drastic, changes had to be made in politics and policy to achieve them. The third scenario was the Mini-Ghetto. It was predicated on the passage of a robust open housing law. As a result, in the United States, it would be “a Federal offense to discriminate against Negroes in any kind of housing, old or new, single or multi-family.” In another telling description of the black freedom movement, the author encouraged the reader to “assume also that the Civil Rights movement [would be] somehow pieced together again,” and that its leaders would agree on a “grand strategy” which is really just “a reinforcement of natural tendencies.” This imagined grand strategy, based on purported natural tendencies was to “urg[e] Negroes to abandon the central cities and start anew in the suburbs.” In this imagining, Haar revealed his own valuation of suburbia

⁵⁵⁷ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁵⁸ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

as more in tune with the natural inclinations of human beings. The city, on the other hand, is implied to be a greater distance from human nature.⁵⁵⁹

In turning to the suburbs, Haar assume that the black community would follow the pattern of other ethnic groups, such as Jewish, Italian, and Irish communities. They would form enclaves and pockets throughout metropolitan areas: essentially, black suburban communities would be formed. This development would result in the geographic separation of classes within the black community, with the middle class choosing middle-class neighborhoods, the working class moving to working-class neighborhoods, and so on. The author assumed a class-based racism in the suburbs, in which lower-class white suburbs would respond with “hostility of the worst kind [...] followed by a massive white out-migration.” Within middle-class suburbs, however, “once it had been established that only middle-class Negroes were moving in,” the suburbanites would have “a hesitant willingness to remain.” Haar assumed that a cautious class solidarity would trump racial antagonism. As chapter one showed in the case of Grosse Pointe, there was no basis historically for assuming this class difference in regards to attitudes towards suburban racial integration.

Moreover, the central city would remain “the largest of the ghettos.” Unlike those who moved to the suburbs, residents of the inner city would continue to face “alienation, unemployment, and poor education,” which was “the lot of the lower-class Negro in the central city.” Even lower-class black suburbs, lacking political clout, downtown business districts to provide a tax base, and diminished access to state and federal aid would find themselves threatened with becoming “pocket[s] of poverty,” “a series of dispersed small ghettos ... throughout the metropolitan areas.” With the population of the central city moving to the suburbs, city land would

⁵⁵⁹ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

become vacant and available for redevelopment. “For once,” Haar commented, “redevelopment could proceed without stirring problems of relocation.” Indeed, with “the exodus of the Negro ghetto,” institutions and businesses would feel “more confident” in operating in the central city. Other would feel more confident, too. With “race no longer an issue in the life of the central city, more suburbanites, especially the young married, might be lured back downtown.” Thus urban renewal would “come into its full glory” as the central city, “reclaimed ghetto land,” is rebuilt “to suit the tastes of the middle-class.”⁵⁶⁰

Haar predicted that this future would be aided by a Democratic Party run by “pragmatic leaders” who accepted segregation by choice. For instance, there could be “many exclusively white or exclusively Negro neighborhoods for those who prefer that way of life.” This compromise, as Haar termed it, could be expanded throughout the metropolitan area. The decision of *Brown v. Board*, which ordered school desegregation, would be “extended to require equality of facilities and expenditures within local corporate unites as between their ghetto and non-ghetto portion; and on the State level as between all-Negro communities and all-white localities.” Without any sense of irony the author proposed to put to the *Brown v. Board* decision in service of the separate-but-equal doctrine it had intended to overturn. This era of compromise would create a political climate in which “a rule of reason prevails” and consensus could be reached. In arguing for such a course of “reason,” in which segregated neighborhoods for those who desired them represented making the best of a less-than-ideal reality, contained echoes of the stated reasoning behind the Grosse Pointe point system. Given how segregated neighborhoods for white Americans and black Americans have historically led to vastly disparate economic possibilities and futures, the burden of this imagined consensus would fall unevenly across the racial divide.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶⁰ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁶¹ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

Haar's fourth scenario was the most hopeful. It was called the Vanishing Ghetto. Taking the strict open-housing law of the third scenario, this last scenario coupled it with "major affirmative housing programs," backed by full Congressional funding. Congress also would provide full funding for the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, including rent subsidies and guaranteed annual incomes. Full geographic mobility would be recognized as a right guaranteed by the 14th Amendment, with the result that "Negroes are endowed with unprecedented freedom of movement." This movement would not be only down to individual choices; it would be the result of public policy as well. All municipalities would be residentially opened up equally, guided by a deliberate effort to "fairly evenly absorb the newcomer." Thus, new ghettos would not be created to replace the old ones.⁵⁶²

Imagining that Johnson would win reelection in 1968, "a brilliant New Cities Program" was envisioned in which "institutional investors and large corporations such as General Motors & General Electric" supported the creation of integrated communities, where "greater economies of scale overcome lingering racial prejudice." "As suburban whites became convinced that the Negro exodus would be guided so that no single community would receive more than a small share of the total," the report continued, "they [would] lose fear of inundation and resist the early inclination toward panic selling." Deliberately planned to permanently be a minority population in whatever community in which they lived, black Americans would have no political power but would benefit from the services and housing available to white Americans. De facto segregation would be thus eliminated, with the result that "the Negro population [would] become[...] increasingly assimilated into American middle-class life."⁵⁶³

⁵⁶² "Describing the Indescribable," August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁶³ "Describing the Indescribable," August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

The author argued that these last two scenarios were not “beyond reach if we use public policy to deflect current mobility patterns,” but it would require changes in both residential movement and public policies. Quoting President Johnson’s “Message on Problems & Future of the Central City and Its Suburbs,” the report concluded by arguing that all people had to have access to the full range of choices available, whether in the realm of housing, education, recreation, or culture, and not just “the fortunate.”⁵⁶⁴ In a follow-up memo clarifying the last two scenarios, Haar emphasized that the fourth scenario was “unrealistic as a short run goal but minor steps can be taken in this direction, and as an ideal, it needs stating.”⁵⁶⁵

While this document contained insightful projections for the future of American urban life and policy, it also contains important evidence of the perception of cities in the late 1960s. Given that the main architect of the Model Cities program wrote the report, it provides a perspective into the worldview that gave birth to that program. One of the first thing that strikes the reader is the author’s distrust of black power politics. The phrase was always put in quotation marks, as if to reinforce that it was not the author’s term. Haar associated it with violence, political extortion, and irresponsibility. The author’s racial politics are ambivalent at best. On one hand, he supported access to housing, to education, to employment, and the freedom of movement. Equality in terms of integration is desired. On the other hand, the author balked at the idea of a majority black population and of black political control. Equal access to resources and services are one thing, he seemed to say, but equal access to power itself is seemingly a step too far.

Tension existed, then, between the goal of complete integration and the reality of black political power. As the report reflects in the fourth scenario, the elimination of de facto segregation would go hand-in-hand with the African-American population remaining a minority in all

⁵⁶⁴ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁶⁵ Charles M. Haar to Lyndon B. Johnson, August 18, 1968, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

communities, and therefore without access to political control. Assuming complete integration to be the more worthwhile goal, it followed that a majority-black city, or inner city, was anathema to the pursuit of civil rights. Not only were black urban spaces to be eliminated, Haar believed, they were a barrier to progress in and of themselves. American cities, in order to have a healthy future free from crisis, required the dispersal of the black population into suburbs, leaving the “reclaimed ghetto land” free for redevelopment. The problem with American cities, the report argued, was not discrimination, segregation, runaway jobs, or the resulting geographically bounded and racialized poverty; it was the impoverished population, largely but not exclusively black. That poverty itself was not the issue was indicated in the acceptance of lower-class suburbs, described as potential pockets of poverty or smaller ghettos. Here class intersected with race, as middle-class African Americans were predicted to move to integrated middle-class neighborhoods, where, despite hesitations, there would be no hostility or white flight. Indeed, the future of black American laid in its assimilation into American middle-class life. The historical experiences of African American families that moved into white suburbs, however, seemed to counter this imagined middle-class integration.

