RACE, RENTERS, AND SERIAL SEGREGATION IN PORTLAND, OREGON AND BEYOND

by

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A DISSERTATION

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Homeownership may be the American Dream, but renting is the American reality for nearly half of Portland, Oregon's residents. In Oregon, where I conducted fieldwork from 2014 to 2017, a statewide ban on rent control, the prevalent use of no-cause evictions, and the lack of renters' protections pushed Portland residents, especially renters, into a Housing State of Emergency. Many renters in this housing crisis are forced to rent and face the threat of being repeatedly displaced as their apartment units change hands from investor-to-investor. These investor landlords used no-cause evictions to remove tenants from their homes and to quickly empty entire apartment buildings, flip the buildings, and increase their rate of return. As gentrification increased the rent in Portland, it also push low-income people and communities of color as they moved to the suburbs in search of scarce low-income rental housing. Employing ethnographic methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing, this dissertation explores the inequalities built into the rental housing system for different groups of vulnerable tenants in Portland. A qualitative analysis revealed that families of color and low-income residents not only experience serial displacement as renters, but also serial segregation.

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In addition, I give special thanks to the residents, community members, and community organizers, who shared with me their stories, anger, hopes, and dreams and their immense knowledge of the world around them.

Finally, thank you to my family who supported me throughout this endeavor, especially my four older sisters. Words fail me whenever I try to express the lifetimes that have passed between us. Words are insufficient to express our shared pains, disappointments, and struggles through this life. Words are an equally disappointing vehicle to convey what it feels like whenever we are together and our laughter fills the air until our belly aches while we do the things we do together.

To my sisters Chi Thu, Chi Trang, Chi Huyen, and Chi Quyen, you are the wonderful family I came from

And to Kyle and An, you are the wonderful family I chose

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Rental Housing Market as a Housing Caste

Cathy is a 62-year old white woman. Most of her income comes from social security because she is a disabled senior. She suffered from a bad fall from a work-related injury in 1990 but did not get approved for disability until 18-years later in 2008. She lives in an apartment complex in Gresham that is a Section 42 tax credit project which means that federal money was given to finance the property. In return, the owner must offer subsidized rent to tenants who qualify based on their income. After Cathy pays 30% of her $742 social security income on rent, her section-8 voucher pays the rest. "That's the theory, yes," she tells me. She explains that in the two years that she has lived in her apartment, her rent increased a little over a $100. When she received her first rent hike of $35, she paid the whole thing out of pocket for three months, so she was paying 54% of her income in rent, not 30%. The same thing happened when she received the other two rent increases. Without her section-8 voucher, her rent would be more than her income of $746 per month. Cathy shared with me the myriad of tactics she used to make sure she paid her rent first. For example, she would use her food stamps debit card to pull out cash and eat food from food pantries or places that served free meals for seniors such as Meals on Wheels.

"Have you ever considered buying a home?" I ask her.

"No. Because I don't have the money." She responds simply. "I was born into renting. My parents were also renters their whole life." Cathy strongly identifies as working class and has worked jobs in retail for most of her life with a short stint as a property manager for less than a year and four months working for the U.S. Census

Bureau. She described working for the U.S. Census Bureau as “really good money” at $9 an hour, although when they assigned her to the “swing shift,” her pay was slightly higher.

Cathy explains that the housing system is really a “caste system” that is divided into three basic categories. “Here, if you’re not a homeowner or renter, you’re considered homeless.” Because she does not have the ability to buy a home, she, and many like her, are forced to rent to avoid homelessness.

Cathy’s situation is slightly more fortunate than others in that she receives public assistance for her apartment. Nationally, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report, one in four households that qualify for assistance do not receive it because the government does not deem it an entitlement, meaning that when funding runs out, so does the assistance (Fischer and Sard 2017). If she did not have it, she would not able to pay for an apartment in the region. She would have to double up with family or friends. If that option was not available, she would be one of the 304,095 homeless seniors in the U.S. The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress states that one in three people who used a shelter that year were aged 50 years old and older (2014:2-8)

In Multnomah County, where Cathy lives, 3,000 households are on a closed waitlist for a section-8 voucher. The waitlist last opened in September 2016 for five days, and before that, it was opened in November 2012. Home Forward, the Housing Authority in the region, website estimates that it will be another three years before the waiting list will reopen. Once on the waitlist, when a home becomes available that the family or individual qualifies for, then Home Forward enters them into a lottery system. If selected, they are notified. Cathy was on the waitlist for four years before they called her, which is

typical. At the time, she was living in an apartment subsidized by the federal government through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). She had to move to use her voucher, since a voucher cannot be used in a HUD-subsidized home.

Unfortunately, most low-income renters who need the help to pay rent, do not receive it, and because they do not make enough money, they cannot buy a home. Furthermore, there are also thousands more in the county who do not qualify for low-income assistance such as section-8 because they are undocumented or over the income ceiling, but who also cannot become homeowners. They are stuck as renters.

Homeownership may be the American Dream, but renting is the American reality for Cathy and for 43.4 million American households (2016 U.S. Census). In 2016, ten years after the housing bubble sparked the Great Recession, U.S. Census data showed that more U.S. households are headed by renters than at any point in the last 50 years (up 36.6% in 2016 from 31.2% in 2006 compared to the high of 37% in 1965) (Fry and Brown 2016). This record number of renters also means that the annual average for homeownership in 2016 was 63.4%, the lowest rate measured since 1965, when the homeownership rate was 63%. A Pew Research Center survey also illuminated that of those who rented, 65% (most of whom were nonwhite renters) replied that they do so because of circumstance such as having barriers to buying (Fry and Brown 2016). The same survey found that although renting increased among white, black, and Hispanic households between 2006 and 2016, black and Hispanic households were significantly more likely to rent (58% and 54%, respectively) compared to white households (28%) (ibid). The Joint Center for Housing Studies' Rental Housing Report 2017 had similar findings in terms of renter profiles. Renters tend to be younger, nonwhite, foreign-born, poor, and in families with children and with less wealth. That is, renters' median age is

40 (although 1 in 3 renters are 50 and over). Racial minorities are twice as likely to rent than own. Immigrants account for 20% of renters, but only 12% of homeowners. Thirty-three percent of those in renter households are children compared to 30% of homeowner households. Two-thirds of all renter households (30.5 million) are in the bottom half of the income distribution or below the U.S. median household income. The median net worth of renters is $5,000 compared to homeowners at $230,000 (Joint Center for Housing Studies' Rental Housing Report 2017:10-11).

In this dissertation, I explore the rental housing system in Portland metropolitan area, where the 2016 U.S. Census reports that 40% of residents are renters, slightly higher than the national average (37%). I relay the turbulent experiences of those who are forced to rent because they do not meet the qualifications for buying a home. If homebuying remains a dream for millions of Americans, then at the very least, we need stronger renter protections and more public housing to prevent more people from sliding into homelessness.

I did not begin this project thinking that I would write a dissertation about renters. Rather, I was initially focused on a broader topic, what psychiatrists Fullilove and Wallace termed "serial forced displacement" to refer to the outcome of the "repetitive, coercive upheaval of groups" (2011:381). My research goal was to compare the residential experiences of African Americans, immigrants, refugees, and low-income whites. Trying to find commonalities of displacement experiences among the groups, the one trait that bridged their stories was that most nonwhites rented their homes. In almost all cases, immigrants and refugees arrive to the U.S. as renters. As renters, they all faced the displacement threat of being no-cause evicted or the threat of astronomical rent hikes

that would force them to move. The rental system that they were forced into, with no feasible way out, repetitively and coercively upended their lives.

Although I talked to homeowners and certainly agree that homeownership is not an ironclad way of preventing displacement—especially after millions of Americans lost their homes after the housing bubble burst in 2008—displacement from homeownership is not as immediate or repetitive compared to renting. For example, in Oregon as with many other states, nonpayment of rent 72 hours past the deadline can give renters an eviction. With homeownership, nonpayment of a mortgage can take months to result in the family being displaced. Yet, when homeowners lose their homes, they often return to renting, but when landlords evict renters, they are forced into another rental to possibly face more evictions, rent increases, or, worse, homelessness. As sociologist Matthew Desmond points out, we often think that poverty causes evictions, but it is probably truer today that evictions also cause poverty and then reproduces it (Desmond 2012; Desmond 2016).

The Places Displaced People Make

After receiving my Master's degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Oregon, I moved to Portland, Oregon in 2010. I lived in the small city of Eugene, Oregon for the last two years, and I yearned to live in a bigger and more diverse place, especially a place with more of a Vietnamese community. I took a break from university life, undecided on whether I wanted to continue on to a PhD. Family circumstances also required that my 17 and 18-year old niece and nephew come to live with me for an uncertain amount of time. I was offered and accepted a job in Portland as the policy and communications director of a local nonprofit.

My Master's research focused on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in the Vietnamese, New Orleans, Louisiana community of Versailles where I was born and raised. This early research sparked my need to know more about displacement-related practices and policies. Finishing my Master's degree was unfulfilling, since I came out the other end with more questions. Why was "refugee" a "dirty word" when applied to displaced black New Orleanians after Hurricane Katrina (Masquelier 2006), but had a sympathetic sentiment when applied to actual Vietnamese refugees (Chiang 2009)? Additionally, in New Orleans, Vietnamese refugees also lived in the same neighborhoods as African Americans in New Orleans East, but our collective stories were painted very differently from mainstream media to make it seem as if we lived in different neighborhoods such that the Vietnamese community was "recovering" but black New Orleanians relentlessly "struggled" to return. In truth, both communities recovered and struggled at the same time in our relief efforts and in our abilities to challenge racially-charged representations of ourselves, though unevenly because of the "racial projects" that informed them (Omi and Winant 1994:56).

Furthermore, during the recovery period immediately after Hurricane Katrina in which I was a community organizer and was finishing data collection for my degree (2007-2009), a burgeoning Honduran immigrant population began developing in New Orleans East. Most were undocumented and had come for work as cheap labor to help rebuild the city. Ironically, Vietnamese people referred to them as *người Mể*, which translates to "Mexican," while they referred to Vietnamese people as *Chino* which translates to "Chinese." Our Vietnamese Catholic church began holding mass in Spanish. When the Spanish-speaking priest wasn't available, our Vietnamese priest would try to lead mass in his broken Spanish. One day, my mother's car needed a battery jump at a

gas station, located a mile away from our home. A Honduran couple stopped to help us. The couple, like my mother, didn't speak English, yet through nonverbal communication, they understood the situation and helped us. As we were driving away, my mother, who seldomly encountered new people, informed me in Vietnamese, "Mexicans are good people." Vietnamese grocery stores began to carry tortillas and Vietnamese bánh mì sandwiches (already dubbed "Vietnamese po'boys" in New Orleans) suddenly had signs that read "emparedado con pollo." After Hurricane Katrina, the predominantly black neighborhood that I grew up in, which had been inflicted with white flight in the 1960s and transformed by Vietnamese refugee resettlement through the 1970s and 1980s, was changing in ways that I hadn't been able to imagine before with the introduction of undocumented Honduran immigrants in the mid-2000s. Of all the neighborhoods in the city, why were immigrants, refugees, and African Africans living side-by-side in the same area of town? How did global and urban forces work to pull us together?

After living and working in Portland for a year, I observed that East Portland, like New Orleans East, had the same spatial, demographic phenomenon in which immigrants, refugees, and African Americans lived in the same area of the city. Intuitively, the two places also felt the same with run-down apartments built in the 1970s, roads littered with potholes, pawn shops, adult entertainment, and bars. Underneath this (or above this perhaps), however, vibrant communities of color also existed with ethnic restaurants and grocery stores, churches, community organizations, and youth programs. These types of places were not only reserved for New Orleans and Portland however, but across major U.S. cities, low-income people of color lived and currently live in close proximity to each other even after various displacement events—"natural" disasters, gentrification, violent wars and conflicts, and uneven economic trade deals—pull them

apart in other neighborhoods, cities, and nation-states. I wanted to know how such places formed and why they existed, and I eventually returned to pursue a PhD to find out. In part, the answer was somewhat simpler than I originally thought: those places had more affordable rent, but understanding how renting worked, how some places became more affordable or expensive, and the impact those spatial changes had on people became the more complex research endeavor that I pursued. I group my main findings into three main ideas: serial segregation, global suburbs, and interconnected vulnerabilities related to housing. I describe each one in turn below.

Racial Residential Segregation, Re-segregation, and Serial Segregation

This study relies heavily on racial residential segregation scholarship but diverges from it in that this study examines how segregated communities in the 20th century change, and how families who lived in these communities move and re-segregate in other places in the 21st century, a process I call *serial segregation.* Scholars who study racial residential segregation typically attempt to answer three questions: Why does racial residential segregation persist? What are the consequences of segregation? What are the mechanisms that allow racial segregation to exist and persist?

In her *Annual Review of Sociology* article on racial residential segregation, Camille Zubrinsky Charles (2003), categorizes sociological explanations for the persistence of racial segregation into three lines of inquiry, which colleagues Kyle Crowder and Maria Krysan (2016) refer to these as the "Big Three" approaches to studying racial residential segregation. The first area of scholarship insists that segregation persists because of racial group differences in socioeconomic status. They argue that on average, African Americans and Latinx complete fewer years of school and

are concentrated in lower-status occupations, earn less income, and accumulate less wealth compared to whites (Farley 1996; Oliver and Shapiro 1995). These inequitable differences lead to the conclusion that residential segregation by race is the result of differences in status (Charles 2003:176). For instance, this group would argue that renters rent housing where their household income allows, so that lower income households (who tend to be nonwhite) logically have fewer options than higher income households (who tend to be white). Once these socioeconomic status gaps disappear, so the argument goes, then racial segregation will also disappear. This theory is also known as the spatial assimilation theory.

The second line of inquiry argue that racial segregation persists because of racial residential preferences with "out-group avoidance or in-group affinity leading individuals to choose neighborhoods dominated by their own group" (Crowder and Krysan 2016:19). Some scholars in this group downplay the salience of prejudice/discrimination in racial segregation because they argue that segregation reflects natural ethoncentricism rather than out-group hostility, while others support the racial proxy or the race0baed neighborhood stereotyping hypothesis, which posits that the "collection of undesirable social characteristics associated with blacks or the neighborhoods where they are concentrated—joblessness, welfare dependence, proclivity to criminal behavior—not race per se, that motivates aversions to black neighbors" (Charles 2003:181; Clark 1992; Patterson 1997; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997; Harris 1999; Ellen 2000).

The third line of inquiry argues that racial segregation persists because of ongoing prejudice and discrimination against nonwhites. According to this "place stratification" perspective (Crowder and Krysan 2016), "whites use segregation to

maintain social distance, and therefore, present-day residential segregation…is best understood as emanating from structural forces tied to racial prejudice and discrimination that preserve the relative status advantages of whites" (Charles 2003:181; see also Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Logan et al 1996; Massey and Denton 1993; Meyer 2000, Patterson 1997; Krysan 2002). Scholars who support the "place stratification" perspective lean on housing market explanations for why segregation persists maintaining that "although formal barriers to integration have been eliminated, discriminatory white tastes remain" (Charles 2003:191) and that white prejudice is translated into "systematic, institutionalized racial discrimination" in the housing market (Massey and Denton 1993:51; Meyer 2000; Yinger 1995). From this area of research emerges paired testing/audit studies (Yinger 1995) and studies that document racial discrimination in lending (Dedman 1998; Jackson 1994). Scholars found that after controlling for risk and personal characteristics, minorities are more likely to be denied home loans and systematically receive lower credit ratings (Carr and Megbolugbe 1993). Racial minorities are also more likely to be victims of redlining by home insurance companies and false methods of advertising and outreach (Yinger 1995).

Crowder and Krysan assert that the Big Three theories explaining the persistence of racial residential segregation fail to explain why segregation remain such a "defining characteristic of most of our metropolitan areas, despite liberalizing racial attitudes, reductions in the most overt forms of discrimination, economic advancement for some minority groups, and technological advances that should loosen the ties of neighborhood" (2016:18-19). They state that researchers' reliance on the dominating Big Three create two core problems. First, scholars treat the three theoretical arguments as "competing, mutually exclusive, and virtually exhaustive explanations of segregation" (Crowder and

Krysan 2016:19). In doing so, researchers fail to "recognize the ways in which preferences, discrimination, and economic forces interact and complement one another in the maintenance of residential segregation, and closes the assessment of more complex, but no less important dynamics that maintain residential segregation" (ibid). The second core problem is that scholars assume that residents of different racial/ethnic groups have the same knowledge of residential options when they make decisions about whether and where to move, which is problematic because individual knowledge of various community options are themselves a function of racialized systems. Crowder and Krysan encourage scholars to consider these two core problems to create more relevant, updated research that better understands how segregation is perpetuated generation after generation.

Another prominent question in racial residential segregation research includes "What are the consequences of segregation?" For decades, important research has answered this question by illustrating the consequences of racial residential segregation (concentrating poverty in places that nonwhites are force to live), linking how places, where we live, influence the outcomes in our lives. Neighborhoods with concentrated poverty exhibit high rates of long-term joblessness, school drop-out, crime, and lower average wages for those who work (Culter and Glaeser 1997; Jargowsky 1996; Krivo and Peterson 1996; Massey and Denton 1993). Segregation also works to undermine black and Latinx homeownership as a tool for wealth either because these areas are unattractive to residents or because of difficulties in securing home loans (Flippen 2001), so that home values occupied by blacks or Latinx depreciate in value compared to whites (Massey and Denton 1993; Rosenbaum 1996). Additional research on the consequences of racial segregation show that nonwhite families who live in segregated neighborhoods

deal with poor educational outcomes for their children (Reardon and Owens 2014), higher exposure to polluted industrial areas (Checker 2005), limited access to medical care, and lowered access to healthy foods. Where we live determines our exposure to crime and policing, access to public transportation, and other factors of livability.

Lastly, researchers who study racial segregation also look at the institutional and historical mechanisms that enable segregation to persist. Scholars in this area examine the process of suburbanization, the use of city zoning ordinances, restrictive covenants, blockbusting, bank and insurance redlining, and urban renewal areas, and federal housing authority's role in geographically separating white families in the suburbs and black families in the city in the 20th century (Jackson 1985; Rothstein 2017; Silver 1997). They also study how such institutions and policies allocated dangerous industrial land uses to black neighborhoods, provided inferior city services, if any, withheld municipal amenities parks and swimming pools, engaged in regressive tax assessment, and targeted those neighborhoods for public infrastructure, displacing residents (Jackson 1985; Rothstein 2017; Silver 1997).

This study is less concerned with why residential segregation persists and more concerned about the manner in which it exists and persists, especially as it relates to renters. Rather than examining segregation events one at time as these important studies do, my study looks at how historically segregated communities (such as inner-cities and ethnic enclaves) disperse for various reasons (such as gentrification, war, "natural" disasters, nation-building projects, economic policies) but come back together, or re-segregate, in other locations (such as suburbs), and in some cases residents are forced to repeat that trend several times. In this sense, residents are serially displaced (Fullilove and Wallace 2011), but they are also serially segregated, an important concept this

dissertation makes to our current understanding of segregation and displacement. Thus, I take into account the consequences of segregation and displacement in this study and discuss how policies that help to enact segregation also eventually help to enact displacement and re-segregation.

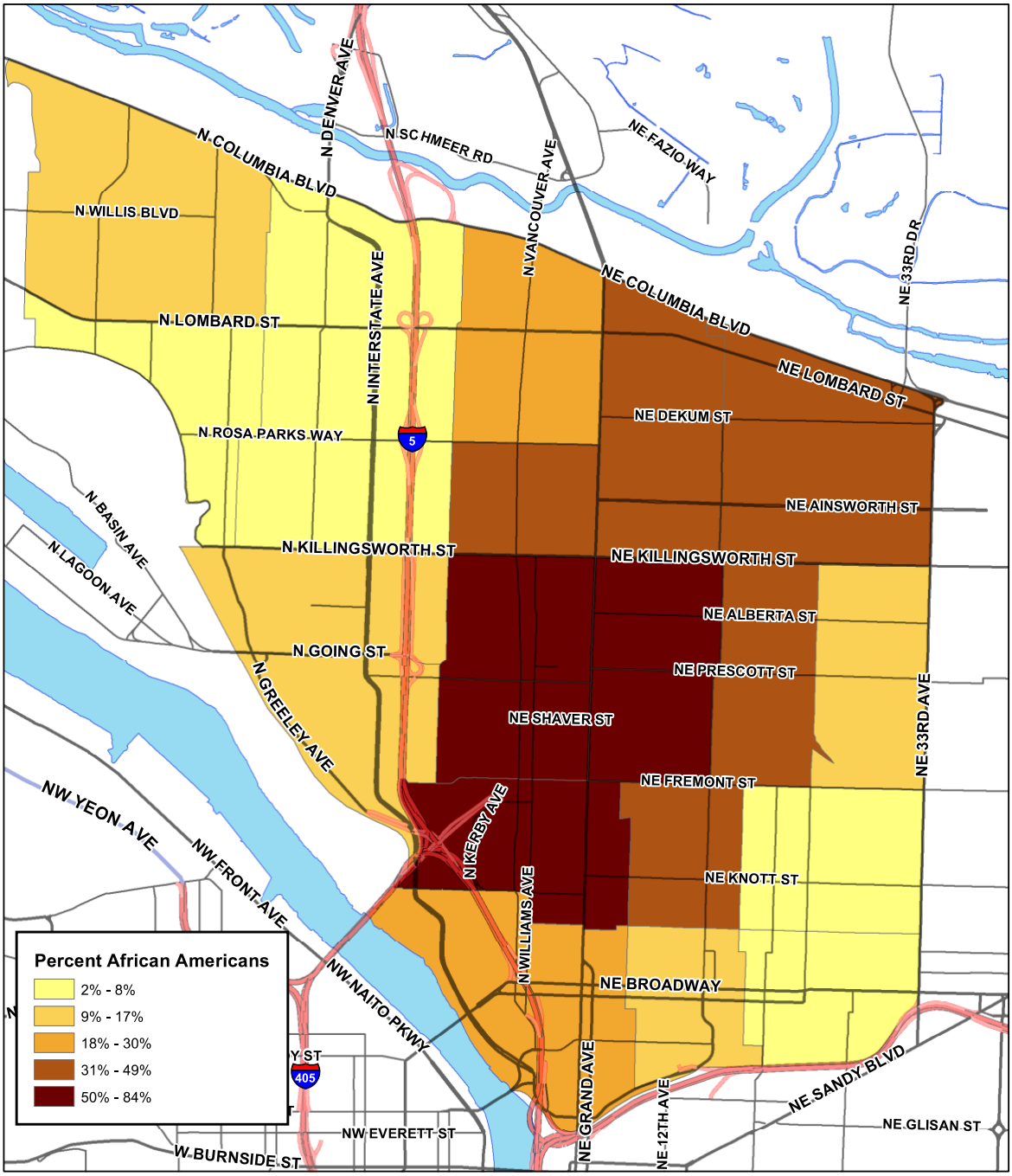
The literature on the re-segregation of America is sparse and mostly focuses on the context of schools and education. An *Annual Review* article by Sean Reardon and Ann Owens (2014) gives a broad overview of the trends and consequences of segregation 60 years after the *Brown v. Board* decision in 1954. The literature that they review clearly state that "school segregation between blacks and whites declined substantially from 1968 to the mid-1970s and continued to modestly decline into the 1980s" (Reardon and Owens 2014:203). Yet, the evidence on trends in segregation since the late 1980s, however, differs based on the researchers' methodology. Because residential patterns are not determinative of student body composition or vice versa (Reardon and Owens 2014:207), this re-segregation literature in the context of schools and education requires me to look in a different direction to answer the research questions that I posed about serial displacement and serial segregation.