The future of the city was to be middle-class city, rebuilt to “suit the tastes of the middle-class.” The black working class and lower class were to be banished to the suburbs, as, presumably, working-class and lower-class members of other racial and ethnic groups also were banished in pursuit of a city oriented around middle-class tastes, desires, and needs. Once again, saving the city did not mean saving those who lived in them; rather, it meant getting rid of existing city residents, solving poverty by moving the poor, and overcoming racial strife by relocating black communities elsewhere.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁶ For discussions of how this dynamic played out historically, see Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Kruse and

Needless to say, the roots of urban ills – of poverty and of racial strife – were not examined. They did not need to be, as those were not the problems that needed to be solved. The wording and phrasing of the four different scenarios strongly suggests this indifference. In praising political compromise in the third scenario, the author explicitly defended segregated communities “for those who prefer that way of life.” He then referenced *Brown v. Board* in a defense of separate-but-equal public policies. One of the key arguments of the *Brown v. Board* decision was that separate-but-equal was unconstitutional *because* separate meant unequal. Taking the argument about housing segregation presented in the first chapter at face value, that the core problem was property values, separate-but-equal would mean the end of the motivation behind housing segregation. If all people, regardless of ancestry or other traits, had access to equal housing, then fears of lowering values would not enter the equation. It is only in an arrangement in which black housing equated to slum housing that a black neighbor would have equated to deteriorating property values. Segregation was premised on unequal access to resources, whether it be housing, education, or political power.

It is striking that “Describing the Indescribable” never questioned white racism or segregationist tendencies. At best, it took them for granted; at worst, it suggested they were reasonable. This bias came to the forefront in the third scenario, in which political compromise is described as meaning a *modus vivendi* comprised of exclusively white and exclusively black neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area, with a resulting “checkerboard pattern.” In the fourth scenario, in which full integration was to be achieved through deliberate public policy, the white suburbs, would be “convinced that the Negro exodus [would] be guided so that no single community receive[d] more than a small share of the total.” They would, consequently, “lose

Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History*; Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube, *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

[their] fear of inundation and resist the early inclination toward panic selling.”⁵⁶⁷ There was no attempt to explain white panic as anything other than “fear of inundation” that could be assuaged by guaranteeing that the black population would always be no more than “a small share.”⁵⁶⁸

A component of this conception of race and space was that Haar saw suburban space as ideal and to be preferred over the urban.⁵⁶⁹ Black suburbanization, for the middle class at least, would give them “the fulfillment of the American dream: the single family house on a grassy plot, barbecue pits, a good education system, a high level of public services, easy access to suburban jobs.”⁵⁷⁰ There was nothing wrong with such a dream in and of itself, though it begged the question of why were there good education systems and high levels of public services in suburbs, but not the inner cities. Why were decent jobs to be found, not in cities, but in their metropolitan fringes? Could one not happily barbecue, in good relations with one’s neighbors and surroundings, in the city?

The eagerness with which Haar conceived of the city as being remade in the image of middle-class culture, with “opera houses, art museums, new town houses, and even a sprinkling of contemporary single-family houses” suggested that it was not the city, inherently, which posed the problem. The problem was that the city was inhabited increasingly by the impoverished, and the impoverished were overwhelmingly black. By the late 1960s, Haar believed, city residents were violent, as demonstrated by riots and by black power politics, which went hand-in-hand in his mind. It bears repeating that, for Haar, the middle class was not *necessarily* white. It also included the black middle class, those who were “articulate” and “politically responsible,” and

⁵⁶⁷ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁶⁸ Charles M. Haar to Lyndon B. Johnson, August 18, 1968, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁶⁹ Thirty years later, Haar authored a book defending the right of all Americans, regardless of race or class, to live in suburban areas. See Charles M. Haar, *Suburbs under Siege: Race, Space, and Audacious Judges* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁵⁷⁰ “Describing the Indescribable,” August 18, 1967, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

who were “assimilated” into middle class society and culture. Yet, when speaking of the middle class, he relapsed into language that indicated that he meant a *white* middle class. In the third scenario, suburbanites, and particularly the “young married,” could be “lured” back downtown with “race no longer an issue” in the city.⁵⁷¹

By the late 1960s, some of those city residents’ frustrations at social, political, and economic inequalities manifested in black power politics or in rioting, beginning with civil disorders in Harlem in 1964 and Watts in 1965. As recounted in Chapter 4, Detroit was the site of what was considered the worst civil disorder in July of 1967, and what was described by veteran Detroit police as “in the worst urban guerilla warfare witnessed in the United States in the twentieth century.”⁵⁷² Over the course of a week, unrest spread through the city, with looting, arson, and sniping covering a hundred square miles. Two thousand five hundred and nine buildings were damaged, accompanied by a loss of \$36 million in insured property. Over seventeen thousand members of law enforcement were present in the city, which included the five thousand federal troops deployed by President Johnson at the request of the state governor. Seven thousand two hundred and thirty one people were arrested, and forty-three died.⁵⁷³ These events, less than a month in the past, constituted the backdrop of Charles Haar writing his confidential memo to the president in August of 1967.

A City for Man

Half a year later, in a February 1968 booklet, *A City for Man*, the Center for Community Planning within the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) outlined the vision behind Model Cities. It thus provides an perspective on how the urban crisis and the Great

⁵⁷¹ Charles M. Haar to Lyndon B. Johnson, August 18, 1968, Box 20, HUD Folder, McPherson.

⁵⁷² Stone, *Detroit 1967*, 130.

⁵⁷³ Thomas Sugrue, “Foreword,” in Stone, *Detroit 1967*, ix.

Society's proposed course of action was viewed by involved members of the Johnson administration outside of HUD. For the author of the Center for Community Planning booklet, the urban crisis was a "a puzzling paradox." In an era of affluence and technological progress, twenty percent of Americans lived "in abject poverty and despair." Millions within that twenty percent were "crowded into the slum areas of America's cities," where some "riot on the streets." The urban poor served as "an ever-present bad conscience for the affluent majority." While never stated explicitly, the "violent, alienated men with nothing to lose" within the slums were more than just a bad conscience. The consequence of poverty shifted unto those who were impoverished, so that the poor became the manifestation of poverty itself. The slums, and those who lived in them, served as a repository of fear for the affluent majority, a site of projection. It led to conclusions such as "it is increasingly clear that Americans will either have to abolish the slums, or the slums will destroy the very fabric of our society."⁵⁷⁴

The booklet identified unemployment and underemployment as culprits behind poverty, but only as abstract forces which, like hunger and illiteracy, were all "part of a horrifying but familiar picture which often seems all but impervious to human hand and will." Any attempt at a causal explanation for these elements of urban poverty was quickly dismissed out-of-hand. Automation, "racial change," and migration from rural to urban areas were further identified as underlying factors behind "slum conditions."⁵⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the fundamental problems of slum areas had to be studied; existing social programs, even if inadequate, had to be utilized. Urban planners, along with "private citizens from both suburb and slum," and different levels of government, business, labor unions, and private associations and organizations, had to join together in order to address the urban crisis. Community involvement was "vital," as city residents

⁵⁷⁴ *A City for Man*, pp. 4-5, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁷⁵ *A City for Man*, p. 5, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

have an “understanding of local conditions and habits [that] can help the specialists develop effective programs for aiding the residents.” Explicit in the philosophy of the Model Cities program, then, was that the program could not be top-down. In fact, speaking of city residents, the booklet argued that “their cooperation and interest may well determine success or failure of any new or renovated programs.”⁵⁷⁶

A few pages later, the booklet returned to this theme, noting that planners would have to “depend heavily upon residents,” as “too often projects are ‘successful’ on paper without ever working in reality.” It was necessary that local residents be involved in planning and subsequent steps of programs, in order to “suggest ways to of making them more pertinent.” Already the reader could see that local resident involvement, while praised, was conceived as advisory: Local residents were to make suggestions, but not decisions. But, then, after “long months of consultation, research, and deep thought,” the arrived-at programs would be ready for “bringing modern living standards and opportunities to the slums.” At stake for the booklet’s authors was modernity itself, which did not include slums, and appropriate living standards. The lack of opportunities, which included employment, were an acknowledgement that there were social conditions beyond city residents’ control. The booklet did not address why there were no opportunities present in slums areas, or how one could bring back jobs that had moved elsewhere.⁵⁷⁷

The economic deprivation of the slums were to be addressed through what the booklet called “financial health.” Poverty was, the booklet observed, the “single massive problem” behind slum conditions. The report betrayed a confusion over what, exactly, caused poverty. On one hand, there were “men and women who spend every waking hour looking for work, working at menial

⁵⁷⁶ *A City for Man*, p. 6, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁷⁷ *A City for Man*, p. 9, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

but exhausting jobs, or minding large families,” with the result that they “have little time for education or job training.” Indeed, “many of the poor are still eager to take advantage of any job training or career programs they can get their hands on.” In other words, the impoverished sought to improve their lot in life if possible, though all too often it was not. Those in the best position to understand that living in poverty and slums was less-than ideal were those who lived in poverty and slums. At the same time, the unstated premise of the booklet was that well-paying employment required advanced education and training; what working-class employment there was was exhausting and menial and paid poverty wages.⁵⁷⁸

Yet, in the same passage, the booklet forwarded a culture-of-poverty argument that somewhat contradicted the above.⁵⁷⁹ The impoverished “have been beaten down by hopelessness,” and “have been convinced too many times that they are worthless.” The result was that “they lack confidence in themselves and in the future.” There was no foreseeable benefit to improving their conditions. Instead of the “risky route of advanced training and education,” the poor chose “early marriage, child bearing, and sticking to a menial, futureless, but familiar job.” This worldview, the booklet stated, was passed down to children in poor families, “continuing the hopeless cycle of poverty for yet another generation.” At the same time, automation was taking away exactly those menial jobs (“ditchdigging, dishwashing, and many other rote jobs”) while rural-to-urban migration continued, putting more pressure on the existing “rote” jobs. That the authors of the booklet understood automation as affecting jobs like dishwashing and ditchdigging indicated their lack of familiarity with automation or its impact on working-class employment.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ *A City for Man*, p. 39, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁷⁹ For the underclass debate, see Duneier, *Ghetto*; Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); William J. Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Michael B. Katz, *The "Underclass" Debate: Views From History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁵⁸⁰ *A City for Man*, p. 39, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

The proposed answer to poverty, whether it be created by lack of employment and education opportunities, or the reluctance of the poor to take risks and improve themselves, was threefold: “job training and career development, financial assurance, and consumer protection.”⁵⁸¹ Job training formed a cornerstone to the Model Cities’ approach to under- and unemployment, and especially industrial employment. While industrial employment was commonly associated with semi- and unskilled labor, or as an entry-point to learn a skilled trade, it was clear that to the Model Cities program, those living in impoverished slums were unaware of this career path. The authors proposed that businesses and associations sponsor urban renewal and housing projects; that labor unions, along with industry and government, create apprenticeship programs; and that local industries “make their machines and equipment available during non-working hours to give residents practical experience in the jobs they are learning.”⁵⁸² That industrial employment might not be an option to impoverished city residents in 1968 due to the combination of segregation, job discrimination, and industrial decentralization was not part of this solution.

Fundamental to this solution was the premise that jobs existed and workers in demand. The booklet was not calling on private businesses to engage in charity; rather, “thirty million poor represent an immense loss of markets and resources.” There was a “manpower gap,” in which “able-bodied men and women” went unemployed while help-wanted columns were growing. “Inadequate numbers of key workers,” the booklet asserted, “curtail business and industrial expansion, still millions are unemployed or underemployed.” The jobs that needed to be filled, however, were above the abilities of the poor. As the “middle-range” jobs were “too demanding

⁵⁸¹ *A City for Man*, p. 39, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁸² *A City for Man*, p. 40, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

for the undereducated,” intensive job training would be required to fill those positions and allow businesses and industries to expand.⁵⁸³

Along with job training, Model Cities was to aid with career development. Here a curious solution was proposed. As an expansion of social services was part of the three-fold solution to poverty, it followed that there would be an increased need for people staffing social service agencies. Essentially, it was proposed that the poor be hired to help the poor. “Renovated social services,” the booklet continued, “will contain innumerable opportunities for permanent, satisfying jobs at all levels of skill and responsibility.” Education and healthcare were included as areas of employment, in addition to social services. If these positions were to be publicly funded was not addressed, although it would be a reasonable conclusion to draw. And while the plan had the merit of connecting the end of poverty with viable job opportunities, including expanding public employment, it was also premised on the continued existence of poverty, not its elimination. If poverty was adequately addressed and eliminated, these positions would no longer be necessary or required.⁵⁸⁴

At this moment, the booklet took a brief yet revealing detour, assuring the reader that “job training is not a panacea.” Training was a precondition to employment, but employment still required open positions. Thus, in a direct reference to industrial decentralization and the lack of employment opportunities in urban areas, the booklet stated that “hundreds of firms must be attracted into the cities.” Labor unions and professional organizations “had to open their ranks,” which was perhaps a reference to the history of racial discrimination in employment. These

⁵⁸³ *A City for Man*, p. 41, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁸⁴ *A City for Man*, pp. 41-43, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

changes would take years to achieve, meaning that something had to fill the gap between the present moment and when avenues of employment became available to city residents.⁵⁸⁵

Yet, instead of addressing social services or welfare provisions, the booklet immediately returned to the culture-of-poverty argument: “more important than the inevitable time lag of years is the attitude of many of the slum residents.” All too many had “passed the point of caring” and thus had no hope for the future. While lamenting the lack of risk-taking on the part of the poor and their reluctance to try a new path in life, the booklet noted that many had sought job training “only to discover that they cannot get into unions or into professions,” or that competition was too intense, job requirements too demanding, or their new skill was already obsolete. The tension between arguing that the poor do not care to improve themselves while acknowledging that many try and failed due to conditions outside their control was never resolved.⁵⁸⁶

Instead, the booklet continued by arguing that “still others lack interest in working.” For these people, “the very concept of full-time work is foreign if not fearful.” To complete the impression that the booklet was contradicting itself, it once again changed tack and argued that others worked for “endless years” in underpaid jobs. As their incomes are inadequate, “they ‘moonlight[ed]’ to support their families. And they never have the time or the opportunity to break the cycle.” So while the booklet acknowledged that some impoverished city residents work year after year in underpaying jobs and moonlighted to make ends meet, while others tried to obtain better employment only to be knocked back down again, it still asserted that the important factor was the attitude of the poor and their fear of full-time employment.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ *A City for Man*, p. 43, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁸⁶ *A City for Man*, p. 44, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁸⁷ *A City for Man*, pp. 43-44, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

If there were those who could work, and needed employment, the planners also recognized that there were many people who could not work for one reason or another: “the aged, the infirm, the mothers with five or six children, very young or ill children, or even older children themselves who should be getting further education and training.” In these cases, the booklet argued for the need for financial assurance, which would allow a family to “feel secure enough about the future to be interested in planning for it.” Many who could benefit from existing social provisions did not realize that they were eligible. Furthermore, programs were split between local, state, and federal initiatives, with “severely limited” resources, restrictive criteria, and intrusive eligibility requirements. Regardless, they had “moved an increasing number of Americans towards independence and a new sense of dignity and self-respect.”⁵⁸⁸