A source I did find helpful, and one of the few books that that takes an in-depth examination of re-segregated America is Jeff Chang's *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*, particularly his chapter titled "Vanilla Cities and their Chocolate Suburbs." In it, he argues that "'gentrification" has become the major story of our time" because it is a word that has "captured urban rage over massive displacement—the active fallout of root shock and cultural clash, as well as the class stakes of eviction and redevelopment" (2016:71). He goes on to explain that the gentrification narrative helps us understand what happened to our cities at the turn of the century but does little to

help us understand "the new geography of race that has emerged," where "cities are becoming wealthier and whiter," and "aging suburbs are becoming poorer and darker" (Chang 2016:72). Chang details for instance how a place like Ferguson, MS (pop. 21,000), the infamous place where officer Darren Wilson shot and killed 18-year old Michael Brown, was once a white suburb with a 1% black population in 1970 but transformed to be 67% in 2010.

This dissertation takes on similar lines of inquiry as Chang's book in trying to understand the racial re-segregation of a major U.S. city and its suburbs. Specifically, I examine the role of the rental housing market in re-segregation. Those who subscribe to neoliberal economic theories argue that the housing market should produce enough housing to satisfy the demands of those throughout the socioeconomic spectrum, and they insist that housing problems arise because of lack of supply (e.g. Mangin 2014). "However," sociologist Mary Pattillo states, "housing problems do not arise because of a lack of supply. At the end of 2012, there were nearly 18 million vacant housing units in the United States. Instead, because of a complex set of housing (and labor) market policies and practices…there is a lack of supply at a price that people—especially low-income people—can afford" (Pattillo 2013:516). This is evidenced by the fact that nationally, only 54 units are affordable for every 100 very low-income renters (those making less than 50% of area median income) and only 33 units are affordable for every 100 extremely low-income renters (those making less than 30% of area median income) (Joint Center for Housing Studies' Rental Housing Report 2017:29). Thus, the availability of affordable rental housing influences where re-segregation of renters takes place.

(Figure 1: Black or African American Percent of Total Population 1980)

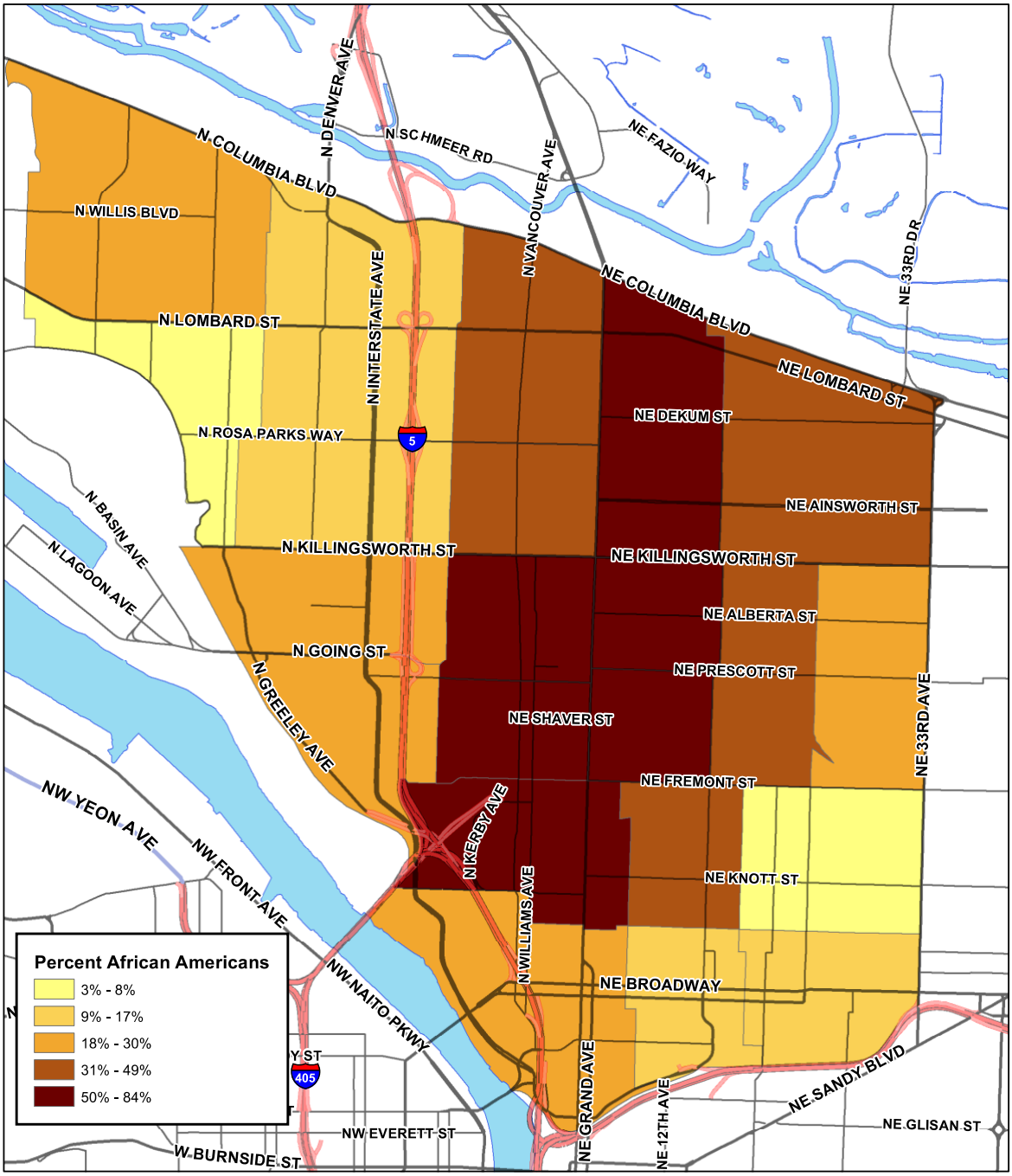


Black or African American Percent of Total Population 1980
North/Northeast Portland
by Census Tract

Created by Portland Housing Bureau, June 2014
Source:2010 Decenniel Census, National Historic Geographic System

Area	African-American	Total	Percent
Portland	27,734	366,383	8%
North/Northeast	22,387	80,984	28%

(Figure 2: Black or African American Percent of Total Population 1990)

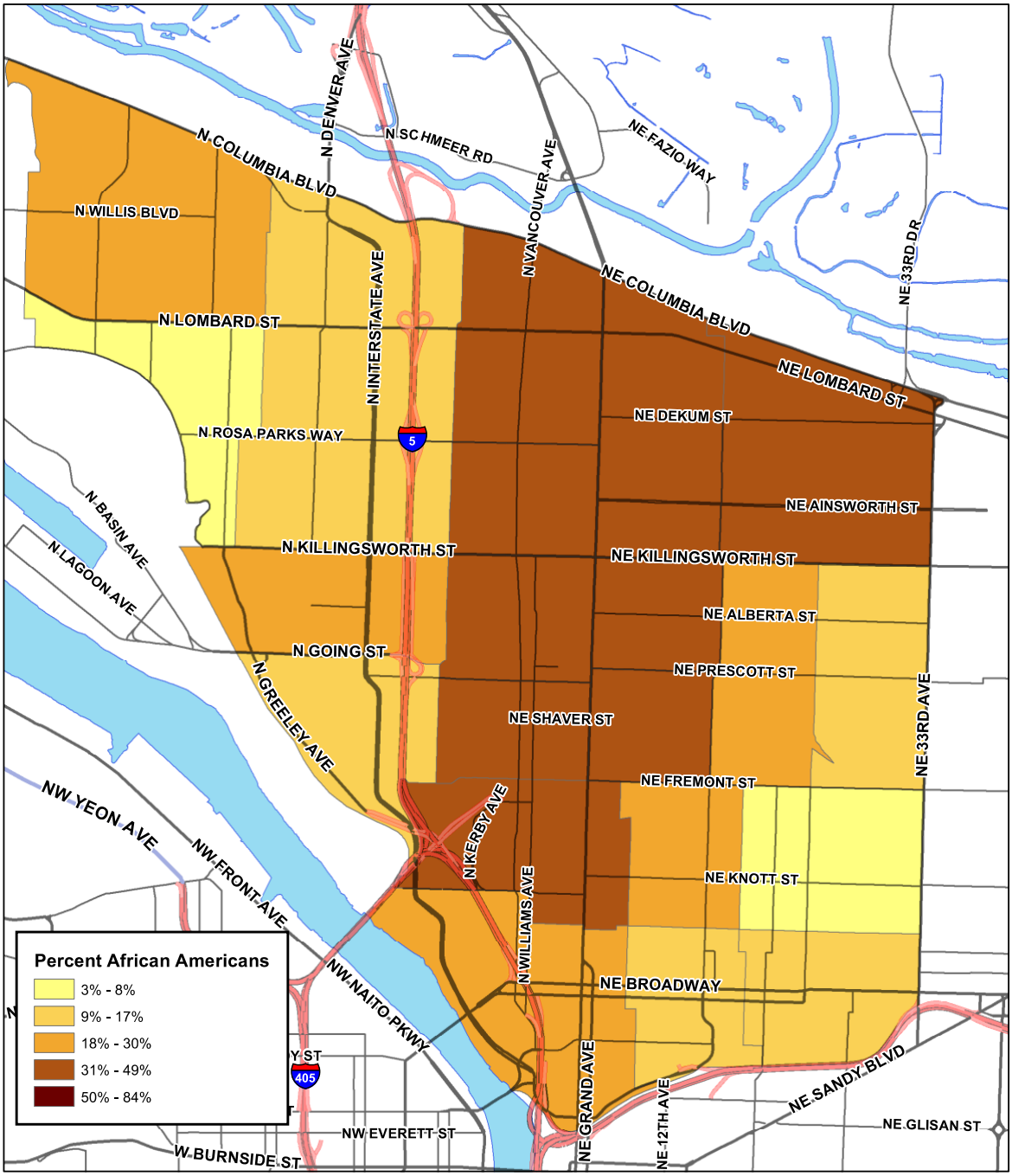


Black or African American Percent of Total Population 1990
North/Northeast Portland
by Census Tract

Created by Portland Housing Bureau, June 2014
Source:2010 Decenniel Census, Minnesota Population Center. National Historical Geographic Information System

Area	African-American	Total	Percent
Portland	33,530	437,319	8%
North/Northeast	23,724	77,195	31%

(Figure 3: Black or African American Percent of Total Population 2000)

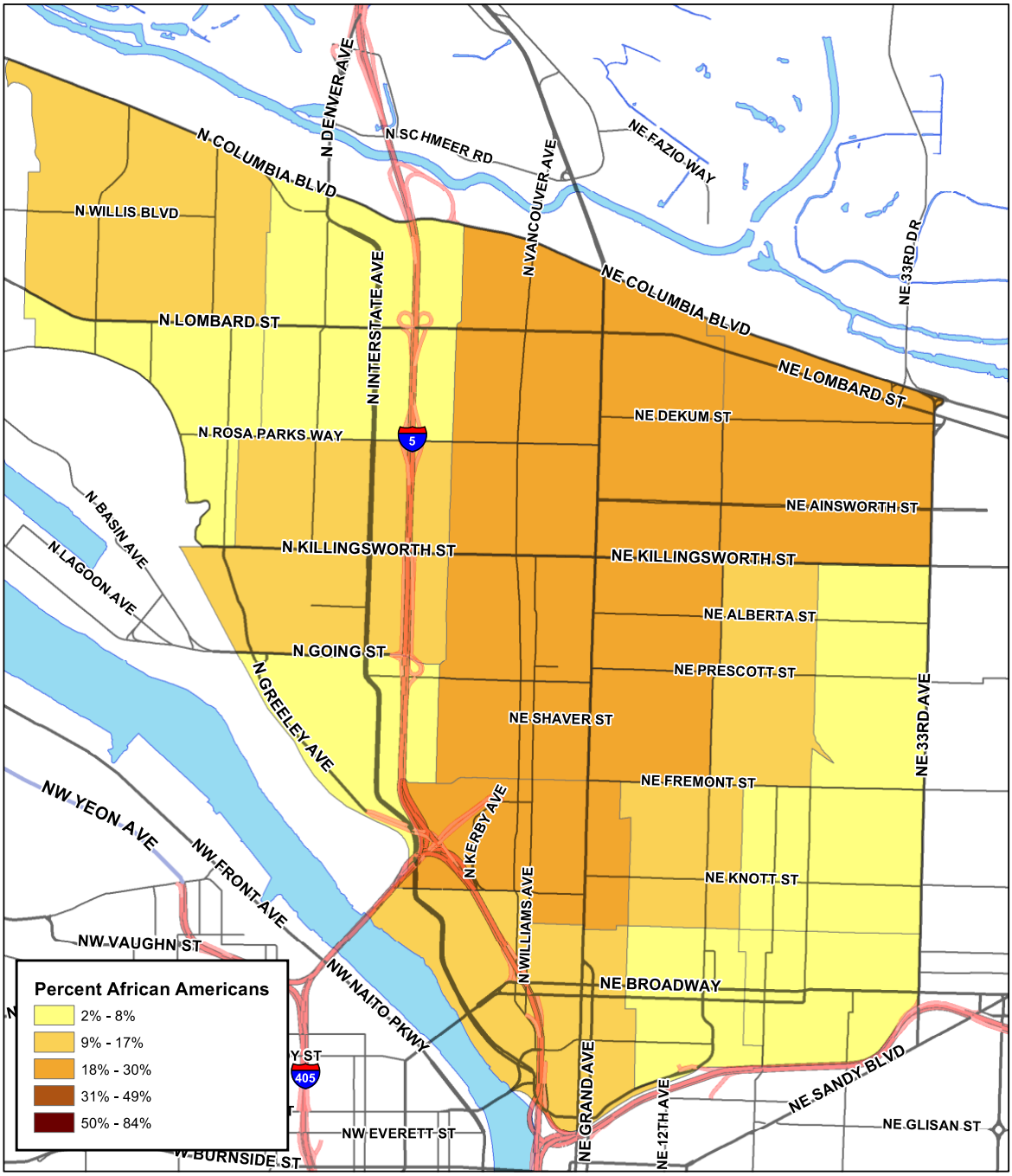


Black or African American Percent of Total Population 2000
North/Northeast Portland
by Census Tract

Created by Portland Housing Bureau, June 2014
Source:2000 Decenniel Census

Area	African-American	Total	Percent
Portland	35,115	529,121	7%
North/Northeast	19,922	80,557	25%

(Figure 4: Black or African American Percent of Total Population 2010)



Black or African American Percent of Total Population 2010
North/Northeast Portland
by Census Tract

Created by Portland Housing Bureau, June 2014
Source:2010 Decenniel Census, National Historic Geographic System

Area	African-American	Total	Percent
Portland	36,695	583,776	6%
North/Northeast	12,274	83,237	15%

In my research, which took place from 2014-2017 in Portland, Oregon (pop. 639,863), affordable housing was largely available outside of city centers in places like suburban Gresham (pop. 111,523). As a result, Portland (circa 2000) became wealthier and whiter, and Gresham became poorer and darker. Portland today is known for its creative scene and its access to recreational nature. Yet, in 1990, due to earlier racist segregation and suburbanization policies, 31% of the African American population of Portland lived in North and Northeast Portland despite comprising only 8% of the overall population of Portland. By 2000, when gentrification began to take effect, the African-American population in North and Northeast Portland decreased to 25%, and by 2010, that number dwindled to 15% (U.S. Census; see Figures 1-4).

In 1970, Gresham was 98% white (2% nonwhite) but this number decreased to 66% in 2016, with its nonwhite population increasing to 34%. From 2012-2016, Gresham's foreign-born population was four percentage points higher than Portland's; its poverty rate was three percentage points higher than Portland's, and its median income was 15% less than Portland's. Additionally, 26% of people in Gresham compared to 19% in Portland speak a language other than English at home. Portland's residents are more educated than Gresham's: 92% of Portlanders compared to 85% of Greshamites hold a high school diploma or higher and 47% of Portlanders compared to only 20% of Greshamites hold a bachelor's degree or higher. All of these indicators show that Portland has fewer immigrant families, and that Portland's population is whiter and more educated with higher incomes than its suburb of Gresham (Gresham and Portland, Oregon's U.S. Census Quick Facts). Yet, 30 years ago, these same socioeconomic indicators would have told a different story about Portland and Gresham.

Global Suburbs

Heeding anthropologist George Marcus's suggestion to "follow the people" (Marcus 1998; Holmes 2013) and taking a page from Evin Rodkey's study of life after deportation in Dominica (2016), I wanted to know: after displacement, what happens next? First, I applied this question to African Americans in Portland, who in the wake of gentrification and rising rents, were leaving historically black neighborhoods in Albina. Between 2000 and 2010, 10,000 African Americans moved out of the city core (2000 and 2010 U.S. Census). Where did they go? Subsequent conversations suggested that a significant number had moved to adjacent suburbs such as Gresham.

In October 2013, I participated in a community conversation hosted by Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc. (PCRI) to listen to people, particularly black Portlanders, talk about the gentrification of Albina. We were in a beautiful, remodeled house that had been converted into office space for PCRI, located in Northeast Portland. There were nine participants, five of whom were black. In the middle of the conversation, an argument developed between two of the black participants. The thin black man with grey hair, who sat next to me, disputed that black folks were being displaced into outer East Portland and Gresham, specifically in the neighborhood of Rockwood. "When I looked at the population change in Rockwood from 2000 to 2010, there was a huge increase for the Latino population in Rockwood, but not so much for African Americans. Whenever I go out there, I don't see many black people," he argued. "I see black people still in North and Northeast Portland. We need to bring people back and keep the ones still here" he stated passionately. The light brown-skinned woman in her thirties countered crisply, "I work in Rockwood. Rockwood is where affordable housing is, so that's where people moved. They live there, but they go home to North and Northeast

Portland. It's where their cultural center is. It's they're community, and where they go to socialize."

Moving forward, I talked to friends and colleagues who lived, worked, or volunteered in or near Rockwood. Near the end of October, one friend who is Filipino, Grimm, who grew up in the community and who continues to live there gave me a tour of the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. He drove us around in his SUV as the sun was setting. "In the 1980s, it was pretty white. In the 1990s, it was known for a lot of Mexicans," Grimm started. He worked with young people who lived in the apartment complexes, and from his many occasions doing pickups and drop-offs, he informed me of who lived in each apartment complex as we drove by. "Grantsview and Rockwood Station are the only ones with swings in the playground. A lot of black families live here. Rockwood Landing has a lot Mexicans." We pass by a new shiny building. "The Rockwood Building: it's a new Human Solutions (community development corporation) site. Barberry Village is where Mexicans, Somalis, Karens, Kenyans, Pacific Islanders, Ethiopians, Marshallians, and Ukrainians live. They have no playground, but they do have a pool," Grimm tells me. He warned me that one of the complexes had a recent murder and tells me nonchalantly that "there is violent crime around here." I nod in acknowledgement. We passed by a few Payday loan stores and a pawn shop. Grimm sighed, "There are a lot of them around here, along with strip clubs and sex trafficking. There's a bookstore up there that probably has sex trafficking going on in there." We pass the Mini Mart that was owned by a friend's uncle. "The uncle was robbed and beaten severely last year in that Mini Mart," he recalled. In addition to the warnings and descriptions of the community's challenges, Grimm also told me about community resources such as Plaza del Sol park, the Filipino Community Center, Rosewood

Initiative (a community center), the Latino-run flea market, and the "taco trucks are very good and cheap. People travel from Tigard to eat at these taco trucks."

The tour confirmed for me that this was similar to the neighborhood I studied in New Orleans East in which African Americans, immigrants, and refugees, at least in this moment, lived in the same neighborhood. 2010 Census data also confirmed that between 2000 and 2010, of the six census tracts that comprised the neighborhood, all tracts increased in their nonwhite populations while the white population decreased. The region's racial makeup was shifting geographically with white people moving to Portland's city core and nonwhites being re-segregated in its suburbs. This pattern followed a nation-wide trend: as gentrification pushed rent prices up in the inner core of cities, nonwhite, including black, families with less to spend on housing costs moved out to less expensive suburbs.

Additionally, in the middle of fieldwork in Spring 2016, I also received another oral history of Rockwood when Rachel, a white, long-term resident of the neighborhood gave an informal presentation to a group of ten nursing students and two of their professors, who are spending their Spring Break in Rockwood. "In the 1950s and 1960s, Rockwood was considered a nice little community," Rachel told the students. Rachel worked as a community health worker for Wallace Medical Center, which served low-income residents in the area. She moved to the Rockwood area almost two decades ago as a single mom. She had frizzy salt and pepper hair, thick bangs that curl just under her eyebrows, and lines that disappear when she smiles. "During this time, you got your house and your middle income, and people assumed that their lives would always be the same in Rockwood." But if they continued to live in Rockwood through the 21st century, those people would find that their community did not stay the same. Even the students'

presence hints that Rockwood did not remain the idyllic suburban community it once was the for the majority of white residents who used to live here. This mostly white, middle class group of students came to volunteer their time in Rockwood, which as they saw it, was an impoverished community, where they hope to do some good. As I noted in my fieldnotes, they reminded me of students who leave the material comforts of their homes, often during Spring Break, to volunteer overseas for a short period of time after a tsunami or hurricane ravages a "third world" community or those who enter "inner-city" neighborhoods to tutor the poor and disadvantaged who lived there. But instead of going to "help" in the "third world" or "inner-city," the students volunteered in Rockwood, perhaps because the people who used to live in those places now live in places like Rockwood, a neighborhood in outer-ring suburban America. Indeed, throughout fieldwork, I met a lot of people who were placed in the neighborhood through programs like AmeriCorps, which focus on "rural and economically distressed communities," through organizations like International Teams, which are Christian-based global organizations that normally focus on aiding refugees outside of the U.S., or those who had spent time doing other kinds of Christian missionary work in the "third world," but found their redirected calling in Gresham.

The ethnographic descriptions and analysis provided in this dissertation present the transformation of Portland's suburban city of Gresham, and more specifically, Gresham's neighborhood of Rockwood into a kind of *global suburb.* Some scholars use the term "global suburb" to refer to middle class, suburban places typically located outside the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia (Keil 2017), while other scholars like Political Scientist Stephen Gallagher uses the term "global suburb" to refer to Canada becoming a bedroom, suburban nation of immigrants, whose "identities are not rooted in

Canada," but rather in other "countries or regions of origin" (Gallagher 2009:171). Political Scientist Kristen Hill Maher uses the term in relation to Sassen's global cities (1991), analyzing the ways that the economy and social geography of Ridgewood, a suburban community near Irvine, CA have been reshaped by "transnational capital and a growing reliance upon transnational labor in the service economy," with particular focus on low-wage Latin American laborers (2004:801). I use the term "global suburb" in this dissertation similar to how Maher uses it with a focus on transformations from transnational capital and the transnational labor economy, but I use it to also broadly include other forces—with a particular focus on rent—that drive immigrants, refugees, and people of color into previously nearly all-white suburbs like Gresham, Oregon.

Interconnected Vulnerabilities

Housing scholars have long recognized that housing challenges, especially being rent-burdened, have enormous impact on other issues such as healthcare, education, taxes, jobs, income, infrastructure, and transit because when rental housing costs rise, renter households spend less on everything else (Joint Center for Housing Studies' Rental Housing Report 2017). In this research project, I also found this to be true. This finding in my research is not new, but the renters' narratives emphasized in this dissertation helps us to better understand how families make decisions and cope with paying less for non-housing costs. Chapter Two, for instance, exemplifies such choices that heads of households must make as they decide whether to pay for an immigration lawyer for their loved ones held in detention centers or to pay for rent. In addition to having less to pay for everything else, I also learned that housing vulnerabilities are also interconnected to problems that go beyond price tags and cannot be quantified. For example, such as

interconnected vulnerabilities include domestic violence (when survivors must make the difficult decision of staying with their abuser or becoming homeless), the loss of being in close proximity to family, friends, and community, or the loss of stability for children as they forced to move in the middle of the school year or multiple times over a short period.