“Still,” the booklet noted, “public welfare payments are now a source of heated national debate.” While some sought to expand the programs, others desired to abolish them altogether. Confusion existed around the different forms welfare programs could take, such as public assistance, in-kind programs, a negative income tax, allowances for age groups, and social security. The challenge, the booklet continued, was that all suffered from the fault of either keeping incomes too low, or else “destroying the incentive to work.” At root, the authors of the booklet assumed that the challenge was the incentive to work, or the inability to find existing work, and not the lack of jobs in which one could work. Also, one might note, proposals for a guaranteed income surfaced and were rejected.⁵⁸⁹

Citizen Participation

That HUD and Model Cities were struggling to understand how to approach city residents in the wake of the long hot summer of 1968 comes across in a number of speeches and reports. A

⁵⁸⁸ *A City for Man*, pp. 44-46, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

⁵⁸⁹ *A city for Man*, pp. 44-46, Box 22, Folder 3, Gaither.

continuation of the effort of members of the Johnson administration to understand the urban crisis, the reports and speeches that focused on citizen participation how federal policy makers conceived of city residents. The HUD Assistant Secretary for Model Cities and Governmental Relations, H. Ralph Taylor, delivered a talk on “Model Cities: Progress and Problems in the First Ten Months” to the Model Cities Midwest Regional Conference in Dayton, on September 6, 1968. Taylor was the HUD official in charge of the Model Cities program. In the course of his long address, Taylor sought to support the fundamental principle that “citizens have the right to participate in and influence the development of plans that will affect their lives.” This, he argued, was no longer debatable. The Model Cities program was, in an echo of its original name, a demonstration. For Taylor, however, the goals of the program were “nothing less than a demonstration that this country, its government and its people, have the capacity, faith and willingness to commit resources needed to build an urban society that honors rather than mocks the rhetorical of democracy and equal opportunity for all.”⁵⁹⁰

While the title of Taylor’s speech referenced “the first ten month,” it had been two years since Model Cities had passed Congress, and only a year after it had received only 45% of its requested funding. The first ten months Taylor meant was the first ten months since seventy-five cities had been chosen to participate in the Model Cities program. Taylor welcomed the occasion to review the program for “our most important and critical audience,” by which he meant “the people of the neighborhoods” and local public officials. The support of these two groups was integral to the support of the program passed by Congress. The Model Cities program was a new form of planning, Taylor told his audience, “totally unprecedented in this country.” He was

⁵⁹⁰ H. Ralph Taylor, “Model Cities: Progress and Problems in the First Ten Months,” cover page, remarks to the Model Cities Midwest Regional Conference, September 6, 1968, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither. For Taylor’s position at HUD, see Robert B. Semple, Jr., “U.S. Gets Flood of Applications for Model City Planning Funds,” *The New York Times*, May 3, 1967, Box 3, Model Cities Folder, Sprague.

glowing in his description of its achievements to date. There had been not only an agreement on the relationship and program between HUD and city governments, there also had been (according to Taylor) a move towards “a joint analysis of the basic problems of their neighborhood and its place in the total picture” by “the city and the people.”⁵⁹¹

Of course, Taylor noted, “there are debates and disputes as to details.” Voicing his confidence that such debates and disputes could be resolved as long as citizens and cities remembered that they were partners, Taylor quoted Senator Edmund Muskie, whom he characterized as having done more than any single legislator to mold “the shape, form, philosophy and existence” of Model Cities. The program mean, Muskie argued in an acceptance speech only weeks prior to Taylor’s remarks, “giving all citizens an equal opportunity to participate in American life and in the policy-making processes of our society. And in all frankness, our society has not worked in this way up to now.” Taylor, via Muskie, began by affirming the need for citizen involvement in policy-making, even as he acknowledged that the history of governance in the United States had not always lived up to this ideal.⁵⁹²

Part of the challenge was that the Model Cities program was attempting to do something new. There had been “virtually no experience in American cities with broad-scale planning that related planning and social and economic planning,” which made the program daunting enough as it was. Moreover, Model Cities proposed to create a new planning process, through which “the total urban problem as an inter-related whole” was to be the focus. That process was to include the involvement of the government as well as citizens, “in close association.” Just as there was no experience with broad-based planning that covered physical, social, and economic needs at once,

⁵⁹¹ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 2, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁵⁹² Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 2, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

so there had been no experience with “this kind of planning as a collaborative enterprise” between city governments and neighborhood residents.⁵⁹³

The first ten months of Model Cities had a been a period of conceiving and developing plans. The first thirty or so plans were to be received by January of 1969 and all plans by that June. After they had submitted their plans, cities were expected to begin their first action year out of a five-year plan. The first steps were expected to be uneven, “but in every city people and institutions that have never worked together before will be working together in a common endeavor.” This collaboration could only improve over time. As such, the planning process itself was an accomplishment of the Model Cities program. Longer-term objectives would likely be, Taylor reminded his audience, far more difficult to achieve. “No city in the country today,” he stated, “has any real measure of the money needed to eliminate entirely slums and poverty, to educate all of its children to function effectively in a technological society where there are jobs for all, and how to create those jobs.”⁵⁹⁴

Model Cities did not just aim to research how much it would cost to expand the program to an entire city based on empirical data from selected neighborhoods. It also sought to “demonstrate that funds will be used more effectively than in the past.” Thus, the program was both research- and action-oriented. The necessary funding was neither solely in the purview nor the responsibility of the federal government. Even as Taylor championed the objectives of the Model Cities program, he cautioned that he was “concerned about this because I see very little evidence of enlarged State capacity or of State commitment to focus resources on the problems of the inner cities.” Model Cities created the arena in which the Federal government and other levels

⁵⁹³ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 3, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁵⁹⁴ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 5, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

of government could experiment with “new patterns of partnership” that created a grant system with local flexibility.⁵⁹⁵

Taylor described two other long-term objectives that were fundamental to the Model Cities program. The first was “to increase the competence and the responsiveness of local government,” following the recommendations of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, popularly known as the Kerner Commission. In contrast to conservative fears that Model Cities was a way of diminishing local power and control, Taylor argued that the program instead “rests on the premise that the problems of the city cannot be solved without the participation and the leadership of local government.” Further municipal fragmentation threatened local leadership and competence. The focus on citizen participation would help, Taylor continued, with the responsiveness of local governance. Model Cities was “an experiment in the sharing of power between government and citizen in developing institutions that will help the individual overcome the feeling that he has no role to play in an impersonal society, no relationship to the decisions that determine his life.”⁵⁹⁶

In particular, this ability to participate in decision-making was important to “the black and the Spanish-speaking citizens.” Their right to participate had been long denied. Still, Model Cities gave such citizens the means to “learn how to master the system, how to change it and adapt it to [their] needs.” The opportunity to do so was integral to American democracy, and “everyone else in our society has done this.” The opportunity had to be granted to “the people on the bottom rungs of society’s ladder – the black, the Mexican-American and the Puerto-Rican migrant to our cities, the Indian and the Appalachian and other white citizens at the poverty level.” There was an racialized imbalance of power, which was something that Taylor sought to address in ways that

⁵⁹⁵ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 6-7, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁵⁹⁶ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 7, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

Haar and other did not. The imbalance was also economic and included impoverished white Americans as well. Thus, Model Cities programs and the findings of the Kerner Commission would both be successful through an expansion of the democratic process. Opening up decisions about the allocation and use of resources to those at the bottom-rung of American society – the poor, whether they be black, Latino/a, indigenous, or white – would mean more effective and equal governance. For Taylor, the benefits of Model Cities went well beyond the quality of life in American cities. It extended to the well-being of American democracy itself, as well as the vitality of democratic processes in the lives of all citizens.⁵⁹⁷

The second long-term objective was to improve the relationship between the federal government and local governments. If the goal was to have local leadership responsive to changing conditions and willing to experiment, then local governments had to trust the support of the federal government, including its support through robust funding. “Mayors have insisted,” Taylor reminded his audience, “very rightly, that if they are to plan with their citizens, they must have more certainty and more timely funding than presently provided.” Otherwise, mayors could not be expected to make institutional changes, many of which were experimental and therefore politically risky. Part of the problem was that federal and state funding flowed through a number of channels, some of which were outside the control, and even the knowledge, of local governments. “As a result,” Taylor rued, “there are very few Mayors in this country who know the full extent and nature of the flow of Federal funds into their cities.” Taylor proposed, as “the only effective solution to this problem,” that approval of all federal grants require recipients in Model City-designated areas to participate in the Model City program and planning process.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁷ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 7-8, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁵⁹⁸ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 9-10, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

In contemplating the future course of the Model Cities program, three significant problems suggested themselves to Taylor. The first was the role of states in addressing the urban crisis. The second was the adequacy of program resources, and the third was the challenges of citizen participation. Taylor began with the role of states as “key decisions as to who gets aid, its use, and the level of services to be provided” were made by state governments, not the federal or local governments. Unfortunately, state governments were often “unsympathetic to, or even unaware of, what is happening in the central city.” Nonetheless, state governments were essential partners for addressing urban problems. They were local enough for experimental and flexible responses to local concerns, but they were at a level to overcome the fragmenting of metropolitan municipal governments, “the splintering of metropolitan areas into political jurisdictions that do not relate to the nature of the problem.” It was necessary that state governments were open to “new ideas, new ways of doing things, new approaches” in the areas of health, welfare, education, and civil rights.⁵⁹⁹

Taylor was not unaware of the ways that states-rights politics had been used in American history, and he was cognizant that these politics and the goals of the Johnson administration were not compatible. In calling for the importance of state governments in the Model Cities program, he was careful to distinguish it from this strain of conservative politics. As Taylor told his audience in Dayton, “a state where the rhetoric of States rights is used as a substitute for hard analysis of reality and a commitment for action serves only to continue the historic suspicion and hostility between State and local governments.” Rather than hostility between a state and the federal government, Taylor underscored that states-rights politics ill-served local governments and especially urban ones. Taylor invited state governments to participate in the Model Cities program.

⁵⁹⁹ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 11, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

He saw it as a key partnership, but “the ticket of admission is State commitment to assist in the solution of problems of the inner city.”⁶⁰⁰

The inadequacy of resources to successfully reach “the desired quality of urban society” was of fundamental importance to the success of the Model Cities program. In an election year, Taylor was skeptical of those who proposed unrealistic cuts to the domestic budget, “who talk glibly of black capitalism and private enterprise and never mention the question of the need for public funds, Federal and State to make it happen.” It was mere dishonesty in Taylor’s mind to talk about rebuilding urban America without providing for adequate funding to make it happen. That funding had to be public. As he argued, “the private sector cannot be expected to, nor will it act at the volume required, without guaranties, subsidies, training dollars or aid in a form that will either create a market or overcome the cost handicap of the action desired.” Black entrepreneurship, just as home ownership and good health and education, were certainly the social objectives to be met, but they required investment in order to reach them.⁶⁰¹

Feeling the need to make public investment palatable, Taylor reassured his audience that “Federal dollars do not necessarily mean Federal operation, or control, or that the money has to be spent through public channels alone.” Rather, Taylor proposed that public funds be used by private enterprises. At the end of the day, it was a matter of priorities rather than means. “We have the resources to build America,” Taylor said, “the issue is whether we have the will.” In perhaps an oblique reference to the war in Vietnam, Taylor conceded that it was a “period of resource shortage,” but that “priorities must be set.” Here Taylor joined a number of other members of the

⁶⁰⁰ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 11-12, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶⁰¹ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 12-13, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

Johnson administration who publicly spoke of the need to set resource priorities as a way to indicate that they considered American involvement in Vietnam to be an ill-judged venture.⁶⁰²

Finally, Taylor addressed the challenges presented by the principle of citizen participation in the Model Cities program. In particular, Taylor spoke on the rhetoric of black control and black separatism. He clarified that he “read this as rhetoric, not reality.” Exclusive control by one group of citizens was not an option, but instead power had to be shared. Standing in the way of this sharing of power were two related obstacles: the “suspicion and hostility” of citizens towards “the city” (by which Taylor meant the city government), and the “suspicion and skepticism” of public officials towards citizens. Taylor was not unsympathetic to the suspicions and hostility on the part of citizens towards city government, as it was “based upon a long history of neglect and second class treatment.” It was not to be overcome quickly, and certainly not by mere words. As he remarked, “even positive actions are slow to penetrate the thick layers of hostility build up by history.” Taylor counseled his audience of Model City officials that they had to cultivate patience and understanding, but that they also had to contribute to an understanding that a joint effort would lead to desired results that could not be attained “solely with resources within the neighborhood itself.” It required that neighborhoods “participate effectively in the decisions determining the use of these resources.” Taylor saw no other way to move past the suspicion and alienation of the city residents that Model Cities was designed to aid.⁶⁰³

To reach that goal required that public officials respect and listen to participating citizens. There were those “who resent the restraints on their power” that came with citizen input. The resentment of public officials could take many forms. An official could prize action over

⁶⁰² Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 13, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither. For an example of a prominent proponent of the expenditures on the Vietnam War being better used in addressing domestic issues, and especially cities, see liberal Republican mayor of New York City, John Lindsay, in Gillon, *Separate and Unequal*.

⁶⁰³ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” pp. 14-15, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

discussion and debate, thereby ignoring input by community members, or an official could express dismay over “the difficulty of getting citizens to agree on a plan for action.” One could rue the “fragmentation” of neighborhood opinion, “conflict between groups,” and the inability to appoint a single “accepted spokesman” as reasons to retain full control over the planning process. These ruses only covered the true reason behind the resentment, that “they have the arrogance of professionals who believe that citizens, particularly poor and black citizens, lack the necessary credentials.” This attitude only justified the suspicion and hostility on the part of the same citizens towards the resentful public officials.⁶⁰⁴

The pathway to partnership between these two forces was wrought with perils, but it was not impossible or unreasonable. It would entail rights and obligations on both sides. Both city government and city residents had to work towards the representation of all groups in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program; they had to recognize that no one, “not even the President of the United States,” has absolute power or control; and that processes had to be established clearly and early and then only changed through joint agreement. But while citizens should have “access to and influence on” the decision-making process, the final decisions should be in the hands of city governments, as “elected officials accountable to the citizenry,” as well as “administrative authority.” As will be made clear below, Taylor’s conception of the role of citizens in the decision-making process was a proscribed one.

Even at the ten-month mark, Taylor was able to pinpoint some of the characteristics of the cities with successful Model Cities programs to date. They were ones in which public officials and citizens had jointly “discussed, debated, and negotiated” the process through which participation would take place. They had ensured the “democratic selection of a group representative of the

⁶⁰⁴ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 15, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

major groups,” in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, economic status, and political views, who lived in the relevant neighborhood. They had determined in joint acceptable ways the roles citizens would play in “identifying problems, formulating plans and reacting to plans.”⁶⁰⁵

Yet, again Taylor underscored that “city government is clearly the dominant partner in the Model Cities program and that is as it should be.” A danger resided in this power dynamic, as city government had final decision-making power and could use that power to undermine citizen participation. Avoiding this danger would required different responses from city to city, but Taylor advised that “strengthening the citizen partners” would be one way to address it. Specifically, Taylor promoted what he called Independent Technical Assistance. An idea being developed in at least twenty cities, it provided “resources to provide technical assistance and expertise they trust” to citizens and which were under their control. This assistance was not intended to duplicate the staff that already existed in public agencies, but rather to “develop and maintain a neighborhood structure that is representative of and accountable to the neighborhood, with access to experts to assist neighborhood residents with the technical aspects of the planning process.” Community expertise could thus be tapped and community members “strengthened” as partners. The plan as described by Taylor did not address the degree to which such community partners would then be involved in the decision-making process.⁶⁰⁶