Fieldwork, Analysis, and Writing

This project included full time fieldwork for 6 months between July to December 2014, another 16 months between September 2015 and December 2016 with field visits inserted before, between, and after full time fieldwork. In July 2014, I moved into the Rockwood neighborhood for six months. I volunteered at the Rockwood Library with Homework Help and attended public community events and meetings to immerse myself community life. Current residents I already knew put me in my contact with their friends, family members, and neighbors. I gave car rides to food banks, grocery stores, medical appointments, and court hearings, which allowed me insight into people's lives. Living in Rockwood meant that I had to drive or take the bus into Portland, and it helped me appreciate the long trek that black suburban residents had to make to participate in their North and Northeast neighborhoods or the journeys immigrant communities made to participate in familiar practices such as attend mosques or buy halal meats in Beaverton and Tigard. To volunteer in Portland, one resident in her 60s traveled by bus 1.5 hours each way. Her travel time to volunteer and return home combined was longer than her two-hour volunteer shift. Additionally, black parents sent their children to the schools that they attended as kids, and they made the same 3-hour journey on the bus to drop off and pick up their students from school.

The research grants I applied for in 2014 were unsuccessful, so I moved back briefly to Eugene, Oregon to teach and continue applying for grants, but kept in touch with people in Rockwood by returning weekly to continue to volunteer at the Rockwood Library and to hang out the rest of the day. In September 2015, after securing additional funding for 16 months through the end of 2016, I returned for one more full-time fieldwork phase.

Between July 2014 and December 2016, I collected 50 residential life history interviews, which I developed from Low's ethnography of gated communities (2003) and a "term-frame" substitution technique (Garro 1986). These interviews ask participants to describe where they live now, reflect on why they moved, and transition backwards in time until we reach where they were born or until we ran out of time. I continued to attend listening sessions and community classes on homelessness, poverty, community gardening, and community building to meet residents and to understand how the narratives on how community life were being framed and understood by different groups of people. For the same reason, to get a top-down view, I attended public meetings at city hall, both in Gresham and in Portland. Given my focus on displacement, I especially focused on meetings that shined a spotlight on housing and economic development. At the City of Portland, those entailed many Portland Housing Bureau and Portland Development Commission (now renamed Prosper Portland) meetings. At the City of Gresham those meetings took the form of Community Development and Housing Subcommittee and the Gresham Redevelopment Commission meetings. In addition to the Rockwood Library, I volunteered for the Community Alliance of Tenants, a tenant rights organization, and for the Rockwood Community Development Corporation, an organization led by white, business-minded, Christian evangelicals (again, to gain

multiple perspectives on community life). During this time, I also completed a 16-hour rent well class and an 8-hour homebuying workshop provided by local nonprofit organizations in the region.

Throughout the research process, I produced fieldnotes (handwritten, audio-recorded, and typed) during field activities and interviews. These fieldnotes, along with "headnotes" or remembered observations (Sanjek 1990:5), were coded and grouped into themes. Local media stories (e.g. about ICE raids, about black displacement, and about no-cause evictions), guided by historic and current housing policies, as well as my knowledge of the academic literature helped to inform the themes. Given that my research focused on displacement and housing inequality, I looked for themes that would help me identify how participants understood theirs and others' displacement and housing vulnerabilities. Much of my process of analyzing my data was to become intimately familiar with the numerous details that lingered in my fieldnotes and interviews, which including repeatedly reading them, writing about them during freewriting and in memos to myself, and then repeatedly reading the memos. I constantly tried to answer the questions: how are housing/displacement vulnerabilities and experiences dis/similar from person-to-person and from group-to-group? Coding, memos, and separating my data into themes helped me to narrow my research topic into manageable chunks and understand the themes relationally (Desmond 2014).

For instance, after coding for the differences between "homeownership" and "renting," I learned that all of the seven homeowners I interviewed, all had been renters at some earlier point in their lives. Additionally, some renters I interviewed had been homeowners, but lost their house as they faced economic challenges in their personal and professional lives and returned to renting. After establishing that homeownership gave

residents and families relative stability compared to renting, I asked myself whether being a homeowner was a choice for everyone? If so/not, for whom? And why? Thus, although I chose to highlight the stories of renters in this dissertation, the stories of homeowners are also represented in a relational way. Understanding the relative security of homeownership for some, helped me to analytically and empathetically what it means for renters to be housing insecure and arrive at the concept of forced renting.

In addition to coding, chunking, and memo-ing, writing was a key part of my analytical process. I first wrote my dissertation chapters from the vantage point of key decisionmakers or people who represented the status quo (e.g. people working out of government agencies), articulating the reasons why they made the decisions they did, trying to understand whose point of view they prioritized in their reasoning. Then, I revised the chapters, emphasizing the vantage point of people who experienced displacement, and in doing so, I tried to write against the grain of the initial chapter versions that emphasized the status quo. In writing from the vantage point of people who are housing insecure, I took great care to represent them as whole dignified persons, and I chose to highlight those particular stories that I thought would resonate with readers in a meaningful way.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation offers three ethnographic chapters focused on detailing different inequities of the renting system in the Portland metropolitan area. In all three chapters, I highlight the experiential knowledge of renters.

Chapter One follows the intergenerational story of Colin and Shaniqua Jones, a black couple who underwent and continue to undergo serial forced displacement

pressures, including rent increases, that cause them to continually be on the move. Both Shaniqua and Colin's grandparents lived in Vanport when it flooded in 1948, and were displaced to Albina, the historic black neighborhoods where African Americans were segregated in Portland. Colin's grandparents were displaced into Lower Albina until construction on Interstate-5 displaced them again into Upper Albina, where they bought a home. Growing up in Albina, from 1970 to the 1990s, Shaniqua and Colin both remember their early childhoods as calm and stable. Life became unstable through the 1980s and 1990s when they had to deal with the drug epidemic that created what Shaniqua called "the missing generation," referring to her parents' generation as those who were unable to care for their children because of their untreated addiction to drugs. Instability in the 1990s was also brought on by Measures 5 (in 1990) and Measure 50 (in 1997) that decreased funding for after-school programs and created a void in the lives of young people like Shaniqua and Colin at the time. That void was filled by increased gang activity in their neighborhoods. As adults, the Jones family became renters and continue to rent today. They moved seven times in their 20-year renting experiences. In 1998, they found themselves renting in Gresham because the rent was cheap, but they intended to move back to Albina where they both grew up. In 2000, they did just that when they moved to and lived in North Portland for 19 months, but quickly found themselves outpriced, and moving further and further eastward towards Gresham again. Their stories highlight serial forced displacement (Fullilove and Wallace 2011), but also serial segregation as other black Portlanders and black residents from other metropolitan areas found themselves dispersed from Albina and re-segregated into Gresham. Yet, Chapter One also describes how Gresham named the neighborhood that African Americans (and immigrants and refugees) were moving to an urban renewal area in 2003. I describe what

community life was like for black residents like Phylicia in Gresham, and how displacement pressures continued to push on the relatively new black Greshamites.

Chapter Two brings attention to the Hernández family, specifically on how their vulnerable immigration status forces them to remain renters by denying them the option of buying a home. This chapter shows how pressures from increasing rents produced new alliances between the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), a tenant rights organization, and Pueblo Unido, an immigrant rights organization that helps families with vulnerable immigration status navigate the legal system after ICE detains their family members. Here, I also explore the different frames for the housing crisis used by the Gresham Redevelopment Commission's Advisory Committee (Gresham's URA) and by Gresham Housing for the People (a multi-racial coalition effort between CAT and Pueblo Unido), and their different proposed solutions to the housing crisis affecting low-income renters.

Chapter Three focuses on the stories of three single mothers—Rosie, Eva, and Maria—who experienced building-wide no-cause, evictions to show the devastating effects of the rental housing system on vulnerable families. As these low-income single moms were forced to rent because they wouldn't qualify for a home loan, they were also forced to endure a housing market system that is largely unregulated and with minimal renters' protections and anti-displacement measures. While Rosie found a new apartment to rent, she faced new hostile neighbors who reported her to the property managers, who in turn threatened her with a "bad record" making it more difficult for her to rent in the future, although she and her children did nothing to violate the terms of their lease. Eva was able to stay in her apartment after receiving the no-cause eviction, but only after months of exhausting tenant organizing efforts that left her exposed and vulnerable to

retaliation by her new landlords. Maria attempted to find a new place to live, but was unsuccessful, partly due to her experiences of housing discrimination. She talked about the effects that the no-cause eviction had on her family and community. When I last interviewed her, a month after she was supposed to have vacated her apartment, she had yet to find a new place to live.

Included in each of the three chapters are descriptions and analyses of how renters attempt to organize, resist, and fight back against displacement pressures in the rental housing system. In Chapter One, I show how black residents like Shaniqua and Phylicia disrupt the assumptions that black residents are not committed to community-building in their new suburban homes after being displaced from urban gentrification. In Chapter Two, Juan's activism with Pueblo Unido against the City of Gresham's gentrifying impulses, led him and others in Pueblo Unido to make the connections between deportations as one form of displacement and rent increases as another form of displacement. They moved forward to create a coalition of Gresham renters to pressure city leaders to pass stronger renter protections. In Chapter Three, in the two apartment complexes discussed—Titan Manor and Walnut Tree—tenants actively organized themselves to fight against mass displacement with the help of the Oregon Law Center and the Community Alliance of Tenants. In the case of Titan Manor, Eva Martin's tenant organizing and courage to speak out against the injustices of no-cause evictions in her life and the lives of her two children helped to push the City of Portland to pass relocation assistance, which encouraged the owners to rescind the no-cause notices issued. If we, as a society, insist on forcing millions of Americans to be renters, then we should be producing more affordable housing and pushing for more protections for tenants. In all, the chapters encourage us to think more about interconnected vulnerabilities of renter

insecurity, fear of detention/deportations, and the precariousness of work. It also pushes us to think about the racial and class inequalities built into our rental housing that has become far too common place and ubiquitous in our lives.

CHAPTER II

SERIAL FORCED SEGREGATION: THE INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF BLACK PORTLANDERS

Introduction

Myunghee, an Asian American woman, bought her house in the Alberta area, located in Portland, Oregon, in 1985. Before she and her husband Jackie, who was black, bought it, they rode their bikes up and down Alberta Street, and she would ask him rhetorically, "Wouldn't it be nice to own a home on Alberta?" They were "pioneer bike riders" she bragged. They rode bikes before Portland became known as a bike town and before the controversy of bike lanes arrived in the area in 2010 after the onset of gentrification (Mirk 2012). One day in 1985, her father suggested to her, "Rather than renting, you and Jackie should buy a home." She replied to him, "Dad, our portfolio sucks. They're not going to approve us." Her dad offered to put the loan in his name. He was a World War Two veteran, which made him qualified for a loan with favorable terms through the GI Bill. "You choose the house, put it under my name, and you two make all the payments," her father suggested. Her father also instructed her to bid lower than the asking price. With no other competing offers in 1985, she paid $29,000 for her house. Her son exclaimed to her 30 years later, "Mom, I paid more for my car than you paid for your house!"

Had it not been for her father's GI Bill house loan, she may have continued renting, and she would not have been able to afford that house a decade later, when her neighborhood became the Alberta Arts District, and home prices skyrocketed. But many black veterans, in Portland and elsewhere, were denied home loans and other benefits of the GI Bill that could have helped them, and their children buy homes in places like

Alberta when it was affordable (Pearson 1996). In 2008, the median sale price of a house in Alberta was $294,000. In 2011, home prices dipped to $252,000 but quickly recovered. In February 2018, homes in this area sold for an average of $474,000. Ten years after the 2008 Great Recession, home values appreciated by about $180,000 or 161%. From another perspective, the median price in the Portland metropolitan area in February 2018 sold for $217/sqft, which is $36 less than homes in the Portland's city limits and $111/sqft less than homes sold in Alberta. In all of Oregon, the median price per square feet during the same period sold for $200/sqft, and only $139/sqft in all of the U.S. (Zillow 2018; see Table 1). Taken in this context, clearly the market demand to live here is through the roof and far different from when Myunghee bought her house.

Price per square feet	**Place/Scale**
$139	U.S.
$200	Oregon
$217	Portland metropolitan area
$253	Portland
$328	Alberta Arts District

(Table 1: Source, Zillow 02/2018)

Urban planners dub Portland as the "capital of good planning" for its smart growth, livability, and sustainability (Abbott 2000). Yet, in the last two decades Portland has also become infamous for gentrification. Images from the popular television show Portlandia making fun of white hipsters come to mind: vegan bakeries, artisan coffee, art galleries, and tiny house hotels abound on Alberta. But long before the "Arts District" got tacked onto the end of "Alberta" in the mid-1990s and before the place became iconic of Portland and a travel destination, "white people were scared to come here," 30-year old Travis who grew up here, bitterly shared with me as we walked around the area. Travis

still lives in the area but cannot afford to buy a home as his dad and mom did, respectively in 1986 and 1996, when it was affordable.

Alberta is located in the heart of Albina, and it did not used to be so trendy or hot on the real estate market. Albina, Portland's historic black community, is the epicenter of urban gentrification in the city. Yet, like most urban areas gentrifying across the country, this flip of Albina from being known as the black "ghetto" of Portland through the 1980s to the highly-desired, "trendy" part of town, with the sixteen-fold rise in property values and increasing rents to go with it, did not happen overnight. Long before gentrification threw the rest of the city and the region into a housing crisis, a housing state of emergency had existed for black families in the face of racial segregation, urban renewal, and redlining. Additionally, narratives of gentrification tend to focus more on the newly upscaled neighborhoods (Zukin 1987; Ley 1994; Hackworth and Smith 2001; Hydra 2017), new typically white, richer residents (Schlichtman, Patch, and Hill 2017), and the black families able to stay (Freeman 2006; Boyd 2008). But after gentrification upended their lives, many black families who could no longer to afford to rent in their old neighborhoods moved out to suburban neighborhoods in Gresham and elsewhere.

In this chapter, I trace the residential experiences of a black couple in Portland, Shaniqua and Colin Jones, and others who were born and raised in Albina before it gentrified. Their stories and the stories of their parents and grandparents illuminate the multiple, continuous, and intergenerational dynamics of instability in Portland's black community. The Jones gradually moved eastward as they found that their money went further if they relocated a little further east. Black families, other families of color, and other low-income residents re-segregated in the suburbs, like Gresham, where rent was more affordable than Portland. In the suburb of Gresham, city leaders took notice that

their neighborhood of Rockwood became poorer and darker, and declared the neighborhood an urban renewal area in 2003 in attempt to "fix" the neighborhood by raising property values and attracting more middle-income residents. From the perspectives of some black residents (as well as other low-income residents), Gresham's urban renewal area propelled them forward into further displacement as they saw their rents continue to rise. Undergirding all of these transitions for the Jones and other Portland black families—from segregated Albina, to gentrified Albina, to gentrifying Gresham, and beyond—is their forced position as renters in the rental housing system.

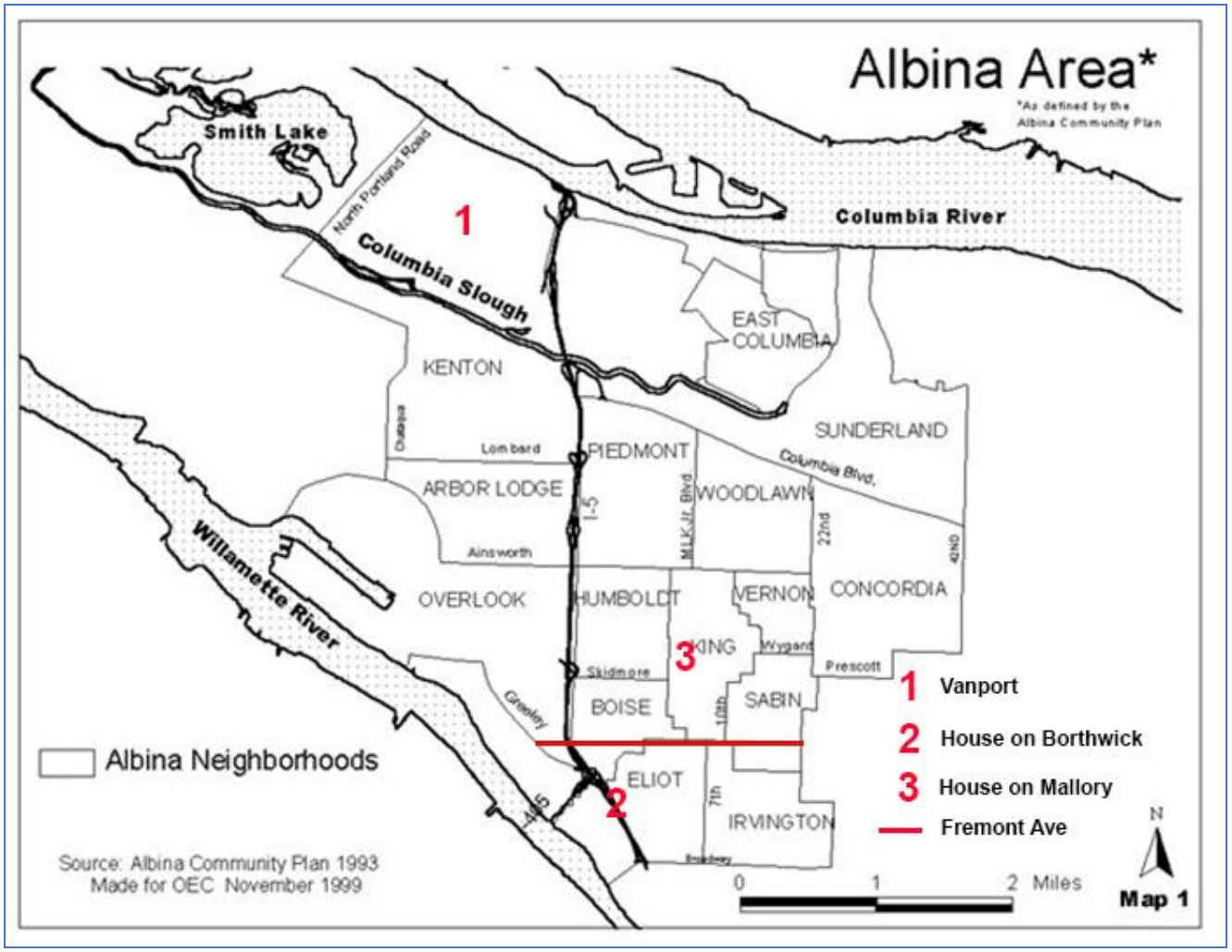
This chapter suggests that gentrification only tells part of the story of displacement and crises, albeit a very important part. We need to understand the other parts of the story as well—those that highlight housing instability before and after the gentrification experienced by Portland's black families, both in Portland and Gresham. I hope to illuminate how the housing rental system in the past and present continues to force black residents to cope with permanent instability and crisis before, during, and after gentrification. The first goal of this chapter is to provide a broad historical overview of the housing challenges faced by the black Portland community that led to the gentrification of Albina and displacement of black families into the suburbs around the year 2000. The second goal is to describe and analyze the re-segregation of the black community in the suburb of Gresham, its urban renewal area, and the subsequent further displacement of black residents and other low-income residents out even further to small towns such as Sweet Home, Oregon as I discuss in the case of Phylicia. Shaniqua and Colin Jones' and Phylicia's narratives, as renters, help us think about the experiences of black people in crises as an ongoing and cumulative processes rather than as contained and discrete events.

Evidence for each of the Big Three theories of racial segregation—centered on spatial assimilation, preferences, and discrimination (Crowder and Krysan 2016)—can be found in the residential narratives presented in this chapter. For example, when Portland city leaders refused to accept more African American residents, prompting the construction of Vanport City, the event provided evidence for discrimination. The harsh experiences of discrimination by black residents then created a preference by the Jones to live near other black families as a way to combat the feeling of "Other." And they were able to move once Shaniqua's job allowed her to make more money. This shows that our application of the Big Three need not be mutually exclusive, but instead intersectional. By recognizing the theoretical and empirical intersections among the Big Three, we can see how discrimination, preferences, and economic forces interact and complement one another in the maintenance of segregation.

Meet the Jones: from Vanport to Albina, 1940-1990s

When Shaniqua met her husband Colin in 1998, they were both in socially and economically precarious positions. She was a single mom of two babies, both under two years old. Colin married young, and he was still recovering from his divorce from that earlier marriage. His cousin and her cousin were in an eight-year relationship, and they introduced Shaniqua and Colin at a party. "That sounds strange, his cousin and my cousin, but we're not; he and I are not related," she explained. She was immediately impressed by his gentle giant nature. He stands at 6'4" with broad shoulders and speaks quietly, almost in a whisper sometimes. His large stature and Questlove-like afro makes it easy to pick him out of a crowd. As she tells it, their relationship moved quickly because they found strength in each other when they both needed it most. "When I met my

husband, he was in a very similar space like 'I'm ready to move forward with my life'." She said to him, "I need help. I've got these kids I'm trying to raise. I don't want them to be in a single-parent household." He answered, "I'm good with kids." They have been together 20 years now.



(Figure 5: OEC November 1999; my edit additions in red)

By the time we had met, Shaniqua and Colin Jones were renting a single-family house just inside of Portland's city limits in the Centennial neighborhood (see Figure 5). Gresham was literally across the street from their house, and they were far from Albina, Portland's historically segregated black neighborhoods, where they both grew up. In

contrast to Colin's soft nature, Shaniqua describes herself as "bossy" and as someone who "loves the rules." Shaniqua is a natural storyteller who narrates with expressions of seriousness, but who is also quick to share her infectious, deep, rolling belly laugh. When she narrates her stories, the lines on her forehead scrunch up. That and the parentheses that form around her mouth amplify her emotions when she talks. She wears little to no makeup most days, and a pair of rectangular glasses help to frame her round eyes and emphasize her furrowed brow when she's seriously considering a thought. While Colin carefully guards his emotions, Shaniqua wears her emotions openly on her sleeves.

Colin grew up in the King neighborhood in his grandparents' house on NE Mallory in between Wygant and Going Streets. He described the house as a "large, five bedroom-house with a basement, full yard, and full backyard." His grandparents—Martha and Eddie Jones—bought the house in 1972 for $10,000. Colin explained, "They were working on the shipyards, and they really worked hard for that house."

Like many black Portlanders, Shaniqua and Colin Jones' grandparents worked in the Kaiser Shipyard until it closed at the end of World War Two. The U.S. Census shows that only 1,800 African Americans lived in Oregon in 1940, but by 1942 at the peak of the war, that number rose to 23,000 with most families living in the Portland area (Maben 1987). While many black families moved to Portland in search of better opportunities, many city leaders actively discouraged their arrival because according to then Mayor Earl Riley, "Portland can only absorb a minimum of Negros without upsetting the city's regular life" (Pearson 2001:162). When the city and local realty board dragged their feet on figuring out where the new black shipyard workers would live because they did not want to accept a large population of black residents, Henry Kaiser, owner of the shipyard, took matters into his own hands. Using federal funds, he built Vanport City, which began

construction in August 1942 and finished 110 days later, located just outside of Portland's city limits. At that time, managed by the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP), Vanport was the largest wartime housing complex in the country, the second largest city in Oregon, and housed up to 40,000 residents (Maben 1987).