At stake was not just the conditions of inner cities. At the immediate level it was about addressing the hostility of city residents towards city government and “city hall’s fear that participation and planning are mutually inconsistent.” At another level, it was about creating successful cities. Ultimately it was “a great experiment in participatory government and administration,” As such, Taylor combined the largest federal program focused on urban affairs

⁶⁰⁵ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 17, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶⁰⁶ Taylor, “First Ten Months,” p. 18, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

and with the ethos of new left urbanism. He echoed the call for participatory democracy that had characterized the Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society. But, as Taylor himself argued, there is a difference between rhetoric and reality.⁶⁰⁷

On another occasion, H. Ralph Taylor gave remarks on the idea of citizen participation before the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials on September 27, 1968, in Minneapolis. Taylor's argument was that "the fundamental principle that citizens have a right to participate in and influence the development of plans that will affect their lives is not longer debatable." The world had changed, and "the social revolution under way throughout much of the world has made this so." The problem for planners and other professionals was that citizens participation could easily become "an effective barrier to action." In a telling use of the plural first person, Taylor described how "we are frustrated by having to deal with (what some consider) the chaotic, undisciplined, unstructured, quarrelsome reality that is the world of the poor, particularly the black and the Spanish-speaking poor." Perhaps Taylor was playing up the sense of frustration for his audience, but this would still suggest that this perception was widely shared. It also suggests that Taylor himself shared it.⁶⁰⁸

Despite the chaos and quarrels, Taylor assured his audience that citizen participation was a healthy and necessary process, albeit one that can be difficult. "We must recognize and understand this," he continued, "for the black, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American communities because these are problem areas." Citizen participation in these "problem areas" was only useful insofar as it led to understanding. Taylor then addressed three aspects of citizen participation. The first was the issue of control, "a word that permeates the rhetoric of the minority community and

⁶⁰⁷ Taylor, "First Ten Months," p. 18, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶⁰⁸ H. Ralph Taylor, "Remarks," p. 1, September 27, 1968, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

is, rarely, if ever, heard in the white community.” This was the case, Taylor suggested, because if one has control, one does not have any need to talk about it.⁶⁰⁹

The talk about control was not going to go away, Taylor observed, “in the model cities program and elsewhere,” because it “is an important part of the rhetoric of self-affirmation and must be understood as such.” There was a difference, implicit in Taylor’s comments, between the rhetoric of control and having control. “There can be no *exclusive* control by citizens,” Taylor cautioned his listeners, and the responsibility for the Model Cities program rested with the political leadership, whether the federal or the local government. The distrust of citizen participation was not necessarily aimed at minority populations. Local control could easily lead to further racial segregation, and “apartheid, whether voluntary or involuntary, is not a legitimate objective of the Model Cities program. Perhaps it would be in a Wallace administration – but not under Secretary Weaver or this Assistant Secretary.”⁶¹⁰

Full citizen control contained the possibility of continuing old urban ills or creating new ones, and Taylor concluded that citizen participation worked best when “citizens and city government negotiate a sharing of power” over the use of resources in a certain neighborhood. Citizens and city government, however, were not equal players, and “the city is clearly the dominant partner and that is as it should be in the Model Cities program.” Taylor qualified this by emphasizing that partnership was not paternalism, the latter of which would make citizens “subservient” to the government. This concept of citizen-government partnership was “nothing new, startling, or frightening,” but rather was “consistent with the historical pattern by which other minorities have moved into the main stream.”⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁹ Taylor, “Remarks,” p. 2, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶¹⁰ Taylor, “Remarks,” p. 3, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶¹¹ Taylor, “Remarks,” p. 4, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

A new challenge in the late 1960s was the hostility among some members of minority groups to the mainstream. There were some, Taylor noted, who saw all social programs a form of pacification, or else saw “the destruction of the present social structure as an essential prerequisite to progress.” Such people, for Taylor, presented negative opposition to all proposals, unless they themselves could “dominate” them. They were not, however, representative of the majority of minority communities. Taylor cited a CBS national survey in support of his argument that the majority of minorities still maintained faith in “the system.” Even as Taylor dismissed the politically radical fragment of minority communities, he still believed that channels of participation should be kept open for “those who are bitter, suspicious, cynical, and even hostile.”⁶¹²

Despite the crucial place *control* and *power* played in Taylor’s remarks, he never defined what he meant by them. He argued that “city governments must be sincere in their willingness to share power.” Without a sincere effort, any resulting program would lack legitimacy in the targeted community, and “chaos is the inevitable result.” In working with a neighborhood it was essential to have “a full understanding of power relationships in the neighborhood.” This meant, on one hand, recognizing those who are loudest with “demand and threat” are not necessarily the leaders of the neighbor or representative of majority opinion, and on the other that those who are representative leaders must be given the assistance they need “to bargain and negotiate effectively.” With this assistance, neighborhoods could “analyze, criticize, and suggest alternatives to be explored and developed, and judge whether the exploration of those alternatives has been honest and thorough.”⁶¹³

⁶¹² Taylor, “Remarks,” p. 4, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶¹³ Taylor, “Remarks,” pp. 5-6, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

Citizen participation was to be advisory in nature. At no point was any means through which citizens could participate in *decision-making* ever addressed: The proscribed routes of involvement were to analyze, criticize, suggest, and judge. Whether a planner or government official had to listen to citizens' suggestions or follow through with their judgements was left unsaid. Moreover, spokesmen [sic] for the community who were "divided and contentious" were deemed by Taylor to be "blocking progress."⁶¹⁴ By definition, those who disagreed with the plans of the specialists and professionals were unqualified to represent their communities.

To stand in the way of progress, as represented by the power and knowledge of planners and specialists, would be to "focus on the equivalent of cottage industries on the threshold of the computer age." Once again, the residents of inner-cities were characterized as outside modernity. Taylor provides a novel coda to this argument. He added that such anti-modernity "would give the enemies of integration the rationale and philosophy for their own special brand of apartheid." Even so, Taylor cautioned his listeners that one could not expect a member of an urban minority community to take "the larger view" unless they "had reason to believe that there is hope in that larger view."⁶¹⁵

On one extreme end of the spectrum of citizen participation, then, was the apartheid of an imagined Wallace administration. The other end came from the parochial and anti-modern community politics that Taylor equated with black separatism. Integration was the national goal of the Johnson administration, but to "inveigh against black separatism" while denying funds for federal programs like the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was an act of hypocrisy and mockery. Taylor's remarks affirmed the program of the Johnson administration, advocated for fully funding approved legislation and moving "forward more effectively to resolve the most difficult problems we all

⁶¹⁴ Taylor, "Remarks," p. 6, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶¹⁵ Taylor, "Remarks," p. 7, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

face today – that of involving the citizen in a constructive process that will lead to positive accomplishment, and significant improvement in the quality of urban life for us all.”⁶¹⁶

Conclusion

The Great Society envisioned a revitalized American society and democracy, and healthy urban areas was central to that vision. Members of the Johnson administration were sincere in their commitment to civil rights, the war on poverty, and an increasingly better life for all Americans. Johnson himself was sensitive the realities of poverty, working, and racism, even as he carried with him lingering prejudices from growing up in rural Texas. He was known to deploy racial epithets, but he also kept a picture of the impoverished rural Mexican-American schoolchildren he taught as an early adult in his desk. Once, when asked who had written one of his speeches as president, he pulled this photograph from his desk and replied, “they did.”⁶¹⁷

Yet, the Great Society was more than just President Johnson, and other members brought their own experiences and prejudices with them. As the memo, booklet, and speeches analyzed in this chapter have shown, not all members of the Great Society were sensitive to the lived realities of racial discrimination or economic deprivation. These attitudes combined to create imagined cities, based on observed realities but colored by preconceptions, for which federal policy makers developed remedies. Additionally, there were generational differences that shaped how policy makers confronted the urban crisis. A main one was the difference between those, like LBJ, who saw themselves as heirs to FDR’s New Deal, and those who considered themselves as part of John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier.

The two halves of this divide approached economics in fundamentally different ways. For those who considered themselves New Dealers, and who had experienced the Great Depression,

⁶¹⁶ Taylor, “Remarks,” p. 8, Model Cities Assessment, Gaither.

⁶¹⁷ Haar, *Striving for the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson’s Reshaping of the American Dream*, 192.

there existed a wariness towards capitalism itself. It was necessary, therefore, to regulate the excesses of capitalism, as proscribed by economist John Maynard Keynes. Carefully calibrated government spending, so the idea went, would ensure economic growth. The postwar success of the United States' economy seemed to demonstrate the veracity of Keynesian economic thinking. This very success, by the 1950s, led liberal thinkers to consider capitalism as stable and capable of sustained expansion. The Kennedy administration argued over what poverty truly meant: it could be a lack of resources, but in "the affluent society," perhaps it was a lack of opportunity. Counseled by JFK's economic advisers away from his New Deal inclinations, Johnson's first State of the Union address thus averred that "very often a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom." The cause was a lack of a fair chance, of access to opportunity to share in the ever-growing American prosperity.⁶¹⁸

It was not until the 1970s that this worldview would change, with the combined forces of stagflation and the oil crisis. Historian Carl Abbott locates this exact shift in 1972, when a group of economists and scientists, the Club of Rome, released their report *The Limits to Growth*. The group, via computer modeling, arrived at the conclusion that population growth was leading to unsustainable pressure on natural resources. This Malthusian prediction, however, then combined with the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, raising fears of peak petroleum. Stagflation and deindustrialization rounded out the picture, which strongly suggested that ever-expanding economic prosperity was not, after all, assured.⁶¹⁹ As the second chapter of this study explained, however, indications of this were already present by the early 1950s. Or, rather, that the growing economy following the Second World War developed unevenly in different regions and in

⁶¹⁸ Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*; Zeitz, *Building the Great Society: Inside Lyndon Johnson's White House*, 42-44, 48, 54; Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society*, 138-139.

⁶¹⁹ Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures*, 160.

different industries. The result was that entire cities were left behind. Regional urban disparities, such as that between the rust belt and the sun belt, were not address by the Model Cities program.

The funding for Model Cities was spread too thin, from six cities to sixty-six, and did not accomplish what it was originally intended to do. Even if it had remained focused on the original six cities proposed by Walter Reuther, the Johnson administration and the Great Society was devoured by the continuing war in Vietnam. Increasing consumed by the quagmire in southeast Asia, Johnson did not seek reelection in 1968, and Richard Nixon won the presidency. Nixon and subsequent presidents have continued key Great Society programs, from Head Start programs to public media, and these continue to be popular with the general public. The role of cities in the health and vitality of American society and democracy, however, never reached the same height as it did under the Johnson administration.

CHAPTER 7 EPILOGUE

This project began under the presidency of Barack Obama, when the United States was supposed to have moved beyond race, into what has been termed a post-racial society. Doing graduate studies in urban and labor history in the majority-black city of Detroit, surrounded by largely majority-white suburbs, it was difficult to quite buy this argument.⁶²⁰ It was clear that poverty and blackness correlated into living in the city proper, while wealth and whiteness correlated with living in the suburbs. Income, ancestry, and geographic location all seemed interrelated. Thus, even if we grant that, in interpersonal dimensions, we were post-racial, it seemed indicated that serious structural inequalities persisted.

The murders of Trayvon Martin, Freddie Grey, Michael Brown, Eric Gardner, and too many others occurred in rapid succession. Ferguson and Baltimore became sites of public frustration and anger met with militarized policing – the same policing that had led to the shooting, choking, or otherwise deadly treatment in police custody, of so many unarmed black men and women. Subsequent police testimony demonstrated to what a degree blackness, even in children, was connected to criminality and violence, therefore perceived as a physical threat.⁶²¹ Our society and, especially, our cities, were anything close to post-racial, and it was clear to most that there was a logic at work in which slums and ghettos, the inner-cities, were black and impoverished.⁶²²

Then, with the subsequent presidential election, the gates of hell seemed to burst forth. Neo Nazis and the KKK openly marched, harming and killing anti-fascist protesters, and leading to a

⁶²⁰ Detroit is often portrayed as a black/white metropolitan area. This erases the significant Latina/Latino population in southwest Detroit, the growing Bengali, Bangladeshi, and Yemeni populations of Hamtramck, and the diverse Middle Eastern community in Dearborn, often called the largest in the world outside the Middle East.

⁶²¹ The testimony of the officer who shot Michael Brown; the case of Tamir Rice, the 12-year-old shot in Cleveland; Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London: Verso, 2012).

⁶²² John Eligon, “A Year After Ferguson, Housing Segregation Defies Tools to Erase It,” *New York Times*, August 8, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/09/us/a-year-after-ferguson-housing-segregation-defies-tools-to-erase-it.html>. Accessed November 8, 2018.

political climate that saw a rise in the harassment and assault of minorities of all sorts: racial, ethnic, religious, sexual. In the year this dissertation was finished, a new phenomenon emerged, chilling given the recent history of extra-legal police killing of black Americans: calling the police on black people for simply being present in public spaces. Within two weeks in the spring of 2018, white Americans called the police on black Americans for waiting in a coffeeshop, for taking a nap in a dormitory common room, for shopping at an upscale clothing chain, for eating breakfast at a popular chain restaurant, for renting a room in a white neighborhood, for having a BBQ in a public park. Similar cases continued over the summer, including the police being called on a black politician canvassing door-to-door, and a black landlord checking on a property he had just purchased. Divorced from any illegal activity, this persistence calling of the police is the cruel harassment of black Americans for simply being in spaces in which they are not welcomed by some white Americans. This chapter in the long book of anti-black racism in the United States earned its wearily dry rejoinder online via #existingwhileblack, through which people documented their experiences with racism in everyday situations and tasks.

The criminalization of blackness, in and of itself, and its subsequent policing, has been long interrogated by scholars of black experiences. As urban areas in the US become increasingly non-white, they correspondingly become criminalized and therefore requiring more intense policing, for not other reason than that they have become non-white. Just as white communities feared the “invasion” of integration fifty years ago, so black presence in what is coded as white space is perceived as an invasion of criminality, and requiring the intervention of an increasingly militarized and violent police force, even if all that is occurring is a BBQ, a vacation, a nap, or a cup of coffee with friends. Unfortunately, these current events show that, far from being past

history or merely academic, the major concerns of this study continue to have present relevance and resonance.

Detroit itself entered into a moment of cultural cachet as this study was being written. A spate of books and articles emerged attempting to explain Detroit to the uninitiated. Those focusing on the abandoned structures of the industrial past were roundly criticized by Detroiters as ruin porn (titillating to its safely-ensconced observers, exploitative of its objectified subjects). The *New York Times* released a series of articles on the city that sublimely missed the point altogether, when not simply patronizing, including that authored by critically-acclaimed Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgaard.⁶²³ The obscurity of Detroit, the unknowability of it, is nothing but the inability to accept what Detroit represents in reality: the potent combination of structural racism and the ability of industrial, and now post-industrial, capitalism to abandon an entire city. Detroit, and its residents, were and are disposable. It is easy to dismiss this statement when it is an abstract utterance. It is another matter altogether when one is, in one's human-sized physicality, confronted by miles upon miles of abandoned industrial spaces and devastated residential areas throughout the metropolitan area. But here's yet another moment of inscrutability. The largeness of that confrontation, in turn, leads to the obfuscation of what does remain in Detroit: resilient and strong communities, vibrant and rich creativity in and appreciation of music and art, a thriving food culture, wide-spread devoutness that crosses faith traditions, a continuing working-class ethos, a

⁶²³ Ben Austen, "The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 11, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/magazine/the-post-post-apocalyptic-detroit.html>, accessed November 8, 2018; Karl Ove Knausgaard, "My Saga – Part 1," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 25, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/01/magazine/karl-ove-knausgaard-travels-through-america.html>, accessed November 8, 2018; Jennifer Conlin, "Last Stop on the L Train: Detroit," *New York Times*, July 10, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/12/fashion/last-stop-on-the-l-train-detroit.html>, accessed November 8, 2018; for how Detroiters are "not given to deep philosophizing," see Peter Applebome, "In Detroit's 2-Speed Recovery, Downtown Roars and Neighborhoods Sputter," August 12, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/13/us/detroit-recovery.html>, accessed November 8, 2018.

warmness and generosity of spirit on the part of those who live there which is nearly always overlooked and ignored in favor of stories of criminality and violence.