On May 30, 1948, Vanport and Albina proved to only be a temporary fix for Portland's racial segregation problem when the Vanport Flood destroyed the city overnight. Vanport residents awoke to a flyer from HAP that read:

> *REMEMBER.*
> *DIKES ARE SAFE AT PRESENT.*
> *YOU WILL BE WARNED IF NECESSARY.*
> *YOU WILL HAVE TIME TO LEAVE.*
> *DON'T GET EXCITED.*

(A copy of the flyer can be found at the Oregon Historical Society, Item ID#044287)

By the war's end in 1945, half of the 10,000 African Americans who stayed in the Portland area, lived in Vanport. The flood displaced 18,500 people, a quarter of whom were black. While Vanport's white families found shelter and resettled widely throughout the city, real estate actors restricted Vanport's black families to the Albina District creating tense, crowded, and rapidly dilapidated living conditions (Maben 1987).

Although the story of Vanport is a relatively well-known event in Oregon history (see Vanport Mosaic Project; Gibson 2007; Maben 1987), a less emphasized fact about housing discrimination and Vanport is that *all of Vanport's residents were renters*. Looking at this from a different perspective, Oregon's second largest city, that housed up to 40,000 residents, was an entire city of renters. Although white residents had the option to move to Portland and buy a home, black residents did not have that option. Black residents who were forced to live in Vanport because Portland did not want to "absorb" more African Americans, did not have the option of buying a home, since Kaiser and the

federal government constructed Vanport to be temporary wartime housing. During this time, although black workers made less than white workers and unions discriminated against African American membership, black workers made enough money to be able to afford to buy a home (City Club 1945). Most were not offered the opportunity, however.

Colin shared that the Flood "displaced" his grandparents, Martha and Eddie, and they lived in Lower Albina on Borthwick Street. He did not say whether they owned or rented their new home in Lower Albina, but he shared that "they lived there for quite some time" until they started construction on the Fremont bridge and Interstate 5 in the late 1950s, and the construction forced Martha and Eddie to move again, this time to Upper Albina in the King Neighborhood on NE Mallory Street between Going and Wygant Streets. Colin told me, "That's where I popped up." Taking out hundreds of black businesses and black homes in part of Albina, the Portland Development Commission's urban renewal plans built Interstate 5, the Memorial Coliseum (a sports and entertainment stadium), and expanded Emmanuel Hospital. From the urban renewal areas, the city displaced 171 households: 74% black and 32% homeowners, many of whom had paid off their mortgages. Of those who owned their homes, 71% were black (Portland Housing Bureau 2014). With the displacement events of Vanport Flood and URAs, we see serial displacement unfolding long before Shaniqua and Colin were born. The Vanport Flood displaced their grandparents from Vanport into Albina. Then the construction of Interstate 5, the Coliseum, and other urban renewal area projects displaced Colin's grandparents, Martha and Eddie, from their house on Borthwick to their house on Mallory Street, where Colin was born. Colin's story about Martha and Eddie's displacement from Lower to Upper Albina correlates with Gibson's historical research on Albina where she notes that the black community was first squeezed into Lower Albina

before URA projects pushed them northward into Upper Albina. Yet, she also emphasized, "Although it is helpful to distinguish Lower and Upper Albina in order to understand the patterns of settlement and resettlement and the changing shape of the community, the name Albina is synonymous with the Black community in Portland" (Gibson 2007:8).

Colin was born in 1977 and was raised by his grandparents after his mom died a few months after he was born, and his father was around but mostly absent. He lived in his grandparents' house on Mallory Street from birth until nearly the end of high school. Colin acknowledged that his grandparents' homeownership status helped him stay in one place until his grandmother passed away when he was 21 years old. Given the redlining that took place in the neighborhood, Colin's grandparents were fortunate to buy their house because many others were shut out of being homeowners. Gibson noted that "The banking industry had left a vacuum in the community when it decided not to lend money on properties below $40,000 (2007:18). In its *Blueprint for a Slum* series, Oregonian investigative reporters found that banks refused to make mortgage loans in Albina. Ora Hart, a Realtor quoted in *Blueprint* stated, "I can guarantee you they are paying more in rent than they would to buy a house in this neighborhood" (Lane 1990). In *Blueprint,* reporters discussed how low property values, due to decades of divestment in Albina made homeownership affordable, but banks refused to approve loans. This left the door open and invited predatory lenders to fill the void. Even as citizens made the predatory lending clear to Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer's office and filed suits against the lenders, the state did not require the offenders to take responsibility. As abandonment set in and property values hit rock-bottom in the 1980s, absentee property owners set fires to buildings to collect insurance payouts. In the series, the reporters

emphasized, “In the fight to save [Albina], declining home ownership is as much a factor as crime, drugs, and gangs” (Lane and Mayes 1990).

As redlining denied African Americans and other residents opportunities to buy a home in Albina, where they were segregated and when it was affordable, bankers also forced African American families to be renters in horrible conditions without alternatives. As the realtor quoted above pointed out, those black families paid more to rent substandard housing than they would if they were allowed to buy. Furthermore, the Oregonian series *Blueprint for a Slum* brought much needed attention to the problem, and politicians began to pressure banks to make more loans in the neighborhood (Gibson 2007). Yet, as urban studies scholar Lisa Bates pointed out, “Ending redlining in a predominantly black neighborhood can result in new homebuyers, but without specific supports for African-Americans, the residents who experienced deprivation of access may not benefit. Given the racial wealth and credit gap, the infusion of capital goes to those immediately prepared to purchase a home—predominantly white households—and has the effect of substantially increasing white homeownership and increasing the racial homeownership gap” (Bates 2013:18).

Although Martha and Eddie owned their home, after they both passed away, Colin did not benefit financially from them being homeowners. In 1998, when Colin was 21 years old and when home prices in Albina had already begun to triple from the 1980s market values, two men approached his father and uncle, who “got the rights” to his grandparents’ house. Colin described one of the men as “Caucasian, tall, slender, and well-dressed,” and he reminded Colin of Jerry West, who played for the Blazers, “just real tall, very animated.” This man “seemed really professional,” according to Colin, “and he knew what he was talking about.” The other man was “African American,

older—like well over 50—he wasn't dressed professionally. He wasn't even wearing anything formal. He would just wear regular street clothes." Colin described the exchange:

> *Mysteriously, a couple of gentleman just showed up out of nowhere like, "Yeah, we want to buy this house. We're interested, but we can't give you what you want because there's too many liens against the house." I'm only 21 years old at the time. What's a lien? How do you sell a house? How do you talk and negotiate? But my uncle was still kind of caught up with drugs, so he wasn't being as thorough with me, and the gentlemen that bought the house weren't being thorough either. It was a shady ordeal. They would give us a check here and there. It just happened so fast. It happened just right after my grandmother passed. "Where did they come from?" I'm asking my uncle, and he's like, "I don't know."*

Colin elaborated that he tried to convince his uncle to go through another company because "at least they have a firm." The two gentlemen who bought the house on the other hand, "there was no headquarters; there was no location." They were meeting at bars. His uncle responded to him, "No, no, no. We don't want to go through all this and all the preliminaries. I just want to go with this guy." Not being able to save his grandparents' home, was one of Colin's regrets in life. After he moved out at 21 (described more below), he became a renter. He continues to rent today and has had several start-and-stop plans to one day buy a home As I show later in the chapter, those plans for homeownership will not likely happen without major assistance as rapidly increasing rental prices makes it less likely for him to save money and skyrocketing home

prices drives prices above his ability to buy. Today, Colin occasionally looks up his childhood home on Mallory Street on Google Maps or drives by when he is in the neighborhood to glance at the changes new owners made to the house over the years.

> *The house sits up on a hill and it had trees in the front. It had a couple of hedge bushes right at the entrance. It had a flowerbed in the front. The porch had a railing on it. They tore that down. They tore out the flowerbeds, they built brick walls. There were cedar bushes in the front. It looks like they're in the process of painting it. My grandmother had a garden in the back. They just ripped it out of there and now it's just grass. Yeah, my grandmother had pear trees, she had an apple tree, she had a fig tree and she had raspberry bushes and now all that stuff is gone. It's just gone. It's just gone.*

This section mostly focused on the residential experiences of Martha and Eddie Jones—from Vanport to Lower Albina, to Upper Albina—from their grandson's point of view. Racial discrimination forced them to rent in Vanport before the flood washed away Oregon's City of Renters. After further discrimination against African Americans squeezed then into Lower Albina, Martha and Eddie were forced to move to Upper Albina because of Interstate-5 construction. They purchased a home on NE Mallory, where they lived until they passed away, but they were fortunate to be able to buy because redlining denied that opportunity to other black families. Those who rented likely paid more for housing as renters. Even when capital became available in the 1990s, without the supports that black families needed to buy a home, ending redlining in Albina helped predominantly white residents to buy and still many black families were forced to

remain renters. Immediately after his Grandma Martha passed away, Colin recalled that his dad and uncle sold her house unscrupulously to two "shady" men, and in doing so, Colin did not inherit any intergenerational wealth building opportunities from his grandparents' homeownership status. Without those opportunities, he remained a renter after they passed away. The next section will elaborate more on Shaniqua and Colin's experiences growing in Albina followed by a section that will discuss in more detail their experiences of renting.

Growing Up in Albina, 1970s-1990s

When Colin and Shaniqua met in 1998, at 22 years old, Shaniqua had already moved more times than she could remember. Up until 14 years old, she moved four times around Albina, the historic black neighborhoods of Portland, where both she and Colin were born and raised. She remembers some of that time fondly because being around black people who looked out for her shielded her from the fact that she lived in a state that was less than one percent African American.

> *Growing up in northeast Portland, in the 70s and in the 80s, I never knew that black people were 1% of the state population because everywhere I went I saw them. My dentist was black. I had one black teacher in the third grade. All of my friends and neighbors were black. There were obviously friends of other ethnicities as well, but it was never a feeling of other. There were blocks to ride your bike on. Everybody had fruit trees. You could walk down any street in several northeast Portland neighborhoods. You would know the people that lived there and their grandparents, and they would know you too.*

I remember when I was six years old, my mother and I were walking down the 7th and Killingsworth, a gentleman walked by and said, "Good morning," and I didn't say anything. She snapped my ear and said, "Shaniqua, you say hi to people when you walk down the street." That's how it was. We spoke to people. We said, "Hello." We said, "Good morning." It didn't matter if you knew them or not. You're supposed to. I remember it didn't matter where we moved. We were always at home. There was always somebody I knew. There was always somebody who went to my schools. It felt safe. It felt comfortable.

I asked her the reasons for moving those four times before she turned 14. She shared that her parents rented until they bought a house in the Concordia neighborhood. Each move, she explained, "was generally moving up to a nicer home until they finally bought a house."

Colin, like his wife, described his early life as fairly stable, but by the time he was about 11 years old, his family was hit by the drug epidemic that began around the 1980s.

I didn't grow up in a nuclear household. It was an extended family household. In the 80s, the crack cocaine epidemic came about and members of my family, a lot of adults had got caught in that epidemic. My grandfather passed in 1983 and left my grandmother to raise me. As I was coming up, it was a stable household. It was stable until things got a little

out of hand with the drug use. My grandmother was not [using]. It was my father and my uncle, actually.

They moved back home. They got strung out and they started to have visitors. You know, they call it when a household gets turned out, it's when there's no more structure and you have an array of strange people that are frequently in and out of the place. Sometimes they don't leave for days. They call that turning a house out. It kind of got like that when I was in the fifth grade and didn't clear up until I was 17. It got really bad and the police got involved and they came in there. They didn't find anything. Anyway, things got so out of hand that they put an order, "Everyone leave." And since I was almost 18, I had to go too. Me being so close to 18.

Like Colin, Shaniqua's family had also been affected by drugs. I asked her to describe what that period was like for her. She answered with a faraway look in her eyes as she talked about her community changing from being a place where she felt comfortable to a place that was alienating.

It was sad and upsetting. It wasn't an idyllic home. These were people who were on drugs and regularly had police come to our house for domestic violence calls; very violent, bloody domestic violence calls. We grew weed in our basement my whole life. As a youth that nobody was watching or monitoring, it was, I don't know, just my opportunity to forge my own way and make my life choices. I don't know how to describe that;

what it was like for me. My father was a crackhead in a big, beautiful home with no utilities or furniture. He burned our beds one night to stay warm.

Six other interviewees who grew up in Albina also talked about how the drug epidemic that swept through black families was the catalyst for them having to move. Darrell, for example, moved in with his grandfather only to move out to live with his sister because his grandfather and his girlfriend were on drugs. "I can't be in that environment, so I stayed with my sister."

After Shaniqua turned 14 and her parents divorced, what she described as a "tumultuous youth" began. Her mom, who is white, moved to Troutdale after the divorce, a rural town at the time, located 18 miles east of Albina. Shaniqua did not want to live in Troutdale, but she also did not want to live with her dad either. "I just lived in Northeast Portland, with lots of different family and lots of different friends, and then lots of different bedrooms, and then lots of different couches." She described about that time, "I was left to my own devices."

In 1990, she was left on her own, not only because her parents divorced, but more importantly because Oregon voters had passed Measure 5 (in 1990) and Measure 50 (in 1997), and it changed her neighborhood. Measure 5 introduced tax rate limits and cut taxes an average of 51% from their 1990-1991 levels. Measure 50, cut taxes, introduced assessed value growth limits, and replaced most tax levies with permanent tax rates. When implemented in 1997-1998, Measure 50 cut effective tax rates an average of 11% from their 1996-1997 levels. Measure 5 and 50 fundamentally changed Oregon's property taxes and systems that funded public schools and their youth programs. By

restricting local school district revenues to be primarily dependent on state general revenues controlled by the legislature rather than on local school boards, Measure 5 and 50 reduced revenues by $41 billion in its first 16 years for all revenues including schools. As the share of the general fund going to the Basic School Fund rose from 25% (1989-1991) to 42% (1999-2001), it squeezed other budgets reliant on the general fund. For instance, the share for higher education declined from 14% to 7%. In 2011, a state legislature panel found that Measure 5 and 50 were the most important explanation of why funding for K-12 schools fell more the $3 billion short of the amount needed to meet state goals (Linhares 2011). In addition to the acceleration of housing values and property taxes in Portland, this also meant cuts to school budgets. Shaniqua felt the effects of Measure 5 immediately in Albina during the summer of 1991. Measure 5 flipped a switch for her and those like her:

> *Suddenly, there was no more money for poor kids to play sports. I remember the youth center closing. I remember there was nothing to do and nowhere to go. That following summer in 1991, gangs kicked up the heat. I don't know if it was just a perfect storm or if it had been breeding for a while. When you take a bunch of kids who have no money and no access, and a lot of energy, you've got to give them something to do or somebody will. I don't know how much of my peers joining gangs, specially some of the young men, was about safety. I know for a lot of us, we didn't have any money. Nobody was watching, and nobody cared.*

Frank talked about how his mom moved him and his brother out of Albina to Vancouver, Washington during this time, a suburb north of Portland over the Washington state

border, in 1992 to protect her sons from joining gangs. “My mom wanted to keep my brother and I out of gangs and stuff like that because the gangs stuff was really rabid around that time.”

Like Frank, Darrell was another young black man (mentioned earlier), who moved away from Albina to escape gangs, that according to Shaniqua, became stronger after Measure 5 cut critical funding for youth activities. Darrell explained to me how he tried to resist joining gangs at first, but the pressure slowly won him over. The way he told the story strongly suggests that he was looking for something to do, and in the absence of other options, gangs provide it. I asked, “Are gangs something you’ve worried about your entire life?”

> *I didn’t even think the gangs was like that until my 9th grade year of high school at Jeff [Jefferson High School]. Nah. I wasn’t thinking about gangs my whole life. I was just kickin’ it with people in class. We were just talking in class—talk, talk talk like, “Alright let’s hang out after school.” And at one of the corner stores, the gang runner used to stand right there every day. And that happened ‘til just fall like, “Alright, kick it at the store.” We’re going to kick it at the store. And at the store, they see like, “Whatcha doing?” they used to ask me why I’m just standing there on the corner with these kids, and I would just tell them, “Just ‘cause we can.” I used to ask somebody why they was standing there. And they be like, “Either money, or it’s just territory. They used to ask me a lot, “Trying to hang out with us?” I’d say, “Nah.” And then one day, I just started out hanging out with them. And I was like, “Fuck it,” and I started kicking it with them, and that’s when I started going downhill. About sophomore,*

junior year, I started going downhill about credits, stopped going to every single class, and started hanging out at the store.

Additionally, he shared that he started hanging out with gang members because he did not think school was going help him. I inquired, "What changed your mind when you would say, you know, "Nah, I don't want to hang out," but then you started to?

I was about 14 or 15. I think it was the fast money that's coming around, and the simple fact that I didn't feel like school was going to help me out anymore. It's just like some people, they graduate. Then they become something they graduated out of. Some other people they just graduated, and their life is messed up. What did you do in school? "Oh yeah, I went to school for science. I'm not a scientist." Stuff like that. I went to high school for like math and science, but when I get to the age, that—that certain age, I'm not going to be a mathematic or a scientist. It's going to be something else that I address. I used to be like, "Man, this stuff ain't helping me out in the long run." I'm not going into no science, math, or writing, so I was just like, "Forget it. I'm going to be out here, hanging out with you guys all day."

Similarly, I asked Shaniqua what impact the drug epidemic and the changing neighborhood had on her education.

I went to school because that's what I was supposed to do. Nobody cared. When my straight As went to Bs and went to Cs, it wasn't a warning sign for anyone. There wasn't a home that was monitoring that. C-students are

not a red flag for an administrator. I think that the biggest reason I left school was because I felt like I just didn't fit. I felt constantly judged and unable to ... I wasn't a 14-year-old girl. I didn't go home. I went to work. Then, I tried to figure out where I was going to sleep that night.

I remember walking into the third day of my junior year, after not even attending half of sophomore, and I'm thinking to myself, "How am I a junior? I didn't even go to school last year." I didn't remember my locker combination. I had no idea what my schedule was. I walked out of the building. Nobody noticed.

At 14 years old, in 1990, Shaniqua began working for $4.16 per hour, but as she explained, "It wasn't enough to pay for anybody's apartment, and it didn't even keep me in food, so I was still a minor relying on the kindness of people, not strangers necessarily." In the four years of her life between 14 and 19 years old, where she lived or slept was a blur. She periodically cycled through staying at her dad's house and crashing on people's couches or spare beds. After she turned 18, her dad kicked her out for good.

I lived in my dad's crack house. I remember I bought a membership to a gym. I worked graveyard. I caught the bus, two hours, one way to get there. On the way home in the mornings, I passed by a gym on Broadway for women. I bought a membership because I could get off the bus and go shower before I went back to his house. I lived there, and then, I turned the power back on, turned the water back on, with just my money that I

was earning. The day I put a phone in the house, he told me I had to leave. He said, "You're an adult. Go pay your own bills."

After that, she moved in with her cousin and followed her around, "Wherever she went, I went." I asked, "Where did she go?" Shaniqua answered: "Lots of different apartments around North and Northeast Portland. Yeah, I just moved around with her until, I don't know, basically until I got my own place."

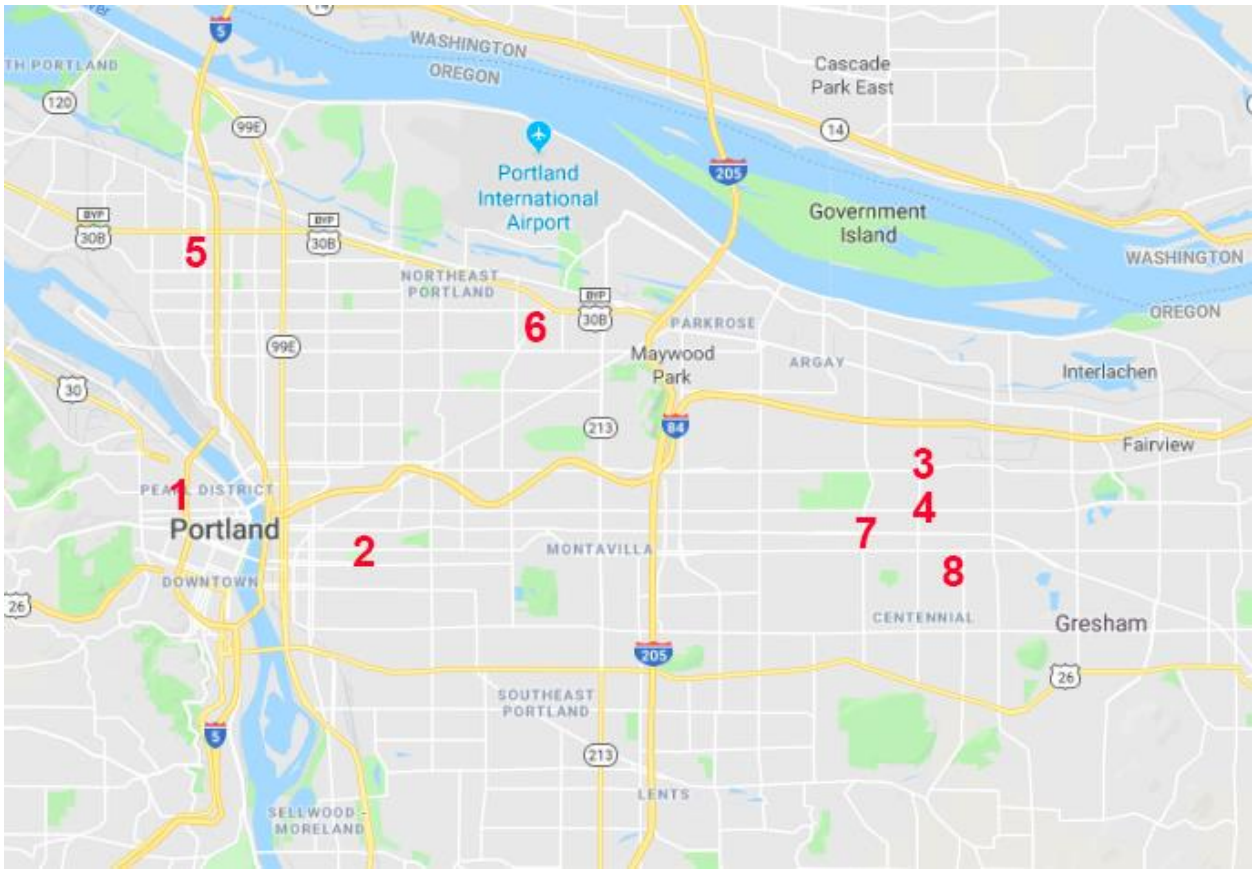
The experiences of Shaniqua, Frank, and Darrell suggest that the cumulative effects of Measure 5 and 50, the defunding of public schools and community centers, and the drug epidemic left a hole in the lives of young people for gangs and other negative forces to fill. Frank's and Darrell's parents responded by moving away from Albina to try to keep their children safe. Shaniqua, who lacked that kind of parental support, found herself moving around Albina, most of the time on her own, but sometimes in the company of her friends or cousins. Professor Gibson notes about 1980s Albina: "Black residents who could afford to move left the area, while those who could not stayed behind and lived with the consequences" (2007:18). According to Gibson, divestment in the Albina area continued into the 1980s from previous decades, but also formed new life of its own: "Economic stagnation, population loss, housing abandonment, crack cocaine, gang warfare, redlining, and speculation were all part of the scene" (Gibson 2007:17).

When Shaniqua's and Colin's grandparents and parents faced racial discrimination that forced them to live in Albina, it also created a contradiction in their lives as they became older. As young children, they remember their early childhood in Albina fondly because with black families segregated together (but also building community together), there was no feeling of "Other." As Shaniqua shared in a later

section below, she preferred to live in a place with more black families because she wanted to feel a sense of belonging again for herself and her children. She found places without other black families to support hers alienating and unwelcoming as she felt that such places exposed her and her family to more discrimination. Yet, racial discrimination against African Americans in housing did not only force black families to live together in Albina, but also divested in the places they lived and denied them access to homeownership in those places. As such, black families in Albina faced ongoing discrimination that persisted the racial gap in socioeconomic status. The Jones' narratives unravel for scholars how the Big Three theories of segregation—centering socioeconomics, discrimination, and in-group preferences—can be applied intersectionally rather than competitively (Crowder and Krysan 2016).

Renting on Their Own Outside of Albina in "One Big Neighborhood," 1996-2017

At 20 years old in 1996, Shaniqua was pregnant with her first child, was renting a place of her own, and that marked the beginning of her life outside of Albina (see Figure 6). Moving out of Northeast Portland was a defining moment in Shaniqua's life. In her mental map of Portland, "anything outside of Northeast Portland is just one big neighborhood." Her first apartment outside of the Albina area was a studio apartment in Northwest Portland, but she only stayed there for a year. After she found out about the pregnancy, she moved to Southeast Portland, so that the baby could have her own room, but after a drive-by shooting, she only stayed there for eight months before she moved again.



(Figure 6: Google Maps, places Shaniqua rented after 20 years old)

After the baby, I quit my job because I wanted to be with the baby. I had never lived in Southeast Portland before and moving there, my neighborhood suddenly got bigger. I lived there about eight months. It's a raggedy apartment. It had cockroaches. There was a drive-by shooting. It turned out not to be a good place to live. After sinking all of my savings into renting that apartment, it took me eight months to scrap up another deposit, and the only place I could afford was on 162nd and Halsey. I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is so far away. Where is this place?"

At that time, 162nd Road wasn't even paved. I moved out there all by myself; literally all by myself. My only friend was my neighbor; a dried-up stripper next door who lived nearby. It was just lonely, and I had another baby. It was another opportunity for me to say, "Where is my life going? What is my trajectory? Let's sit out and make a plan without any distractions."

Living at 162nd and Halsey, Shaniqua had just crossed the border between Portland and its adjacent city of Gresham. Living here, she had officially moved out of the City of Portland. At this time in 1996, the Alberta Arts District was in full swing and gentrification was well underway. She had a second baby in 1997, which caused her to move again, her fourth time in two years. In part, she moved because the rent at the new place was slightly less, and she needed the money. At this time, Shaniqua received a welfare check for $509 per month. The rent was $450 for a two bedroom, which "didn't leave much money for an electric bill." She did not have phone or cable. She also moved again because her son's father was a paranoid-schizophrenic.

My son's father is mentally ill. He's paranoid-schizophrenic. When I met him, he was on his meds. After he was released from the prison system, they gave him 30 days of meds and sent him on his way. After those meds ran out, I was already pregnant, and I was like, "Wow, something's not right here." At home, I was trying to keep him out of my house. "I have these babies here. I can't trust you. I don't understand you." My son was about six months old, and I had to move out of my apartment. I felt like I did in order to get away from his biological father who was breaking in

while I was gone to be there and just doing things that were unsafe. I had to go. I had to go away so that he couldn't find me. I ended up moving down the street because it was what I could afford.

Yet, even without the challenge of her son's father being off of his medication, she may still have moved, she told me, because the welfare check she received was barely enough to cover her rent. She considered going back to work, but two kids in daycare would have cost her $1,300 per month. At the time, the minimum wage in Oregon was $5.50 per hour. If she worked full-time, she would have made less than $1,000 per month, so she did not go back to work and stayed on welfare.

In 1998, Shaniqua met Colin, who became her husband shortly after. With him helping to take care of her children, she decided to go back to work and ended up getting a job with Qwest, a telephone company at the time, but later merged to become Century Link. Until meeting Shaniqua, Colin had never been out to 162nd Ave. "It was so alienating for him to be way out there" Shaniqua said. Colin talked about how he liked the apartment itself, but they struggled with the managers he believed were racist. They also wanted a better space for their kids.

Again, the place was nice. It was a townhouse, double level, two bedroom, one and a half bath. Nice, it had a swimming pool area. Didn't have a washer and dryer hookup. Had to go to the wash house. It was okay. The managers, they were older. They were an older Caucasian couple. I think that they had some issues with people of color, so we kind of had to ... We kind of had to walk on eggshells. Just kind of keep it ... Tread lightly, because just any little infraction and it's notices or, you know.

That was kind of difficult to deal with. We were looking for a bigger space, though. It was a parking lot. There was a playground, but the playground was clear over on the other side of the complex, so there was really nowhere for the kids to play unless they go all the way and our kids were really small then. There was a lot of traffic in and out of there. We were like, "Well, look for another place with a yard." Other than that, it was a nice place. Nice place. Almost a dream.

About two years after Shaniqua's job began with the telephone company in 2000, they saved enough money to move back to Albina, where they both grew up. They went from paying about $450 per month for rent to $750. About the move, she described it as a bad apartment in a better community.

That move was for the better. We felt like it. It was the worst space, but it was a better move because we were much closer to community resources to groceries, to transit. The rent was higher, the place was crappier, but we were surrounded by like people. That was comforting.

They lived there for about 19 months before they moved again. Colin explains that the kids were getting bigger, but another reason for the move was the landlord. They moved in 2000 when Trimet began construction on the Yellow MAX line (public light rail in Portland metro).

I remember when they began on the Yellow Line project. We were kind of having some issues with the landlord then with the rent. It felt like he was

always trying to find a way to snatch the rug from under our feet and he expect us to adjust to all these different numbers that would fluctuate, just among other things. We went to go look at the place, and he said it was a two bedroom. Or, no, it was a one bedroom. And we were on housing at the time. We had just got on housing. They said that, "Well, you need a two-bedroom unit to qualify for us. I remember he built some crazy little makeshift bedroom down in the basement area and it just didn't work out. He didn't take anything serious and he was slow on repairs. Had to constantly, constantly, constantly battle him about, "We need this done." He would have something slick to say and it just wasn't fair. We didn't get a fair shake out of that. So, yeah. It was time to go.

They searched again for better apartment with a more responsive landlord. They liked being in North Portland, so they tried to stay in the area, but they found that the rent in the area had doubled, and they were suddenly outpriced. They also found that their money went further in other neighborhoods, so they started moving east again.

When we moved initially to north Portland, we were paying $750. That was just what it was. Then, when we were looking at rents again in the area, Arbor Lodge area [North Portland], where we really enjoyed being, suddenly, the most affordable unit was two bedrooms for $1,400. We found if we moved a little further east, we could get a whole house on a double lot for $1,100 with rooms for everybody.

Their new place "a little further east" was in the Cully neighborhood, where they loved living because they felt at home with their neighbors. Colin also really liked the house.

> *It was like a loft. It was a house. Three-bedroom house with a loft bedroom. Big yard. It was a flag lot and a single car garage* [Flag lots are lots that do not face a street because it sits in the middle of the block with a driveway that peeks out into the road. From an aerial view, the shape looks like a flag]. *It was a fairly good size house.*
>
> *That neighborhood was actually a dream. Dream. It was nice. Nothing but homeowners. There were no new developing going on, so everybody still had their small property. They had lots of flag lots. Everybody owned a home, so everyone was neighborly. They would have little neighborhood events where everybody would come out and meet. The whole street had a potluck. We became very good friends with neighbors that lived behind us. Our kids played and got along well. We actually were considering on buying the place, but the money got a little tight. We figured we'd downsize a little bit, so we could get on our feet.*

After four years living in Cully, 2002-2006, they moved because they were priced out again. When they first moved to Cully, they paid $1,100 for rent, and after being there for four years, their rent increased to $1,300, an 18% increase. They began looking again for another place, but soon discovered that "there wasn't anything in that area under $1,300." Shaniqua told me, "that $1,300 was unsustainable for us as a family." Another reason for the move was that in 2004, they had another baby. "Now there's five

of us instead of just four. We had to account for the growing family need," Shaniqua added.

In 2006, the Jones' next home was in the Hazelwood neighborhood, a little further east of Cully. Here, they were on the border between East Portland and Gresham. The Jones moved back into renting an apartment instead of a house. Colin described it as a spacious unit with four bedrooms and two bathrooms. They lived there for six years. He described it as an "impoverished community" and talked about how it's very similar to what he grew up with in Albina before it gentrified.

GN: Can you describe your time there?

Colin: I grew up there my whole life. There's lack of education and so forth. You have the crime. You have your break ins and your burglaries and your robberies and so forth. Sometimes it's uncomfortable. I actually enjoy letting the kids go out and about without worrying about just anything can happen.

GN: What are some of your worries?

Colin: Just you know, gangs, drugs. You have a lot of meth users around here, and they do a lot of break ins and burglaries and such.

GN: Have you experienced any of that or do you know anyone who's experienced that?

Colin: A couple of occasions where I've witnessed large groups of teenagers, and I mean a group of like maybe 80 teenagers on Friday night, would get out there and fight. From 162nd down to 148. I mean, there was just bunches of them out there fist fighting, and they would be out there for 20, 30 minutes then the police would have to come. It was almost like a riot situation, just break them up.

We had a community garden that we had helped put together and there would be people come through there and urinate in the garden. We had to chase them away. People were trying to break into the mailbox. Lots of graffiti, vandalism and you have your occasional fist fight here and there, or you have your meth heads come through there a few times and just be rowdy. The police have to come and collect them.

A couple of months back around Thanksgiving, my cousin was visiting, and someone had slashed all of the tires from 174th all the way down to 167th. Just came through and slashed everyone's tires on the street, including his car. My car's been broken into twice. You see a lot of graffiti. You see a lot of gangs. They're present. I just kind of worry about that. Just the influences. We've actually witnessed two murders. Well, not eye witnessed, but we were there when they had heard. That just shed a whole new light. Then, our kids were real small. We let them go outside with their friends on the playground which was public, and gangs were present. People see them walk through there and they seem them hanging

out at night. During the day, it was okay. But at night you see questionable things. My wife and myself just was like, "We've got to get out of here."

Again, the Jones moved in 2011 to their current place, a little further east. Here, the Gresham border was across the street from their house. They are in a house, located in what Colin calls a "pocket," referring to a subdivision of homeowners within a neighborhood full of apartments. They liked the home, but Shaniqua felt socially isolated in that location and described their cul-de-sac as "foreign" compared to being in the apartments.

It feels like there are not the same supports that a neighborhood community would have. There's nobody I can go and borrow an egg from. None of my children have a friend within walking distance. The house itself…it's nice. It's a little bit close to its neighbors. It's on a lot that used to contain two homes. They were torn down and now there are 12. We're very close to our neighbors. 6 feet apart. We all have 10x10-feet yards. There's lots of different nationalities there too—multi-ethnic. The neighborhood is a working-class neighborhood. It's tidy. The people in the original homes don't interact with the people in these new homes that were built. There is no housing project, an affordable housing project, Housing Authority of Portland or Home Forward, on the same block. It's very insular, and it caters mostly to retired people, elders.

This place is different because it's not affordable housing, so there's less turnover. I'm surrounded by homeowners as opposed to renters. This

place is also not as friendly. At the apartments, I could borrow an egg. There were lots of kids that all went to the same school as my kids. We had community gardens. We saw each other and spoke and interacted. We knew each other's children, even the children from different ethnicities. It was much more communal.

Shaniqua struggled with balancing living in a place with a sense of community like at the apartments and having a safe place for her children. She recognized that there was a much higher turnover rate, gangs, and youth who "came from single-parent households and were not well supervised."

Within three months of us moving from the apartment, my 13-year-old son's four best buddies; one had gotten a girl pregnant; two of them had been in trouble with the law; and a third, his parents had paid fines for truancy because he wasn't going to school. It also became scary for the younger kids to go to the playground. At night, gang members and drug addicts use the space. Sometimes they'd still be there in the morning. While there was this wonderful warmth, and friendship, and camaraderie, there was also this other element that was unsafe.

I feel torn because I want my children to understand that home is not just what happens inside the house. It's also the connections you make with the people that are next to you and that share your sidewalks and your space. At the same time, I want them to feel safe. I want to feel that they are safe, so they can actually make it to adulthood.

I visited the Jones in 2017, and at that time, they continued live in the house. Shaniqua told me that their last rent increase was about $200 per month, and they considered moving again. They wanted to save more money to buy a house, but the new rent increase made that difficult.

After Urban Gentrification, Suburban Gentrification in Gresham, 2000-present

While Shaniqua and Colin Jones were living in the Cully neighborhood (2002-2006), eventually making their way back towards Gresham (in 2011), many other black families had already begun to concentrate in Gresham, reeling from their own serial displacement experiences and shifting the racial demographics in the region. Between 2000 and 2010, Gresham's black households increased by 141% (U.S. Census 2000 and 2010), and the 2012-2016 American Community Survey showed that the population increased by 74% since 2010, giving Gresham the largest percentage gain of black residents in Oregon (in 74 of Oregon's cities with at least 7,000 people) (Kolmar 2018). With such a sudden shift, how did their new neighbors perceive them? Many nonblack people I talked to in Gresham told me that black people only wanted to return to Portland, to the Albina area specifically. For example, in July 2014, the founder of the Rockwood CDC (a Gresham nonprofit) and a long term white resident of Gresham who grew up in the area, stated in a public presentation,

> *African Americans in Rockwood [a neighborhood in Gresham] generally don't feel safe here, and because they don't feel safe, they are less likely to commit to community building. All groups are invested in living in*

Rockwood except for African Americans. They are so new that their primary concern is, "How do I get back?"

This fourth and final section of the chapter refutes such claims by detailing Shaniqua's attempt at creating a sense of community for herself and other black families re-segregated in the suburb of Gresham. In this section, I also introduce Phylicia, a black community member, and I analyze her feedback to Gresham regarding their Rockwood Rising project, the cornerstone project of their URA.

As black families moved into Gresham in the early 2000s, the City declared their most inexpensive neighborhood of Rockwood, where many black families and other nonwhite, immigrant, refugee, and low-income families resettled, an urban renewal area. Black community members (as well as others) interpret urban renewal areas to be the precursor of gentrification and the displacement that follows from their previous experiences with URAs. Thus, I discuss how African Americans in Gresham, most of whom were displaced from gentrification in Portland, asked the City of Gresham to explain how *their* URA will not cause further displacement. Unfortunately, community members' displacement concerns fell on deaf ears. As City Council members congratulated themselves on the high level of community engagement for the project, black families like the Jones were seeing further rent increases and were preparing to move out further. By the end of 2016, Phylicia also incurred a rent increase that forced her to move to Sweet Home, Oregon.

Shaniqua on Becoming a Black Greshamite

I first met Shaniqua in August 2014, three years after she moved back to the border of Gresham for a second time. She identified herself as "a self-appointed advocate" and "a native Portlander, who is displaced and trying to make a home for herself in Gresham." She told me about her efforts starting a drill team that practiced on Saturday mornings in front of the elementary school across the street from her house. The purpose and inspiration for the drill team was to help her connect with other "displaced Portlanders" and to have "a space to come together and deal with having a scattered identity," she explained. During one of our coffee dates, she talked about how she still longed to be an Albina resident again, but also wanted to "make a stand" and "build community" where she now lived, so she was slowly letting go of her dream of returning to the place she grew up. She felt conflicted because she knew North and Northeast Portland were not the same as she remembered. For example, she complained to me, "As the neighborhood gentrified, new people are less likely to say "hi," but they say "hi" to each other. They're friendly to people they could identify as like them."

In Gresham, she tried to befriend her neighbors, especially families of color. She found it easier to make friends by introducing herself to the parents of the children that her children played with. She noted to me that a lot of the African and Russian children play outside, but she did not notice many of the Asian children, like her Cambodian neighbors playing outside. She said without confidence, "It must be a cultural thing." I smiled at her assumption as I thought of a much younger version of myself being yelled at by my mother after coming back to the house, stained with mud before we left for church, which was a common scene for me. I assured her that Asian children play outside, and that there must be another reason why she did not see much of her

Cambodian neighbors' little ones. I share this small point to highlight how some of her attempts to engage were not free from misguided assumptions, but that she tried to be present in her neighborhood; therefore, making an attempt at community building. Shaniqua was also involved in Gresham's community life in other ways too. For instance, she served as a board member on the local school board. "The first African American ever to do so for that school district," she told me both as a point of pride for herself and critique for the school district she lived in. Additionally, she had volunteered for nonprofits in the neighborhood, participated in clean up days hosted by the City of Gresham, and attended other community events such as the annual Rock the Block event.

I met many black residents in Gresham, who like Shaniqua, had been displaced out to Gresham, but who were building and participating in their community. One African American community member stated about living in Gresham, "There's a lot of good things here. I'm not trying to go back, and I want to build a routine and not have to go out to Northeast." Another shared, "Many of us live out here as a result of gentrification, and we need to build what we have based on what we have here in Gresham." I met black entrepreneurs who started businesses, gardeners who donated their crops to food banks in Rockwood, and I have attended black church services in Gresham. I know of two nonprofits started by black leaders to serve the Gresham community and a charter school that serves a large population of black children, run by black administrators in Gresham. The description of Shaniqua's involvement in her community, her attempts to know her neighbors, make friends, and serve on the local school board, and the experiences of other black Greshamites question the idea espoused by some that black residents are not committed to community building in the area.

The assumption by typically long-term white residents, like the one quoted above, that displaced black Portlanders turned black Greshamites were only temporary residents looking to return to Albina caused tensions in the black community. For example, in the 2015 State of Black Oregon report, an elderly focus group participant shared about living outside of Portland, "We're survivors as people. And we're trying to connect as much as we can. But as far as cities like Fairview or Gresham are concerned, they're not giving the Black community a sense of being wanted out there, and certainly not that they want to meet our needs" (Urban League of Portland 2015:137).

Phylicia and Rockwood Rising

Tensions continued to grow when the City of Gresham's URA staff, beginning in 2014, focused on engaging community members to inform them about their project, Rockwood Rising—a 5.5-acre property, where, according to its official website, "nearly 100,000 square feet of new commercial, office, and retail will serve Rockwood" (RockwoodRising.com). The project will also include approximately100 market rate, rental housing units with 22 subsidized units priced at 80% of the residents' MFI (median family income). Gresham voters approved the URA in 2003. When Fred Meyer, a large regional grocery store closed in 2006, the City acquired it. An earlier attempt to develop it into a gated community failed, according to URA staffers, because residents opposed the exclusion aspect of gated communities, and partly because funding stalled during the Great Recession. Thus, Rockwood Rising is the City's second attempt to redevelop the of Fred Meyer property. City Council members and the Mayor, who also serve as Gresham Redevelopment Commissioners, bragged about the in-depth community engagement process undertaken by their URA staff. At one City Council meeting in Fall 2017 for

example, Councilor Hinton, stated "Since 2014, we have collected thousands of comments from hundreds of meetings from community members. Rockwood Rising has engaged with the community from the beginning. This is a project for the community, by the community" (GRDC 11/19/2017). While the staff have made a concerted effort to collect input from community members about Rockwood Rising, for the most part, they were asking for input on design aspects of the project. For example, one meeting asked participants to give input on a logo related to the project, while workshops and tabling opportunities at community events asked participants to engage in "modeling exercises" to share what they wanted the market hall and public plaza to include. Yet, residents, including new black residents, were providing input on larger concerns that the City did not ask about such as, "How is this different from gentrification?" Or more specifically, "How will this impact my rent?"

One of the engagement efforts the City made to learn from the community included hiring 12 community liaisons, who represented various racial and ethnic groups in Gresham. They met weekly, at least three hours each, for 16 weeks during the summer of 2016, and the aim during this time was to have the liaisons learn more about Rockwood Rising and to share with and gather input from their respective communities about the project. The 16 weekly workshops were facilitated by a planning firm, Design and Culture Lab, and URA staff occasionally attended to answer questions. Of the 12 community liaisons, 4 identified as black or African. However, the facilitators left the workshops open for anyone from the community to attend and participate, and several curious black residents attended some of the workshops. I attended nearly all of them.

Near the end of the 16 weeks in September 2016, I talked to one of the African American community liaisons, Phylicia, whom I had gotten to know pretty well, about

her opinions on Rockwood Rising. Originally from Pittsburg, Phylicia was not displaced from Portland, although we talked about how Pittsburg had also gentrified. She came to live in Gresham by way of Los Angeles. When I met her, she had been living in East Multnomah County for 25 years and loved living there because she preferred small towns to big cities, especially after living in Los Angeles for 19 years. She was a 59-year old baker, and at the beginning of the 16-week workshop hoped to secure one of the food stalls in the market hall on the Rockwood Rising site to sell her baked goods. She already sold cookies, brownies, and other sweets informally to her neighbors and friends, and wanted to see if she could make it a legitimate business, and Rockwood Rising seemed like a promising opportunity. After trying to find out more information as a community liaison, she gave up on the idea because she learned that to start her business, she needed startup capital, which she did not have, and she learned through the weekly workshops that there was no way that she could get it.

During an interview with her in September 2016, after she had spent the last three months learning about the Rockwood Rising project, I asked her, "Who do you think is going to benefit from the development? Animated, she answered,

> *I think that the people that are going to benefit from it the least are going to be the people that are actually in the neighborhood now. It's just going to drive prices up and drive people out. The rising costs will drive people out, and it's going to bring people out who can afford it.*

Phylicia went on to share her general thoughts on urban renewal and talked about her hometown of Pittsburg.

> *I have a problem with urban renewal. Most of the time, when urban renewal goes on, then basically it's just forcing those people in the neighborhood out. I think urban renewal is a good thing and bad thing all at once. A bad thing because, generally when you see urban renewal, like in Pittsburg, when urban renewal came into where I grew up at, the street I grew up on, they said, "Sure, we're going to redevelop and we're going to renew this," but none of us is going to be able to afford to live in it, you know. So, they're not actually doing it for us because we're not going to be able to live there. They are doing it for other people to move in there. If they're saying it's affordable, I'm saying affordable to whom? Development is not good for everybody. A lot of times, I think it's only good for people that are going to profit and benefit from it. Generally, then, when they urban renew or develop and area, most of the people are gone anyways.*

Phylicia and other community liaisons shared this idea about the relationship between urban renewal areas and displacement of people who cannot afford it to URA staffers throughout the workshops. I witnessed other community members express similar concerns directly to URA staff. In response, the staff denied that their project will cause displacement because they designed Rockwood Rising to be the "economic engine of Rockwood;" thus, rather than displacing people, the project would create opportunities so that residents would see their personal incomes rise. Take, for example, this response from the URA Executive Director, Josh Fuhrer, when community members asked during

the early neighborhood notification meeting how this project will help to prevent displacement:

> *The goal with this project is to create opportunities for Rockwood residents to see economic empowerment. The goal is not to build expensive housing, wine bars, and antique shops that will push people out. The advantage of the workforce, entrepreneurship, and technological opportunities and resources in this project—they could go and take classes from tech shops, or start that small business, or gain the skills they need to get a living-wage job—the hope is that their economic futures will rise with the community. So then when they raise rents, it's not as painful because income raises as well (GRDCAC 06/08/2016).*

I asked Phylicia about her opinion on this answer from Mr. Fuhrer. She said frankly,

> *If the people are still able to be here, but what we need to look at already is the anticipation of what is getting ready to happen in Rockwood. Look at the $100 per month increase in Barberry [Village Apartments]. Look at when I surveyed that lady in the park. She lived at Raintree [Apartments], and they raised everybody's rent $400. Look at mine. It's going up 26% in December. They're pricing them all out. You can see already in anticipation, and I really feel that this is in anticipation of what's getting ready to happen here. So, yeah, it just depends on whether people that are in the area actually have enough to do that, actually make a training center for people who are here. Then yes, maybe it could benefit the area, but it just depends on what happens in the neighborhood around that*

development, whether those people are going to be able to hold on or able to wait the two years because it's two years away, and they're already being priced out. They're already being priced out in anticipation of what's going to happen.

I asked how her perceptions of the Rockwood Rising site changed, if it had. She answered crassly, "I think it's a crock of shit. Personally, I really do. I think it's a crock of shit. I think they're playing a bad game with people's lives. I'm becoming very disillusioned with it." I asked if she had always felt that way about the project.