Similar in conceit to ruin porn strand of photography is the comparison of Detroit to post-Soviet urban decay or a bombed-out city, often Berlin after WWII or Sarajevo following the brutalities in the former Yugoslavia. For instance, Detroit native Mark Lilla compared the city to post-Communist Bucharest, where one can take a “Beautiful Decay Tour” to visit “buildings full of rubble and broken glass, abandoned factories invaded by local grasses.” Detroit, Lilla tells his readers, is “American’s Bucharest.” Part of the appeal, which can be traced back to Romanticism, is that “for those who have never experienced defeat, destruction, or exile there is an undeniable charm to loss.”⁶²⁴ A common story told in Detroit is that of visitors from Bosnia or Germany or some such place that has experienced grievous destruction during a war, and asking Detroiters who had bombed *them*.⁶²⁵

Detroit does not fare better in fiction, as related by urbanist and science fiction fan Carl Abbott. In *Imagining Urban Futures*, Detroit appears as an iteration of “crabgrass chaos,” where even the suburbs are “ghettos and slums, free-fire zones of danger and depopulation where it’s everybody for him or herself and wilding gangs take the hindmost.” Abbott points to Tobias Buckell’s “Stochasti-City” and Elizabeth Bear’s “The Red in the Sky is Our Blood,” both based in metropolitan Detroit. “Bucknell’s and Bear’s Detroit,” Abbott tells his readers, “is no long stretch from the real thing.”⁶²⁶ In another case, Nalo Hopkinson, author of 1998’s *Brown Girl in*

⁶²⁴ Mark Lilla, *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction* (New York: New York Review Books, 2016), 137-138.

⁶²⁵ The last encounter the author experienced with this meme was from a non-traditional student and life-long Detroiters when he taught a history of Detroit class at Wayne State University in the fall of 2016.

⁶²⁶ Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures*, 120, 140-141.

the Ring, featuring a Caribbean Canadian young woman in a future inner Toronto abandoned by government and businesses alike, has said her vision of Toronto was modeled on Detroit.⁶²⁷

Between the extremes of only seeing the many hardships faced by Detroiters and focusing only on the positives, and consequently over-romanticizing, one can acknowledge the difficulties experienced by the city and its residents while seeing that humans, through time and space, make the best of the circumstances in which we find ourselves: we find love, joy, and creative expression where we can.⁶²⁸

This study has aimed to explore the roots of present day Detroit, by examining case studies of racial segregation, deindustrialization, and contemporary responses at different scales (by residents, by local elites, and by the federal government). The intent is not to chide historical actors for not making better decisions, but rather to endeavor to understand what solutions had been proposed in the past, what their advantages and drawbacks might have been, and which were followed and which were not. This history is more variegated than it is often presented in popular narratives, and this study seeks to bely the notion that the present conditions of Detroit, and many other cities and small towns that share its experiences, were inevitable. They were not. As sociologist Daniel Bell wrote in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, “these trends become subject to choice and the decision is a policy intervention which may create a turning point in the history of a country or an institution.”⁶²⁹ Alternatives and proposals were offered by many, the acknowledgement of which is not to argue that their implementation would have been plausible, possible, likely, or desired.

⁶²⁷ Abbott, *Imagining Urban Futures*, 227.

⁶²⁸ One of the true evils of the Nazi camps, according to Hannah Arendt, was not just that they killed so many, but that they condemned their inmates to a living death before a physical death, by robbing them of their very humanity by denying them any means to love or create or hope.

⁶²⁹ Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, 4.

Even as we acknowledge that the present is the culmination of the decisions and choices we, as a society, have made in the past, it is difficult to argue that, for instance, a racialized society should have simply chosen to forego racism, structurally as well as interpersonally. Ideally, yes, but structures of power did not appear over night and, putting severe ruptures of catastrophe, revolution, and war to the side, they do not change over night. Understanding what those structures are, and how they operate, and how they came to be, however, is the first step to moving towards moving beyond them. Likewise, this study does not mean to argue that deindustrialization of a region is inherently bad, which is a form of romanticizing industrial production for its own sake. Rather, the point is, historically, deindustrialization led to a certain set of problems for workers and for cities. On one plane is these problems and how they could have been avoided, and on another is how they could have been quickly and efficiently addressed after coming into being.

As we live in a world that is largely urban and only becoming more so, the conditions of life in our cities matter greatly. All too often, solutions to urban ills center around moving the problems out of sight and out of mind – instead of addressing the roots of poverty, for instance, it is easier to relocate impoverished city residents to the outskirts of the city or into scattered suburbs. It is impossible to grapple with inequalities within metropolitan areas without grappling with the history and legacy of racial inequalities or large-scale changes in economic structures, yet frequently we do just that. It is unsurprising, then, that these questions have risen to the forefront, yet again, of American politics and social relations. They are fundamental to our social well-being, and we must engage with them if we are to move forwards as a democratic and urban society that strives for well-being of all its members.

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ABSTRACT**ENVISIONING THE CITY OF THE FUTURE: RESPONSES TO
DEINDUSTRIALIZATION, SEGREGATION, AND THE URBAN CRISIS IN
POSTWAR DETROIT, 1950-1970**

by

ANDREW HNATOW**December 2018****Advisor:** Dr. Elizabeth Faue**Major:** History**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Following Second World War, cities in the United States appeared to be in trouble. The urban crisis revolved around poverty, unemployment, segregation and discrimination, suburbanization, and deindustrialization. Using metropolitan Detroit as a case-study, this dissertation examines responses by local residents, urban planners, and federal policy-makers to these changes. Local community and union members centered around the Ford River Rouge complex in Dearborn rallied against industrial decentralization in the early 1950s. Community members in Grosse Pointe practiced systematic housing segregation, while other members of the community organized a Human Relations Council to support integration and interracial understanding. Constantinos Doxiadis led a research project in the 1960s, which published a three-volume study on the city in the year 2000. In the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential administration, the Model Cities program was developed to address struggling urban areas across the nation, even as the program originated in Detroit, via Walter Reuther of the United Automobile Workers. Through all these episodes, different people expressed how they understood the current challenges in the city and how they imagined its future. What they included and what they left out reveal the

state of race relations, economic inequality, and who was and was not considered to have a right to the city.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Andrew Hnatow received his BA from Western Michigan University in 2010, *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa. He double-majored in History and French, and he studied abroad in Lyon, France. He received in MA in History from Wayne State University in 2014. His MA essay was on the relationship between the New Left and organized labor in the early 1960s, and is the basis for a forthcoming chapter in an edited volume on intellectual history. Hnatow's teaching fields include the United States since 1865, urban history, and world history. His research interests include postwar US history, urban studies, the Cold War, the global 1960s, and social and intellectual history. Additionally, he has participated in a GRAINES summer academy in Vienna on European cities; three years of the Bavarian American Academy's summer program, in Munich/Regensburg, Miami, and Nuremberg, respectively; and as a assistant for a program on African democracies in Accra, Ghana. He has over five years teaching experience, as an assistant and as an instructor of record, in world history after 1945, American labor history, and the history of Detroit. After studying, teaching, and living in Detroit, he currently is pursuing his interest in academic publishing by working in the acquisitions department of the University of Texas Press, in Austin.