I have always tried to maintain a hopeful attitude about it because I live here. This is my hood, but I'm just getting more disillusioned, hearing all the double talk and bullshit. I'm just becoming very disillusioned with it.

Phylicia continued to vent that attracting more people to the area would only put more pressures on rent.

More people in North and Northeast are going to migrate because they are being displaced. They're not done coming here yet. Then you got all the Caucasians that are in downtown Portland that can't pay their freaking rent because it's going up. They're going to migrate here too. You've got the white people who can't afford this shit. You've got black people who can't afford this shit. The people who live here can't afford this shit, a place where rent is going up so high. Who's going to be able to afford it? Urban development, fuck everybody. You know what I'm saying? This is where I am.

She also shared comments she heard from other black people about their fear of being pushed out further.

> *You've got black people from the Black Voices meeting [one of the meetings hosted by another black community liaison to tell people about Rockwood Rising] saying, "Well, where are they going to push us next? We don't want to move to Sandy [a small town about 13 miles southeast of Gresham]. It's too far off. There's no bus service out there. There's no reliable public transportation out there, so if you move that far, you have to have a fucking car. So, who's this good for? That is why I'm disillusioned. My pet peeve is I don't think anybody is going to be able to afford this shit when they finally, finally build it.*

Phylicia was also angry that they turned down her idea to include a space for nonprofit startups.

> *Another thing that really pissed me off is I asked [a senior project coordinator] about whether they were going to have room for nonprofits in there. No. Why? Because they can't make money off of them, so we already know that they are already anticipating putting people in there that they feel like they can make money off of. So, it's not about helping the community. It's about making money. That's another reason I'm really disillusioned about it because they don't really give a fuck about the people. All they care about is the money.*

I inquired, “Who do you think is making the money?” She answered, still heated, “The developer. I don’t really have a clue, but I know it’s not going to be the people that are there because they’re barely going be able to afford the rents. Those people can’t even afford to pay their fucking rent, their housing rent, nonetheless, their business rent.”

That summer, she received a 26% rent increase, mentioned earlier, to go into effect in December 2016. She talked to me about moving to Sweet Home, Oregon, where an elderly white friend recently moved. Phylicia reasoned that she could save at least $300 per month if she moved. She turns 60-years old soon, and she always wanted to travel more. “With that money,” she reasoned, “I could go visit nieces and nephews I’ve never met. I can see more of the world.” Indeed, that December, she moved to Sweet Home.

Conclusion

This chapter followed the residential lives of Colin and Shaniqua Jones, their parents, and grandparents from 1940-2017, with primary emphasis on the 1980s to the present. At 40 years old, when I interviewed her, Shaniqua moved 12 times, not counting the many times she moved between 14 and 19 years old. On the other hand, Colin moved seven times in his life, fewer than Shaniqua because his grandparents’ home provided him with some stability in his childhood. Their stories of serial displacement are like those of many others I spoke with. For example, I met Deedee, a 34-year old black woman with five children, who lived down the road from Shaniqua. Deedee was born and raised in Albina and had moved 13 times in her life, and she was a life-long renter. I asked Quintin, a black 19-year old young man, who was also born in Albina, but who now live in Rockwood, to count the number of times he moved. He answered with

exasperation, “Too many. *Way* too many. Too many to remember.” I pressed on, “Can you give me a round-about number? It doesn’t have to be exact.” He shakes his head, “So from the point I was born up until now? I’ve lived on 23rd. I lived on 18th and Cleveland. I lived in North. I forgot where exactly, but I know it’s in the North. I say, man. I say about 20, 25 places.” Quintin’s mother, whom he lived with, was also a life-long renter.

In addition to recognizing the number of times the Jones, and other black families moved, it is also important to understand the reasons for their move from Albina to the suburban areas eastward, which happened twice for the Jones. After they moved back to North Portland in 2000, they found themselves outpriced. Shaniqua explained:

> *When I look at it linearly, there’s always been a movement, I’d say, moving to the right. If northeast Portland is my left hand and we’re moving to the right, so beginning my life very close to the I-5 Corridor and moving out. Then, there was a move back in. Excuse me. That was when I met my husband, and we moved back into North Portland; but then, we consistently moved right again. There was just really one big inward movement. It’s always been a push from the left to the right.*
>
> *We moved to North Portland because that’s where we feel comfortable. That’s home. Anything way out here was just temporary feeling. Then, after about a year and a half in the crappy place, we needed something better, which was further to the right. Now, we’re in Cully neighborhood. We stayed there until we were priced out.*

Then, suddenly, we were on 148th and Burnside because there wasn't anywhere in between we could pay for. We moved to 148th and Burnside in 2005 or 2006. We're renting a four-bedroom, two-bath flat for $850 a month. We were paying $750 for a leaky one bedroom in north Portland. Financially, by now, we have three kids. It just made far more sense to go where our money went the furthest.

Taken collectively, these stories illustrate a theme in Black Portland: a family origin in Albina by way of Vanport, and a progression out of Albina due to a myriad of factors with the last 20 years primarily focused on the rent being too expensive. In this chapter, I also tried to capture the many reasons why people moved and there are many reasons that this chapter did not capture. Some shifts were positive such as the first four moves in Shaniqua's life in which her parents made more money. This point was also captured in other people's stories too that families moved after they received promotions or came into more money. Most reasons for moving relayed to me, however, were not a cause for celebration. In many cases, moving meant trying to run away from violence, from gangs, from drugs, from deteriorating and unhealthy structures, from slumlords, from failing school systems, or from a partner with untreated mental illness and domestic violence. In the cases where they were not actively looking for another place, they were pushed out from the Vanport Flood, city policies like urban renewal, or being outpriced by rapidly rising housing market where landlords doubled or tripled the rent.

These stories by Black Portlanders about serial segregation illustrated how housing insecurity experienced by those who have to contend with an unstable rental housing market is interconnected to other forms of vulnerabilities resulting from other

forms of discriminations. As the city divested in Albina, Shaniqua and her peers' education fell through the cracks. In the 1990s, the state passed implemented Measures 5 and 50 in the 1990s, which changed the tax structure in Oregon, it slashed public funding not only to crucial after school programs and community centers, but also funding for all other public programs. In the same decade, Oregon (along with the federal government) also restructured its welfare programs (Morgan, Acker, and Weigt 2010), which impacted where Shaniqua and her children could live, and because welfare programs did not adequately cover childcare costs, it was impossible for Shaniqua to have had gainful employment. Finally, the Jones acknowledged the intergenerational impact that serial displacement and segregation had/have on them and their children. Each time Shaniqua and Colin moved after they had kids, they cited their kids as part of the reason for moving. I once asked Colin, "What's your mentality for how long you want to stay in a place after you move in?" He responded,

> *"As long as possible. I mean, you want the stability. You want somewhere to call home because [moving] is dampening on your finances and emotions. If you keep moving around like that every year, your kids get attached to their friends, to school, and all that, so my mentality is as long as you can."*

The second half of the chapter focused on the experiences of black re-segregation into the suburb of Gresham. The 2016 State of Housing report by the City of Portland calculated that 70% of African American Portlanders rent compared to 45% of whites. This fact makes black families more vulnerable to outrageous rent increases (amongst other vulnerabilities such as evictions) that forces them to continuously move in search of

rents they can afford. It was unsurprising, then, that low-income black people would move to places like Gresham, where rent was more affordable. Yet, as they were re-segregated where they could afford to live, tensions arose because white people in suburban places like Gresham, historically had not experienced a sizable population of black people, and they questioned African Americans' commitment to the community. From the perspective of African Americans who moved into or near Gresham like Shaniqua or Phylicia, they continued to carry generational, experiential knowledge and lived experiences of displacement with them. They bring those experiences to light when they encounter projects like Rockwood Rising. In the case of Phylicia, even though she did not experience Portland's gentrification, she experienced urban gentrification in Pittsburg, where she was born and raised. Phylicia clearly articulated that she felt that low-income people like her were not meant to benefit from redevelopment projects with gentrifying impulses like Rockwood Rising, based on her lived experiences in other places. As black residents like her get pushed further beyond Gresham to small towns like Sweet Home, Oregon, further research should focus on documenting and understanding the ongoing the unsettlement of black communities by looking at displacement events together rather than discretely to more fully understand how and why black families become more vulnerable to serial forced displacement.

CHAPTER III

FORCED RENTING AND TENANT AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ALLIANCES

Introduction: From Morelia, Michoacán (Mexico) to Portland (U.S.) to Gresham

The Hernández's are a family of five, who have three different immigration-citizenship statuses. The parents are undocumented. Both Juan's younger siblings were born in the U.S., making them citizens. Juan's status is somewhere in the middle. He is a 26-year old DACA or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipient. DACA allows some individuals who were brought to the U.S. without documentation as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit. Currently, 690,000 are enrolled in the program. Although DACA provides him with a two-year work permit, he has no legal path to citizenship. Every two years, Juan and other DACA recipients apply for renewal to extend their current work permit. He had completed the renewal twice already.

On September 5, 2017, the Trump administration declared that it will end the DACA program within six months and will not be processing anymore new applications, citing executive overreach from the previous administration, fear that Texas and other states would sue for the program to end and that the administration would not be able to overcome the lawsuit, and that "illegal" immigrants were taking away jobs from Americans and driving down wages (Shear and Davis 2017). Between September and March, Juan and other DACA recipients waited. The March deadline came and passed, and the program did not end. On April 25, U.S. District Judge John D. Bates ordered the government to continue accepting new applications, ruling that the Trump administration's move to end the program was "virtually unexplained," since the reasons they provided did not legally justify ending the program (Jordan and Patel 2018). Bates

gave the administration 90 days to defend their position, and if they cannot provide an adequate legal defense, then the government must continue to accept new applications. On May 2, Texas and six other states sued the federal government to end DACA (Gajanan 2018).

Juan qualifies for DACA because at five years old in 1997, he left Morelia, Michoacán and crossed the U.S.-Mexico border with his parents. Like many others who crossed the border at a young age, he does not remember much about his early experience of living in Mexico or about crossing the border. His parents told him that they were brought over in a car, crossed over, and then went under some sewer lines. Juan's earliest memories include living in a rented apartment shared with another immigrant family in outer northeast Portland. Immigrant families, like the Hernández's, commonly share living space when they first arrive to the U.S. Juan told me, "It was the only space they could get at the time." Living with another family made him somewhat anxious because his mom was really strict: "about like this is our stuff, you don't touch any of their stuff." He recalled, "I would get home from school, and it would be like straight to the bedroom. Make sure I didn't make a mess or touch anything else I wasn't supposed to."

After living in the shared apartment for a year in Portland, in 1998, they moved out to Gresham, a suburb east of Portland, into a multifamily complex, where they stayed for the next 21 years. Their long-time residency in this apartment complex made his story unique and allowed him to be a stabilizing force in the community. Juan coordinated food pantries, ran after school programs, coached soccer for youth, and volunteered at his church. His high level of community involvement became critical to his community's success in rallying for his release after ICE agents picked him up at his home and held him at the Tacoma detention center in Spring 2017 (more details in the next section).

He returned home from Tacoma, overwhelmed with the support he received, but he noticed that others whom ICE picked up did not receive the relatively favorable treatment that he did. He received offers for legal assistance, media outlets spread his story like a firestorm, community members came out to attend rallies in public spaces, and hundreds of people flooded ICE with telephone calls, emails, and social media mentions demanding for Juan's release. When he realized that his case was special, he was grateful, but also believed that his case should not have been special; it should have been the norm. There was a void in services for and attention paid to families with vulnerable immigration statuses, and he wanted to fill some of the void. Juan started Pueblo Unido to connect family members of people in detention centers with attorneys and other resources. Yet, he noticed after working on cases for six months that a lot of the families they helped were forced to *choose between paying rent or paying for legal aid*. As rents increased, so did the number of times detainees postponed paying for legal help, which meant that they stayed locked up longer and increased their risk for deportation. In September 2017, when Juan made the connection between rising housing costs and lack of funds for legal help to prevent deportations, he learned about Rockwood Rising, Gresham's cornerstone urban renewal area project. Juan and his colleagues at Pueblo Unido began testifying in front of Gresham City Councilors (who also make up the Gresham Redevelopment Commission) because they were concerned about the threat of gentrification coming into Gresham. Rising costs from gentrification would place more financial strains on the families of Pueblo Unido and on the other low-income families in the community. Their vocal opposition to Rockwood Rising led Pueblo Unido to partner with the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) to fight for increased tenant protections

and renters' rights in Gresham. Together, Pueblo Unido and CAT formed Gresham Housing for the People (GH4PPL) to build a movement of renters in Gresham.

In this chapter, I detail more of Juan's residential story as a DACA recipient, as a forced renter, and local activist. Like Shaniqua and Colin Jones from Chapter One and others mentioned throughout this dissertation, Juan and his family are forced to rent because they cannot buy a home. In the case of the Hernández family, Juan's parents qualified for a home loan and the homes in their neighborhood of Rockwood were affordable but being undocumented made it impossible to secure a loan. Juan looked into putting the paperwork under his name, but after his time in the detention center, they decided against it. Although they lived in the U.S. for over a quarter of a century, the increased potential of them being deported made their lives too uncertain to buy a home, even if Juan could legally do so at this time through his DACA status, so they continue to rent. One goal of this chapter is to illustrate the Hernández's forced renter status. The other goal, which I focus on in the next section, is to trace Pueblo Unido's origins as an organization focused on connecting families with vulnerable immigration statuses to their advocacy for renters' protections. Housing advocates have long understood that when renters pay more for rent, they pay less for everything else (Joint Center for Housing Studies 2017), but I hope that this chapter's focus on the Hernández family being forced to rent brings more light to the connection between one form of displacement: detainment/deportations and another form of displacement: rent increases/evictions.

Tacoma Detention Center and the Start of Pueblo Unido

Juan is a young man with few words. He expresses himself more in his actions than in what he says. When he does speak, he does so softly with the edges of his words

fraying into a mumble. I observed that he usually does not voice his point of view unless someone directs a question specifically towards him. His facial expressions and body language are carefully guarded as he seldomly gives away any emotions, except for a coy smile now and again. I found that his calm and quiet mannerisms and lack of showmanship make him approachable. I could sit next to him comfortably without the need to constantly carry on a conversation with him.

In Spring 2017, on a Sunday morning, the Hernández family were all sound asleep in their beds. At 7AM, Juan's 20-year old sister awoke from a loud banging on the door to their three-bedroom, first floor apartment in Gresham, and she got out of bed to answer it. Three Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers stood on the other side of the door in plain clothing, out of uniform, and asked for Juan. Juan tells me, "They asked for me, but they never identified themselves." They also did not have a warrant. He walked out of his room, and an officer asked him for his name. They showed him his DACA application, and asked, "Is this you?" Juan replied, "Yes." They then asked for his work permit, so he presented it to them along with his driver's license to confirm his identity. He told them, "All my paperwork is still in order." They responded by taking his identification away and saying, "Oh, you have to come with us." The next thing Juan knew, he was sitting in the back of one of their cars.

Later that same day, he found himself at the detention center in Tacoma, Washington. An ICE spokesman later in the week said that he was targeted for arrest because of his DUI conviction, which he plead guilty to in December 2016. When he was picked up, he was two months from completing the diversion program and having the crime expunged from his record. An immigration attorney said that Juan's case was

common in that detainees, who were working on improving their record after a mistake, were picked up weeks or months before the completion of their diversion program.

At the detention center, he began talking to and getting to know some of the other detainees in the facility. “Some were there for months without contact with family, and some did not receive the medication they asked for,” he shared. The detainees lost track of what was going on in the outside world. “It all felt like a bad dream being taken away from the environment of my community to being in a place like that where people were there for so long. It didn’t feel real,” he shared. He went to sleep Sunday night to wake up the next day on Monday and found that it was more than a bad dream. That morning, he was called into their check-in office, and one of their agents gave him some paperwork and said “We need you to sign for your release. Your bond has been sent.” Juan was stunned. “I had been told not to sign any paperwork without a lawyer present, and everyone else’s timeline to get out of there was at least a month or so. When he told me that your bond had been sent, I hadn’t even had a hearing or anything.” The agent told him, “You have people on the outside who want you out so we’re setting your bond.” Juan thought to himself, “I hadn’t even talked to anyone. I’m still not in the system to be able to make a phone call or anything like that.” The agent walked him through the paperwork. “I read everything,” Juan told me flatly. The agent assured him, “I’m not trying to trick you. This is for you to be released today. We just need your family to go pay the bond, and you’ll be released this afternoon.” Juan signed the paperwork.

He returned to where the other detainees were and the people who were around him, who had been there for longer were puzzled, “We’ve never seen someone get this paperwork right away. It’s kind of weird.” One of the guys lent Juan his account to call home, and he asked his family, “What was going on?” He shared, “At that time, my

family did not know what was going on. They still hadn't hired an attorney because they were still trying to get one. The only thing they told me was that they had gotten a call from one of the immigration agents telling them to go pay my bond so that I could be released later that day." They sent someone to pay the bond, and that was the last time he talked to his family from inside the detention center. A few hours later, an agent called him, and told him to get all his stuff together, and they were going to let him go home later that same day. That afternoon, he was released, and he walked outside of the detention center. "There was a long trailer outside like an RV, and the people in the RV were just people that were there to help those released from the detention center. They provide them with food and a phone, so they could call family or reach whatever they needed, to get to wherever they were going. That was really helpful," he remembered. As soon as Juan was released, he checked his phone and realized that he had hundreds of calls and messages.

"I got on the internet, and it was all over the news, and there was a rally going on here [in Portland], and it just got a lot of attention real quick." Later on, he understood that the publicity was the reason why he was released so promptly, less than 36 hours, after ICE agents banged on his door. "They had just gotten so much bad publicity that the longer I stayed in there, the longer I caused trouble. It was really bad publicity for them." When the news about Juan's detainment spread, his supporters emphasized all of his work in the community: at his church, at schools, at food pantries, and at nonprofits. His family paid his bond, which was set unusually low. "Usually the bonds they set for people are ridiculous, like $10,000 to $30,000, and they definitely didn't want me in there because they set my bond at $3,000, and no one has ever known anything like that to be that low." Juan's family picked him up, and after he got home, lawyers who turned down

his case 24 hours earlier "because they were like, 'he's going to face the same situation like everyone else'," called back and agreed to take his case. Everybody else usually gets lost in months of hard-fought and expensive legal battles only to lose and be deported anyways.

After coming home, he started to notice that ICE was "picking people up every day and nobody was making a fuss about it." Others being picked up did not have the same support that Juan did, so in April 2017, shortly after returning home, he started Pueblo Unido to help them. Juan explained,

> *A lot of the nonprofits we were working for at the time really didn't have the resources, time, or capacity to help families in these situations. That's what led to us forming Pueblo Unido. We help families and walk them through the process of what to do once your family members are detained: how to connect them with proper attorneys, get them the consultations they need, see that they understand everything that's going on, and facilitate the communication between the attorneys and the families. A lot of these families don't know who to call, how to get certain documentation that they needed from the kids, or just knowing how to work any of these systems because it wasn't something that they had to do in the past, so just walking them through all of that.*

A year after he had been working with clients for a year through Pueblo Unido, I asked him to tell me about a typical case, since he described his case as "unique."

> *Usually what we've seen is that people get picked up at work most of the time, so there's not a whole lot of attention. By the time the families start*

> *to realize that they've been detained, it's already been hours. Also, there's not a whole lot of support or they're not as connected to people so it's hard for their story to spread, so families don't have people to come and guide them through the process of what they have to do next in order to get their family member out. Time goes by, then news just dies out. It's not until later when the people [detainees] are actually facing deportation that the families start reaching out to us and others to see what kind of help they can get.*

Compared to what he described as a typical case, his case was far different. When ICE detained him, it was Sunday morning. He was at home, so his family knew immediately. Then because Juan was very connected to his community: his church, nonprofits, food pantries, and his volunteer work at schools, he had a lot of support. His supporters quickly spread his story, which Juan thought put enormous pressure on ICE to release him. Juan emphasized, "Yeah. Definitely haven't seen another story like that because there's not so much support behind a lot of residents out in East County." Although the support Juan received and the relatively brief time he spent in the detention center was atypical, the fact that ICE picked him up and put him in a detention center was typical.

Juan's aim for Pueblo Unido was to provide that support, like the ones he received, for families in East County, but he soon realized that clients he worked with were grappling with whether to pay for a lawyer or to pay for rent. In one of the cases that Pueblo Unido helped with for instance, the family ended up being charged approximately $15,000 in lawyer fees, spread among three different lawyers, over the course of 9 months. In this case, as was typical, the male breadwinner of the family,

whom I will call Manuel, was detained, so Pueblo Unido worked with the detainee's spouse, whom I will call Analee. The family spent $100 for the initial consultation with the first lawyer. They paid $3,500 for the initial retainer fee and for the lawyer to represent the Manuel at two hearings. Two weeks after the first payment, they lawyer charged them $2,000 to continue to attend to the detainee's bond hearing. Two months after the $2,000 charge, the family reached out to Pueblo Unido because they did not like how this attorney handled the case. Pueblo Unido tried to help the family fire the first lawyer. As they were doing this, they tried to ask a second lawyer to take the case, but he had scheduling conflicts with one of the hearing dates, so could not officially represent the family, but continued to walk Pueblo Unido and the family through the legal process for several weeks. They paid this second lawyer $1,000 to travel from the Portland area to Tacoma to attend one of the detainee's hearings, not to represent Manuel but whose presence was meant to silently signal to the judge that the family was seeking to appoint another attorney, who would not miss any more filing deadlines or arrive late to hearings as the first attorney had done. As the second lawyer sat in the gallery, the detainee explained their intention to hire another attorney, but that the judge first needed to officially remove the first attorney from the case for that to happen. The judge agreed, and the family was able to retain another lawyer. This third attorney lost the bond hearing, so they paid no bond, but he eventually won the case. He charged them a total of $8,000. Manuel returned home in March, and now has a green card, but at the time that he and his family were going through this, they did not know what the outcome would be. Pueblo Unido talked to at least 25 lawyers, and they all told them that chances of winning were slim if not impossible.

Manuel and his wife Analee have three children aged 6, 13, and 18—all boys. Analee could not work because of a developmental disability, so they relied almost entirely on Manuel's income to survive. When Manuel was detained, they burned through all of their savings, and they borrowed the rest from family and friends, who also drained all of their savings. Other costs include paying for videoconferencing or for phone calls which cost $18 for 1.5 hours or hiring an interpreter. Manuel and Analee's eldest was the first in his family to graduate from college a few weeks after his father was in Tacoma, and Manuel missed his graduation.

One of Pueblo Unido's members, Leo (described more in the next section) explained to me that unlike criminal cases, where clients are, by law, appointed an attorney (although there are plenty of things broken in that constitutional promise), with immigration cases, the law does not require attorneys to be appointed. With Manuel locked up in Tacoma, knowing that he had a slim chance of being released, and being uncertain about how long the case would last, Analee and Manuel had to decide whether to address the family's short-term needs that meant paying for rent, medical bills, and food, or taking a long-term gamble that meant paying for Manuel's attorney fees to work on cases that could drag out for as long as four years or more. To fall behind on rent meant the possibility of eviction and potentially homelessness, but to not pay the attorneys meant losing a pillar of their family—a heavy decision. Although Manuel received his green card, the family must now pay back the $15,000 they borrowed. It will be very difficult for them—particularly in the context of the likelihood of rising rents where they live due to the City of Gresham's Rockwood Rising project to recruit higher income residents and raise property values in Manuel and Analee's neighborhood. Additionally, in May, after a few months of returning home, the family received a no-

cause eviction. They now have 60 days to move out of their apartment. The next sections discuss Juan and Pueblo Unido's role in protesting the Rockwood Rising project and their involvement in Gresham Housing for the People (GH4PPL) to keep rents low and to increase renters' protections, as a way to keep their neighbors in the community.

Pueblo Unido and Rockwood Rising

In April of 2018, Juan, Leo (another member of Pueblo Unido), and I attended a Gresham Redevelopment Commission Advisory Committee (GRDCAC) meeting at Gresham City Hall. Leo is a 26-year old, white AmeriCorps fellow, who grew up in Atlanta, GA and now works with Juan coordinating food pantries and working in the local schools. He also taught English classes to Spanish speakers in the evening along with engaging in a plethora of other community-related activities. He learned Spanish in college when he spent about a year in Latin America studying abroad. He wanted to return to Latin America after graduating with a degree in Political Science but could not because of personal reasons. Leo ended up in Rockwood because he thought, "Well if I can't go back to Latin America, I wanted to continue working with the people, so AmeriCorps placed me here over two years ago, and I stayed."

The meeting we attended was for the GRDCAC, which is a citizen committee, made up of six to ten members—usually white-collar professionals such as bankers, realtors, landlords, developers, and business owners or elderly retirees—who volunteer their time to provide feedback to URA staff, give recommendations to the Gresham Redevelopment Commission (consisting of the six City Council members and the Mayor), and network with city leaders and staffers. Like the other four GRDCAC meetings I attended in the past, it was conducted in English and held on a Wednesday,

started at 7:00 in the evening and lasted for two hours. The committee is scheduled to meet once a month on an "as needed" basis, meaning that there are times when they do not meet.

The last time Juan and Leo tried to attend a GRDCAC meeting was in January, and it was cancelled at the last minute without public notification. Leo told me that in the last nine months, Pueblo Unido members have attended and given testimonies at about a dozen City of Gresham meetings related to Rockwood Rising. As they did with those other meetings, Juan and Leo had spent a few hours prior to the January GRDCAC meeting preparing their three-minute testimony during the public comment portion of the meeting. Three minutes is typically the maximum allowed for public comment at government meetings. Leo told me that each time they testified, it typically took them at about five hours to prepare. Some things they did to prepare included looking over their previous testimonies, thinking about the previous meetings, deciding how their message will be similar to or different from other testimonies, doing further research if needed, writing out what they hope will communicate urgency to City Council, the Mayor, and the GRDCAC, and practice reading their testimony a few times. If the meeting was held during work hours, then Juan and Leo gave up $50 each from their would-be wages to attend and testify. Similarly, Juan shared about giving testimonies,

> *I'm not one to talk in front of large crowds. I'm usually very nervous. The first time we testified [in front of City Council and the Mayor], I was really nervous. We just make sure that we prepare like a day or two before to make sure we go over what we're going to say, a lot of practice beforehand to make sure we have exactly what we're going to talk about,*

and that we're not talking about the same thing, so that definitely makes it a lot easier.

When the January GRDCAC meeting was cancelled without notification, they were disappointed and angry because they felt like the City had wasted their time by purposefully not notifying them. This time, in April, they learned about the meeting too late to prepare their testimonies. I have witnessed these shifts in meeting times and notifications at least five times during my fieldwork from other government bodies such as the City of Portland, County government, and state government. Advocates who put in enormous efforts to speak out for or against a topic that the government takes up during the meeting typically do not have the flexibility to adjust to last minute schedule changes, so sometimes, they do not get to testify, and they feel like their efforts were wasted in vain. People arrange childcare, medical appointments, and work schedules, among other things to participate in testifying. When meetings get cancelled last minute or switched around without adequate prior notification, advocates such as Juan and Leo, believe that the schedule change is a tactic by the City of Gresham, or other government body, to disrupt their voices and ability to testify about government action important to them such as the Rockwood Rising project.

One hour before the start of the GRDCAC meeting in April, I picked up Leo from his Rockwood apartment. Knowing that he had back-to-back meetings that day and that we would arrive early to the meeting, I asked him if he wanted to stop by somewhere to get dinner. Leo replied, "No, they have food at the meeting, and they eat pretty well too." He added, "We should probably get in the room a few minutes before [the meeting begins] because they usually don't have enough chairs for non-committee community

members attending." Leo thanked me for the ride. Juan usually gives him a ride to meetings because Leo does not have a car, but sometimes Juan has to run errands for his mom, so being able to arrive separately gave Juan some extra time to do other things for his mom.

The process of attending a meeting at City Hall can be daunting for someone who does not speak English, is not documented, and who is not familiar with what typically is supposed to happen. When we arrived at Gresham City Hall, where the meeting was held, we entered through two sets of heavy glass doors. We approached the front desk, manned by a white security guard with grey hair in his uniform, and we followed the proper procedures by signing ourselves in by writing our names, the time, and the meeting we are to attend. Sometimes, I recognize a few names on the list, so the information is public for others signing in after you to see that you're attending that meeting. If this was during daytime business hours, they would hand us a plastic card with the words "Visitor" on it, and we would be required to wear it around our necks, but because we were attending an evening meeting, "Visitor" tags were not given. The security guard asked us, "What meeting are you here for? The budget meeting?" Leo answered him, "No. We're here for the GRDC Advisory meeting." The security guard looks at his clipboard, and said back to us, "I don't see it on the list." I offered, "It's normally in the Oregon Trail Room." He looked at his clipboard again, and Leo shot me a sideways glance that said silently to me, "They might have cancelled it again." The security guard then said, "Oh, you're right—the Oregon Trail Room. Down the hall make a left and then a right, and the room will be on the right." We both knew the way, but we politely thanked him anyways. If we were not comfortable asserting ourselves with the security guard, his mistake may have meant that we would have missed the meeting.

Walking down the hallway, I noticed that Gresham City Hall is a very nice building. The carpets are clean. It probably gets vacuumed every evening. The walls had artwork on them, nothing that stood out as particularly evocative, colorful, or eye-catching. It seemed to blend into the white walls including the silver-colored frames. The air smelled like a hospital to me: sterile and absent of fragrance like food, flowers, or sweat. We walked into the Oregon Trail Room. There were six chairs placed to the side of tables in a U-shape, which were all later used by community members who attended the meeting, confirming what Leo said earlier about "not having enough chairs." Immediately in front of us stretched a long rectangular table with the meeting documents all in English: agenda, power point printouts, and forms to sign up for testifying. There was also catered sandwiches and chips from Panera Bread and coffee and tea on the table. Yet, during the meeting there was no invitation from the chair of the committee for community members to help themselves to the dinner available. Leo was the only one to eat the food later. As he picked up the paper with the agenda laid out, Leo noticed that the public comment section was placed at the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end like usual.

Leo's purpose for attending the meeting was to listen to the EcoNorthwest's presentation, where he hoped to receive some answers Pueblo Unido had asked the city for regarding the Rockwood Rising project, specifically rent estimates for the 100, market rate apartments to be located on the site. Members of Pueblo Unido believed that the price of the apartment buildings would help to set the standard for rents in the area. In previous testimonies, they stated that they were concerned that Rockwood Rising would signal to other developers and apartment owners that there is money to be made in the area, encouraging them to increase the rent as property values increased. In the February

2017 GRDCAC meeting, a year earlier, one of the committee members asked, "Do we have a targeted rent per square foot yet?" The executive director of the URA replied, "EcoNorthwest is doing a housing study to determine what achievable rents might be. They are still in the process of that work." Now, 14 months after that work was "in process," Juan and Leo eagerly anticipated the presentation by EcoNorthwest, a large economic consulting firm operating in the Northwest, because they believed it would reveal estimated rental housing amounts for the Rockwood Rising project, and thus the area.

Leo did not prepare a testimony ahead of time, given the short notice of the meeting, but he planned to listen to the EcoNorthwest presentation first, so that he could build his testimony off the presentation. His plan did not pan out when he realized that the public comment portion of the meeting was now at the beginning of the meeting. He testified anyways, simply repeating one of the questions he and others of Pueblo Unido asked multiple times before, "What is the rent estimates on apartments?" They answered his question with silence. In the public comment section of meetings, citizens have the right to attend and give public testimony, but the government body they testify in front of is not required to respond in any way. About the three-minute limit and about being met with silence, Juan said,

> *Having three minutes to talk, and then I guess that's just how they limit us to being able to present everything that we have to present to them. We've learned though that even though we don't finish in our three minutes, we still submit our testimonies [in writing] so they have to see all of it. At first, we were really frustrated by the fact that it was only three minutes, and they would just say thank you and would not give an answer [to our*

questions]. Just because they listen doesn't necessarily mean that they're actually paying attention to what we're actually saying. As far as answers, I don't think we gotten any answers. They always replied with another question, and we understand that's how politics works. It's just one question after another and back and forth.

After they gave Leo a silent response to his question, the committee moved the agenda forward. They approved the minutes from their last meeting in October, six months ago. Then, two representatives from EcoNorthwest, Lorelei Juntunen and Matt Craigie, gave their presentation.

Lorelei and Matt's presentation focused on answering two questions. 1) "What factors, both local and regional are causing housing rents to rise in Rockwood?" 2) "Will the addition of new housing units in the Rockwood Rising project shift rental rates enough for landlords of existing properties in Rockwood to raise their rents?" Members of Pueblo Unido pushed for new, concrete data on how Rockwood Rising would directly and indirectly affect rents in Rockwood, especially for the low-income people, whom they work closely with. From Pueblo Unido's perspective, EcoNorthwest was supposed to help provide the answer, EcoNorthwest's presentation showed that they did not collect any new data. Rather, their presentation focused on articulating neoliberal beliefs about the efficiency of market logics and the ability of those logics to solve the current housing crisis. They said nothing about how those beliefs and logics may have contributed to the housing crisis in the first place. The presentation defined and explained basic economic concepts such as "filtering," "supply and demand," and price setting and basic concepts of displacement such as "direct displacement" and "indirect displacement." In doing so,

they summarized the problem of the housing crisis as the underproduction of housing units to which the answer was more development. “The Portland region has under-produced housing units. An efficient housing market provides units at all points in the spectrum, allowing ‘filtering’ to occur” one of the presenter explains. “Rockwood Rising is one part of the affordability solution; it delivers housing units at a crucial price-point in the housing market,” she lectured. In this light, they concluded that rather than being the initial gentrifying force, which groups like Pueblo Unido hinted at, in actuality, “Rockwood Rising is part of the solution” to the critical housing crisis affecting the lives of low income people.

During the Q&A portion after the presentation, after the committee members asked their questions, Leo raised his hand silently. The chair of the committee overlooked his gesture to ask a question and tried to move on to the next agenda item. Leo then verbally said, “I have a question.” A committee member sitting next to the committee chair, nodded to him. He told me later that the committee chair “was probably trying to ignore me, but it was that guy that gave me the green light to ask the question.” Leo cited Miriam Zuk’s policy brief which concluded that building affordable housing and market rate housing eased housing pressures of supply and demand, but that building affordable housing was twice as effective (Zuk and Chapple 2016). “Why, then aren’t affordable housing more of a priority, as an anti-displacement measure?” To this, one of the presenters dismissed his citation by stating that she did not think “Miriam’s study” applied to Portland. She also added that they know “Miriam,” and that EcoNorthwest is working on a project with her for Metro, the regional governing body for the Portland metropolitan area. The other presenter encouraged Leo to look at Metro’s calendar to attend “Miriam’s presentation” so that he could ask his question to her directly. The

suggestion to attend "Miriam's presentation" when she planned to be in Portland later on for another purpose to ask Leo's question communicated a mismatch between the urgency connected to the housing crisis expressed by Leo and Pueblo Unido and the EcoNorthwest presenters.

Considering that they were presenting on such a serious topic, the delivery of the EcoNorthwest presentation and the discussion that followed was rather upbeat. For example, when Lorelei Juntunen introduced herself and her co-presenter Matt Craigie, she joked, "I'm here to answer the easy questions, and Matt is here to answer the hard ones." The committee laughed. Then when Lorelei stated to Leo that "not building will only exacerbate the problem and raise rents even more," one of the committee members agreed with her. "We already tried that in 2009, and that didn't work." To this the presenters and the committee members laughed again. "That's right," another committee member chuckled. Later, Leo clarified that of course that he was not suggesting that they do not build any housing, but that they should build at price points that is affordable to the people he sees daily, but his point during the meeting was misconstrued. When compared to the Gresham Housing for the People meeting described in the next section, the emotions communicated at the GRDCAC meeting appeared rather misplaced.

After they gave their presentation, there was a five-minute break before the next agenda item began. Juan, who sat next to me during the meeting, whispered to me, "Yeah, they didn't present any new information, except to say that they found 16 apartment complexes in Rockwood that were 'repositioning'." EcoNorthwest defined "repositioning" as owners "modifying or upgrading a multifamily property to rapidly raise rents," specifically any that raised rents over 10% in a single year." Juan and I

wondered the same thing, “What did they actually do over the last 14 months, if they didn’t spend it collecting data? If they presented no new data, then what are they basing their conclusions on?” As Juan told me earlier, “we understand that’s how politics works. It’s just one question after another and back and forth.”

I left the meeting at 8:30, when it was scheduled to end, but it continued past 8:30. I checked in with Leo a few days after. We talked about the meeting, and I asked if anyone other than him ate the catered sandwiches and chips from Panera Bread, he answered, “No. We always get to take all of the food home with us because they don’t really eat.” He also added that when everyone in the meeting walked to the parking lot to get into their cars to go home, “You know, Juan drives a Honda, and everyone else was leaving in their Mercedes.” These details point to class differences between Juan and Leo as members of Pueblo Unido and the GRDCAC members and URA staff.

The next section compares the GRDCAC meeting with the Gresham Housing for the People meeting that Juan, Leo, and I attended only one day before on Tuesday. When analyzing the two Gresham meetings about housing side-by-side, the jarring differences in tone and affect continued to reflect class differences between the participants of the two meetings. The comparison will show the stark tone differences in urgency of the housing crisis, the limited material resources available for the GH4PPL as renters, and the accessibility of the two meetings in terms of transportation and English proficiency.

Pueblo Unido, Community Alliance of Tenants, and Gresham Housing for the People

After testifying in front of Gresham City Council, the Mayor, and the GRDCAC about Rockwood Rising for several months without feeling heard, Juan and Leo

connected with the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), a statewide tenant rights organization, based in Portland. They attended CAT's membership meeting at the end of October 2017, and the two organizations began to work together. Tina Lee, a staff member at CAT suggested that Pueblo Unido should join CAT to push for more renters' protections in all of Gresham, rather than continue to focus narrowly on Rockwood Rising, and Pueblo Unido agreed. Together CAT and Pueblo Unido joined forces and formed Gresham Housing for the People (GH4PPL) with the first meetings held in February 2018. They continued to meet once a month in attempts to catalyze a coalition of renters in Gresham to pressure City Council and the Mayor to pass, amongst other protections, ordinances that would require landlords to pay relocation assistance to tenants who receive no-cause evictions or rent increases over 10% within a 12-month period, extending the minimum required notification time of no-cause evictions from 30 days to 90 days, and to declare a Housing State of Emergency to allow the Gresham to creatively address the housing crisis. As they were preparing for their April meeting, which was a day before the GRDCAC meeting described in the last section, Tina from CAT asked if I could help coordinate the meeting with Pueblo Unido. I agreed. In what follows, I recall details from the April GH4PPL and compare it to the GRDCAC meeting from the previous section to illustrate the contrasting ways that the meetings were conducted, reflecting key class differences in how the housing crisis was felt and addressed respectively by low-income renters at the GH4PPL meeting and GRDCAC committee members/EcoNorthwest Gresham City Hall. The comparison also helped to reveal the different solutions to the housing crisis proposed by the GRDCAC (and their colleagues at the City of Gresham) and vulnerable low-income renters.

Pueblo Unido and CAT scheduled the April GH4PPL meeting for 6:30, and I had agreed to pick up the food at 5:30 and bring it to the meeting. Rather than food from Panera Bread, a CAT staff member, who lived in Rockwood at the time and knew many of the local businesses that catered, ordered food from a Mexican food cart owned and operated by a community member. Cathy, a CAT board member brought Little Debbie snacks as a dessert to supplement dinner. To help people, who did not have a car, attend the meeting, Pueblo Unido and CAT organized ride shares. In addition to picking up the food, I also picked up two community members who did not have cars. One was an African American woman in her 60s, named Claire, who grew up in Albina. Living on social security, she now lived in East Portland, after being displaced from her previous apartment due to increased rent. The other person I picked up was Catrina, a grandmother who lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Rockwood with her daughter and granddaughter because she could not afford a place of her own. She was Mexican and spoke limited English, so Juan and Leo interpreted for her at the meeting. Cathy also picked up three community members, so they could attend the meeting.

We arrived at Reynolds Middle School, where the meeting was held, shortly after 6:00. Juan and Leo worked at the school, so they were able to reserve the cafeteria at no cost to the group. The cafeteria was at least four times larger than the Oregon Trail Room, where the GRDCAC meeting was held, and it was being shared with other groups. The room had about 20 long cafeteria tables with plastic laminate on the table tops. The technology in the space was awkward and outdated. For example, after we invited people to start eating dinner, Leo and I worked on setting up the projector, which I brought from CAT, so that he could show a video of the last Gresham City Council meeting where half a dozen white, elderly renters and a few Latinx residents from Pueblo Unido testified for

more renters' protections in Gresham. We fumbled for 20 minutes trying to lower the white screen above the stage and for another few minutes trying to find an extension cord long enough to use the projector as there were few available outlets. Leo showed the videos off his work laptop, which was outdated too because it used a VGA, rather than a more modern HDMI, outlet to plug into the projector.

There was a bilingual Spanish/English sign in sheet in front of the doorway with a pen, which encouraged but did not require participants to provide their name, email, and preferred language. Unlike at City Hall, a security guard did not man the sign in table. About 20 renters attended the meeting. They ranged in age from mid-20s to 70s and included people from different racial backgrounds: Latinx, African American, and white. The meeting began with participants introducing themselves and sharing what brought them to the meeting. "I'm here," one participant stated somberly, "because my rent increased by $300 last month, and I can't afford it." Another participant shared, "I'm a paycheck away from homelessness, and I don't know what I'm going to do if my rent goes up again or if I receive an eviction." Another participant said, "I'm worried about my neighbors. I've already begun to see people move out of the apartment complex I live in, after my rent increased and don't want to see anyone else leave."

After the heavy-hearted introductions, Leo showed the video of community members testifying in front of City Council for more renters' protections on April 3rd, a week earlier, to show some of the groups' activities since the last meeting. The tone of meeting remained somber as renters told City Council about sacrifices they made to pay for rent. Javier for example, submitted a testimony, because he could not attend the City Council meeting due to illness, his testimony was read by a member of CAT on Javier's behalf. Javier shared that he moved into his current apartment in October 2015 and paid

$850 for rent. In March 2017, he renewed his lease at $1,070 per month, and in March 2018, a year later, he renewed his lease again at $1,430 per month. In 2.5 years, his rent increased by almost 70%. The sacrifices his family made to pay the rent included a year of college for his son. Due to his illness, Javier was unable to work, so his wife was the breadwinner of the family. The family must now decide between paying for rent or paying for Javier's medical care. He urged the Mayor and City Council to act to prevent his family from having to move or face homelessness.

After watching a few testimonies, the group then decided to call the numbers provided by the Mayor and City Council—each with their own line—for residents to tell their rent increase and no-cause eviction stories. After calling through the list, the group discovered that of the seven numbers (six Councilors and the Mayor) provided, only the Mayor's and one of the Councilor's lines worked. This further put into question the seriousness and urgency in which city leaders placed on the housing crisis.

Next, Leo talked about the new Gresham Task Force on Housing, which "will provide recommendations to the community on how to best address housing issues in the city." Leo explained that Pueblo Unido and CAT had testified for nine months regarding the housing instability faced by renters in Gresham in front of the Mayor and City Council. He stated that they decided to create a community taskforce to provide nonbinding recommendations on best practices to provide housing needs in the city. Leo informed the group,

> *The taskforce will be appointed by the Mayor, and our strategy is to have many renters apply, since the rumor is that they will only have one seat reserved for a renter. We would like the taskforce to make up of at least 50% of renters, since they represent half of the city's residents. So, to help*

make that happen, we would like to spend the rest of our time in this meeting having you begin your application to be on the taskforce. Someone will then look over your application and help you refine it before the April 20th deadline. We've asked the City what criteria they are using to choose members of the taskforce, and they have not answered us yet, so given the upcoming deadline, we are going to apply anyways and see what happens.

Leo shared his skepticism of the taskforce, but admitted that in this political game, tenants did not have other options to be heard. The taskforce was the result of months of organized effort by Pueblo Unido members and other renters, but Leo questioned whether the taskforce represented a distraction from city leaders or actual progression on meeting their goals of winning renters' protections for Gresham's renters. There was no way to know, and the participants spent the rest of the meeting filling out applications for the taskforce. The rest of the chapter describes more about the Hernández's residential history as renters and their failed attempt to buy a home, solidifying their position as forced renters. In doing so, his story illustrates the high stakes that renters' protections represent for Juan and families like his. Families and household with undocumented members live with daily fear and insecurity in relation to possible detention and deportation. These fears are intensified by ongoing preoccupation about the loss of housing.

The Hernández Family, Undocumented Immigrant Renters

The Hernández's apartment sits on the edge of Portland and Gresham in the Rockwood neighborhood. When they first moved in, they started out in a one-bedroom apartment, as is often the case for newly-arrived families. When his sister was born a year later, they moved into a two-bedroom. Then, when his sister turned six years old, they moved into a three-bedroom in anticipation of his younger brother's arrival. As in the case with other undocumented immigrant renters I came to know before and during fieldwork, his parents had a hard time looking for someone who would rent to them "with no renting history or anything like that," but they found their apartment through their social networks. The single most important asset for newly-arrived immigrant families are personal connections, often from the same community (see Zavella 2011; Gomberg Munoz 2016 for more examples).

> *The fact that we already had family there. Family that was renting there already had a relationship with the manager. She understood our situation. We went and talked to them and she was like, "Yeah, you guys can move in whenever you guys are ready." So just having a connection, being able to talk to her, and her understanding where we're coming from and what our situation was like, she was like, "Yeah, I have a room you guys can come move in." But it would have been harder to find a place anywhere else especially not knowing anyone or not having a connection like that.*

After they moved in, the Hernández's social networks in the apartment building and the neighborhood continued to play a role in making them feel welcomed. Their

relationship with the apartment manager who rented to them, "an elderly, white lady, really nice," became an important part why they stayed in the apartment.

> *When we first moved in, we had a couple of family members also living there, so just them showing us around the complex and introducing us to a lot of the other neighbors and the manager at the time was really nice. Just from meeting the manager and building a relationship with her, she ended up being a really good friend of the family. Even after she moved out of there, we still keep in touch, so not only did we meet each other, but it also extended to us having a longer relationship with her. She was always looking after us as if we were her own kids too. Especially because we were always getting into trouble for playing out in the parking lot—stuff like hitting cars with balls.*

The on-site apartment manager took care of the place, and Juan described the apartment complex and the neighborhood, when they first moved in, as "well-kept," "tidy," and "nice." There were flowers and "everything was more taken care of."

Yet, around 2005 at the end of his middle school years, he started to see the neighborhood decline and attributed the change to two main reasons. First, people who were moving in, primarily African American families from the Albina neighborhoods in Portland, did not want to be there. He observed,

> *There was a lot of people being displaced from North Portland out here. It was rough for them to come out here into a new neighborhood which they knew nothing about and try to adapt. From the experiences I've had talking to people around the neighborhood, people are moving into the*

neighborhood not because they want, but because they are forced to, because of what's going on in Portland. They're being sent out here not because they want to be out here. The way they view it is: "I don't want to be here, and I'm not going to be out here for very long." They don't consider this place home.

When we first started living there, there was a lot of Hispanic/Latino families moving in. Right now, we have a lot of African Americans moving in, and they're constantly in for a couple months before they move out again. Then, we'll have another family in and stuff like that. I think we have too many people coming in and out where they're just bouncing around from place to place. They're only going to be there for a certain amount of time before they move somewhere else.

In Juan's comment, he reasoned that part of the area's decline comes from the instability of serial displacement faced mostly by African Americans being outpriced of the Albina neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland to the Rockwood area. When they only lived in the apartment for only a short time before they moved again, it disrupted the "welcoming" atmosphere that was there before. Juan explained that he did not make an effort to welcome new residents to the complex anymore because the "people who were moving in, they were scared to introduce themselves and be open and come out and stuff like that, so that pretty much lead to people closing themselves off and only sticking around family." Additionally, he elaborated that "it's hard to tell which people had been there for a while, and it's hard to introduce new neighbors to people you barely know

yourself. Before, everyone knew each other through families and jobs. Everyone was close, and I don't see it being that way anymore."

Second, when the original owner sold the apartment complex in 2009, they lost their property manager, and the new owners did not take the same level of care and responsibility to maintain the property.

> *Now, we don't even have a manager in the complex. The landlords pretty much show up whenever they have to fix something or to pick up the rents. Otherwise, they're never there. Just the condition of the place is definitely the opposite of what it used to be. They don't take care of it. It's always a mess. If it wasn't for the residents, they wouldn't make changes or clean up anything around the complex.*

Juan described how he learned to navigate asking for repairs from the new owners. When they had an on-site manager, residents simply asked her directly, but with no responsive on-site manager, he had to find another way to get the repairs his family needed.

> *At first, I was having to call them to get a hold of them because that was the only way. Half the time, it goes straight to voicemail. When I would get in contact with them, they would be me that they'd be there the next day. Sometimes, they wouldn't show up. Later on, I started to ask around on how to get in contact with them. The manager that was there before, I asked her, "Hey, what can I do about it?" She said, "Well, if you write them a letter, then give them a copy and make sure they write off on your copy to have proof that you talked to them, and they know what they have to do,*

and don't pay the rent until they make those fixes, especially after they sign the letter." I started doing that, and once they saw that I was one of the few people in the complex actually holding them accountable, they started to make those repairs right away. Nowadays, it still takes them a while to make repairs, and I feel like the repairs they make are just band-aids just to cover up for the meantime, and later on, it starts again.

Besides being slow on repairs, the new owners also increased the rent by $100 every time they made changes to the complex such as pouring concrete in their patio area as described in Juan's quote below. The tenants receive the rent increase immediately after the change because they refuse to offer leases, forcing residents into month-to-month agreements.

When they got there, they didn't do any leases. It goes monthly, bimonthly. We haven't seen anyone go on leases, so that's one of the reasons why people move in so quickly because I think they know they're only going to stay there for a little bit. The new landlords made some changes to the place, and we've noticed that there are rent increases right after that. In front of our patio, before it was just grass. They put concrete in, and the month after that, the rent went up $100.

The new changes, Juan reported, forced tenant turnover in the apartment when his neighbors could no longer afford the rent increases.

We started off at $890 when we first moved into the three-bedroom, and now it is $1,200. It's definitely gone up over the years, and we've also seen that as people move out, and they fix up the apartment, they've already raised the rent, so we're wondering how that's going to affect the rest of us. Some people have had to move because they can't pay the rent, mostly more elderly people and people on social security. For right now, we've managed to pay the rent, but it's because there's me and my dad working, and we help each other out, but if it was just him or me, I don't think we would be able to pay the rent, especially for that many bedrooms. Hopefully, they don't make any new updates to the complex. Otherwise, we know for sure, it's going to be another rent increase.

In many ways, the Hernández's renting experiences were similar to other Portland-area renters who see their complex get bought and sold. When the owners change, it is not unusual for them to not to hire an on-site property manager to save money, and they change the rental agreements that tenants had before such as refusing to offer leases, which forces tenants onto more precarious month-to-month agreements. With Oregon being a no-cause eviction state, being on a month-to-month lease means that the landlords can legally issue no-cause eviction notices, forcing tenants to be out within 30 days. Other tenants talked about new owners imposing new utility costs, deferring maintenance, or making repair requests more difficult. In other ways their renting experience was atypical in that because of their undocumented status, they relied on their social networks to introduce them to the manager, who approved their application. Fortunately, the manager was understanding and kind, whereas in other

stories, managers took advantage of immigrant families, knowing that they have limited housing choices. After the owner of the complex changed and their renting experience worsened, the family attempted to buy a house, but like with renting, their undocumented status became an important factor in their housing experience.

In some ways, the use of their social networks to introduce them to their property manager who later became a close family friend could be read as their preference to live near those like them due to "in-group affinity" (Crowder and Krysan 2016; Charles 2003), but we must also consider that because of state-sanctioned, institutionalized discrimination against undocumented immigrants, the Hernández family and other undocumented immigrants had little or no other options. In this light, their story shows the intersection of discrimination and preference in racial residential segregation theories.

The Hernández Family's Homebuying Attempt

The options available to the Hernández family not to be renter, but not to be homeless, as with other renters, is to become a homeowner. "Yeah, definitely have looked into moving and purchasing a house," Juan shared with me when I ask if they considered moving. "We've looked around, and we've had everything we need to get a loan." He relayed to me the process of getting the loan:

> *We talked to families that already had homes, and they put us in contact with their brokers. They talked us through the process of what it took to get a home loan and next steps. We definitely had to do a lot of research on it. First up was to go to the bank and see what we were approved for on a loan. Luckily, a few years back, we had been able to get a couple of credit cards with our I-10 numbers. At that time, my parents didn't have*

any social security numbers. They were able to start with their I-10 numbers, which they used for their taxes every year. They have really good credit now. They were approved for a loan and everything.

After they received the pre-approved loan, they were told that they needed to choose someone to put all the paperwork under their name. After that, they could start looking for a house, make an offer on it, and then see how that went. Around this time that they were looking into buying a home, Donald Trump was elected president, ICE raids increased in the Portland area, as they did around the nation, and their future to remain in the country and their dream of buying a home became even more uncertain.

They have the credit for it, but they don't have the documentation to able to put a home under their name. They didn't know every day, there's just: How long are we just going to be here as there's chances of raids at work or just out on the street and stuff? It's just a lot to take into consideration. It's a big step forward to take on responsibility like buying a home. Then comes the question of whose name to put it under.

At first, they considered putting it under Juan's name, but that choice became even more unfeasible after the Trump administration declared an end to the DACA program in September 2017 and set it to expire in early March 2018, giving Congress a six-month deadline to pass immigration reform. That deadline came and went without much legal consequence to the DACA program, but increasing uncertainty and fear remained. Juan explained how the current political climate affected their consideration to buy a house and climb out of renting.

I usually put my name on everything because I have all the paperwork required for that two-year timeline, so then it would probably be under my name. But once I reached the point where I was like having to pay my immigration lawyer to find out whether I could still apply for DACA and whether it would get approved or not. It's just the fact that since my parents are undocumented, so there's no paperwork for them to be able to put a home under their name. With my situation, it's also kind of rough because my [DACA] paperwork is in one process, and then to jump into another process is rough. I only have my paperwork for two years, and then I have to renew again. It's not for sure whether it gets approved or not, so it's just iffy. It's kind of hard for me to also take on something like that [purchasing a house] when I don't know what my current situation is. That's the one thing we've been told is like to buy a home or anything that you have to be a citizen and this and that. They [my parents] also don't want to apply for something then later on have it taken away because of their documentation. There's no point in trying to take on something like this if the next day, I lose all that so once we started to see the downsides to it, we just stopped looking into it.

I asked Juan what he thought would happen if he went through with buying a house, and his DACA did not get renewed. His answer gave a broader perspective on how deportations and the fear of deportations made it unlikely for undocumented families to become homeowners even though they may qualify in other ways.

The house would probably get taken away, going back to the bank or something like that. Years back when a lot of people were being deported, a lot of people were losing their houses. It may be the person [deported] was the breadwinner of the house, so they wouldn't be able to make payments or for whatever reason so then that's also a lot of stuff that we took into consideration like whether it was my dad or me who would be able to keep making payments on a house. That's one thing that we looked into, not wanting to leave that responsibility upon the rest of the family especially with my siblings being younger and my mom not working and stuff like that.

Juan also discussed another very important reason why they have stopped looking for a house. Simply put, moving is not just inconvenient and costly, but also dangerous for mixed-status families like the Hernández's.

Right now, I'm going through [DACA] renewal proceedings, so that's an even bigger reason why I haven't actually tried to look for a house right now. I have to report back my address and location all the time to immigration. It's just a lot more complicated to keep updating and showing all the paperwork for change of address. Right now, they know where I've been since I've started DACA. They don't really checkup or go visit or anything like that. At the same time, if I were to move, I wouldn't want them to show up at the house because it's also putting the rest of the family in danger.

With the prospects of homeownership highly unlikely because of their immigration status, the family continued to rent. Yet, with Juan being in the middle of an uncertain DACA renewal process, he explained that renewals are never guaranteed. He noticed that other people in the same renewal process as him, who have not been able to get their DACA renewed, have to move locations because they know that immigration already has all their information.

> *Once their work permit expires, they're an easy target to get picked up. I've just seen a lot of people move. Once they get their paperwork back as denied, they have to move right away; otherwise, it won't be long until they end up getting picked up at their own house.*

I asked Juan, "Where do they go?" He answered,

> *I guess they go to anyone who would rent to them, especially nowadays with everyone asking for IDs and everything. Once DACA expires, your IDs and driver's license expires as well. A lot of people don't want to rent to you unless you have valid identification. Then there's a lot of these people left without jobs because the jobs they had were inside of schools and stuff. Once your work permit expires, you're not allowed to work or anything like that. It's just rough. They try to look to anywhere that will rent out to them, and also have to start from scratch and look for a job from anyone willing to hire them in their situation.*

Conclusion

In October 2017, Juan, with his colleagues at Pueblo Unido, attended the GRDCAC meeting. Juan read his testimony, stating their opposition to Rockwood Rising constructing 100 market rate apartments. He urged the City of Gresham to instead implement anti-displacement measures and build more affordable housing to protect the community from the tide of mass displacement and gentrification. In response to their public comments, Ms. Salvador, a member of the committee and a real estate broker responded,

> *In my work with renters in Rockwood, I see many people not being displaced, but instead becoming first-time home buyers, because buying is now the same price as renting. Rockwood residents want to stay here, which is the goal for both the City and Pueblo Unido: to keep our residents in the community. A good goal to have is to promote home ownership, and there are a lot of resources available to help first-time homebuyers. Buying homes is still very affordable in Rockwood because buying in the neighborhood will now cost the same amount as renting.*

Ms. Salvador's comment helps to illustrate one of the main points of this chapter, which is that people with her assumptions need to realize that for some families, like the Hernández family, buying a home is not a choice because of their mixed immigration status. Other families may also have additional barriers such as lack of income, good credit, or money for a down payment. As result, they are forced renters. This chapter also highlights how the lack of protections for tenants in the rental system forced many low-income people to make difficult choices between paying for rent (to avoid homelessness)

and other critical needs in their lives such as paying for an immigration lawyer if family members are sent to a detention center, medical bills, their children's education, or food. If renters are forced to rent, it would seem that cities like Gresham should pass renters' protections to help those families, which is what Pueblo Unido tried to push the city to do. Although Juan and Leo founded Pueblo Unido to focus on preventing deportations, they soon discovered that the rental housing crisis that doubled the rent made it difficult for their clients to pay for an attorney. After protesting the Rockwood Rising project because they believe it to be a gentrifying force that will exacerbate already increasing rents in the area, they changed their focus slightly and teamed up with CAT to advocate for stronger renters' protections in Gresham.

As they moved between the GRDCAC and GH4PPL, they also experienced the classed-inflected hierarchies that exist in different kinds of housing-related meetings in Gresham. Lastly, the description of the GRDCAC meeting with its multitudes of inaccessible characteristics such as all materials being presented in English, the security guard at the door, the limited chairs put out for community members, the last-minute cancellations, amongst other things, begged the question, "How public are these public meetings?"

At a larger level, this chapter lays out the interconnected vulnerabilities between the daily insecurity of renters who live on the edge of eviction and the families with undocumented members who live with the additional daily fear and insecurity of detention and deportation of a family member. Under the Trump administration, ICE arrests and detentions are up 40% (Capps, et al. 2018). The coalitional work of Pueblo Unido and CAT suggest the importance of building organizational and political connections between different kinds of renters who share a common experience of

insecurity. This work also builds alliances between immigrant rights work and housing advocates in ways that can create broader coalitions for pushing back on development advocates who point to the market as a way to solve housing shortages. And it makes non-immigrant renters sympathetic and informed about the additional pressure undocumented renters live under. The emotional insecurity of being on the edge of losing your housing and being on the edge of detention are connected. This chapter suggests the numbers of people in Gresham of with anxiety, emotional insecurity, and likely some PTSD related from actual or probably eviction and detention is significant, and further research is needed to better understand these under-examined connections.

CHAPTER IV

FORCED, NO-CAUSE EVICTIONS AND ITS EFFECTS

Introduction

In the Fall of 2015 at Peninsula Park in North Portland standing in front of their constituents, their supporters, and the press, some bundled up in extra clothes to fight against the autumn cold, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) declared a "Renters State of Emergency." Typical of late fall in Portland, the precipitation fluctuated between a light sprinkling, general mist, and dampened air, and the grey clouds mimicked the somber mood of the crowd. "This summer has seen an unprecedented number of building-wide evictions and rent increases," Justin Buri, the executive director of CAT, said to the crowd of 200, one-third of whom I estimated were people of color. The population of Portland's communities of color has always been relatively tiny compared to other cities of its size, so the diverse color of the crowd was notable. Justin had dark brown hair, a trimmed beard, pale skin, and a slim, lanky build, which was made more obvious in his skinny jeans. In the midst of rent hikes and no-cause evictions, CAT and their supporters called for a one-year moratorium on no-cause evictions and for landlords to give a year's notice to tenants for any rent increases higher than five percent.

"The evictions and rent hikes are forcing responsible and reliable tenants out of their homes," Katrina Holland, the deputy director of CAT announced after taking the loudspeaker from Justin. The crowd, hungry with anticipation for Katrina's words, exhaled audibly as the loudspeaker stalled on her for a moment. With the rain steaming over her dark rimmed glasses, dusting her natural, rounded, tightly curled black hair, sticking up in all directions, Katrina continued her speech. "Right now, it's harder for a

tenant to find housing than it is for a landlord to push us out. This is beyond a crisis. This is an emergency. Our communities are hemorrhaging, and the bleeding has to stop!"

Oregon's law permitting no-cause evictions is the structural lynchpin in the lives of renters. While the previous chapters have provided an in-depth look at the ways in which renters remain on a renting treadmill across generations, through displacement from the city core to the suburbs, and a lack of access to processes for purchasing homes, this chapter documents and analyzes how no-cause evictions linked to gentrification push people into homelessness and an endless cycle of displacement in the booming real estate market of Portland. It also highlights the developing coalitional organizing strategies that have evolved between legal non-profits serving low-income clients such as the Oregon Law Center and tenant organizing advocates. No-cause eviction processes have created emergency situations for hundreds where alliances between different organizations representing the Portland areas most vulnerable residents have thrived.

In Spring of 2015, Grantview Court Apartments issued no-cause evictions to over one-third of tenants living in the 80-unit apartment complex in Gresham, a Portland suburb. The asset manager from Templeton Property, who issued the evictions, described the evictions as an effort to "improve the clientele in the area and increase the value of the property." Nearly all of the tenants living there were minorities and at least half were African Americans. Around that time, Randall Investment Company, the new landlords of Sovereign Apartments told all of the tenants, mostly seniors on fixed income, in the 43-unit building in downtown that they had to be out by the end of the year for renovations. All received no-cause evictions. In the Fall of 2015, Brentwood-Pinecrest apartments issued no-cause eviction notices to all tenants living in one of their 22 units. Nine months before, Brentwood-Pinecrest sold for $2.2 million to NBP Capital, a

"privately held commercial real estate fund with a focus on value-add opportunistic investing on the West Coast" (NBPCapital.com). Many Latino and Native families lived here. At Terri Lee Apartments in outer SE Portland on the edge of Portland and Gresham, all except one of the tenants living in the 17 units received a no-cause eviction notices, and they had to be out by Halloween. The previous owner sold the building for more than $1 million.

In Summer 2016, Walnut Tree Apartments in the Southwest suburb of Tigard was sold to a Los Angeles-based company and the new owners issued no-cause evictions to all tenants living in their 43-unit complex. They renovated it by the end of the year and doubled the rent. At the beginning of 2017, the new owners of Normandy Apartments sent notices to their tenants, notifying them that their rent will more than double from $600 to $1,250 per month beginning in April. Real estate property owner CPE Killingsworth bought the 18-unit building for $2 million in December, one month before the notices went out. Five percent of students who attended Rigley Elementary and several extended Mexican families lived here. Normandy's management company, First Class Property Management, were following the new owner's instructions to improve the "poor conditions" of the property. "We weren't raising the rent just to raise the rent," said Tom, the owner of the property management company. "They need to be fixed up." At about the same time, Titan Manor Apartment's new owners issued no-cause evictions to families of 59-school children, who lived in their building. They had bought Titan Manor, a 72-unit apartment complex in October for $8.3 million, three months before the eviction notices. Many undocumented indigenous Guatemalan immigrants and Latino families lived here. All of these tenants, and hundreds of others received no-cause eviction notices across the Portland metro region, lived in affordable housing.

This chapter focuses ethnographic attention on building-wide, no-cause evictions, in this case the experiences of three single mothers, Rosie Gonzales, Eva Martin, and Maria Gomez, who were issued no-cause eviction notices. During my fieldwork, many single mothers experienced no-cause evictions, which affected their abilities to create stable homes for themselves and their children. While their decisions before and after the no-cause evictions were affected by their lack of monetary resources, each of these vignettes serves to underscore the different "choices" un/available to them, essentially locking them and their children into continuously unstable, unhealthy housing. After receiving the no-cause eviction, Rosie moved out of her apartment at Titan Manor, and while that brought her relief from the threat of homelessness, it also brought up a new set of conflicts in her new home, which made her and her children continually anxious of future no-cause eviction notices. For Eva, the no-cause experience brought out the fighter in her as she actively and successfully advocated for tenants to be able to stay in their homes by getting the notices rescinded. Her story highlights the dangers and rewards of tenants fighting back. Additionally, her story also underlines how the rental market functions in domestic violence situations, which force women to choose between staying with their abuser or becoming homeless with their children. Such choices point to the interconnected vulnerabilities between housing insecurity and domestic violence. The apartment complex that Maria lived in underwent renovations as she was still living in it. Unlike Rosie, Maria tried but could not get approved for a new rental after her no-cause eviction notice. With nowhere else to go, she and her two teenage daughters continued to stay in the apartment and the management company responded by shutting off essential services like heat and water. Maria's story also teaches us what happens when people live in suburban metropolitan borderlands. In these suburban places, Portland's hot, rapidly

rising rental market pushed up rents outside of its city borders, but Portland's new tenant protections, like the Housing State of Emergency and the Renter Relocation Assistance Ordinance, did not extend past the city's boarder. Such an analysis brings to light further consequences of the Jones' story discussed in Chapter One of being priced out to the suburbs as the effects of Albina's gentrification ripples out the rest of the city and beyond. Each of these women's story underscores renters' continual fight and resistance against displacement in the face of violent racism, sexism, and market forces.

In Portland, no-cause evictions enabled building-wide removal of tenants for the purposes of flipping affordable multi-family complexes to luxury units, especially in a regional housing boom like the one that happened after 2010. Financial investments in real estate drive these no-cause evictions and transitions of buildings. Luke Hammill, the housing reporter for The Oregonian informed readers:

> *Tenants are losing their rental units on short notice throughout the region, amid a frenzied multifamily market that has seen a record* ***$1.6 billion*** *in building sales this year alone. Frequently, new owners evict tenants or aggressively raise rents to empty the buildings so they can renovate and re-rent (or re-sell) at significantly higher prices…The trend is helping fuel skyrocketing rents that are increasing at an annualized rate of 14 percent region-wide—some areas are rising at twice that pace (Hammill October 25, 2015, emphasis mine).*

Hammill goes on to quote Jeff Capen, a principal broker with a reality group in Northeast Portland. Capen analyzed, "Even back in 2006, 2007, I did not see as much cash in the market place. Now, I see a very aggressive market place where things are being bid up."

Furthermore, Hammill states that out-of-town institutional investors are buying buildings at an average of $89,000 per unit, up more than 14% from last year.

Oregon is a no-cause eviction state, which means that the law does not require landlords to have reasonable cause to evict tenants, and they can evict without ever providing a motive. Additionally, at the time of my fieldwork, the law did not limit rent increases, and did not begin regulating it until February 2017. Due to the efforts of activists and organizers, like Eva Martin who spoke out about her no-cause experiences at Titan Manor and the effect it had on her, her children, and her neighbors, the City of Portland began to require landlords pay for relocation assistance if they issued no-cause evictions or raised the rent more than 10% over a 12-month period, which helped to slow the rate of evictions. The relocation ordinance clearly targeted larger investors as City Commissioners initially exempted landlords who lived in the unit or only had one rental unit. Even so, when city leaders made the renter relocation assistance ordinance permanent in 2018 by removing the time limit on the original ordinance, tenant activists demanded that leaders remove the exemption for landlords who only owned one rental. The reason for the demand was because renters and the city could not verify how many rental units a person owned due to use of limited liability corporations that were used as shell companies to hide the identities of landlords. The Portland City Commissioners and Mayor agreed to remove the exemption.

Evictions in Portland

Sociologist and ethnographer Matthew Desmond's critically-acclaimed book *Evicted* (2016) tracked the eviction stories of eight families in Milwaukee and their urban entrepreneur landlord. In some ways, the descriptions and analysis of evictions by

Portlanders provided in this chapter overlaps with Desmond's work in that it illustrates how evictions have the power to wreck people's lives and destabilize families. Desmond aptly states that evictions are not only a condition of poverty, but a cause of it, and evictions play a key role in the reproduction of poverty for black mothers (Desmond 2012). This chapter adds to Desmond's analysis in that unlike the tenants highlighted in *Evicted,* who received for-cause evictions for reasons such as nonpayment of rent, the residents in this chapter received no-cause eviction notices that cleared entire buildings of low-income, long-term residents during a short period of time. Additionally, as Desmond details in his work, Milwaukee is one of the most racially segregated cities in the U.S., which allowed him to conduct his ethnography in three racially distinct neighborhoods.

Racial segregation is present in Portland, but it occurs at a micro-level on the scale of city blocks or apartment complexes rather than the designated black, Latino, Asian American, or white side of town, respectively, as commonly described in comparative race, place-based ethnographies such as *Evicted* (also see Cheng 2013; Roger Sanjek 1998, Hartigan 1999). In other words, segregation in Portland is not divided by distinct neighborhoods with specific racial populations living separately from people of other races, as was the case in Desmond's research. Rather, Portland segregation is marked by the places that black and brown people are restricted from living, but white people could live anywhere including places where communities of color were segregated like Vanport, Guild's Lake (a wartime Housing Authority of Portland-owned property that was sold shortly after the Vanport Flood, displacing families who lived there), or Albina. One of the people I interviewed, Colin Jones (from Chapter One), who grew up in segregated Albina in the 1970s and 80s, described

Portland's segregation phenomenon as "pockets" of good homes surrounded by troubled areas.

> *I want to say North and Northeast Portland is just one of those places where there was just a lot of pockets. You go to other cities and you have this demographic here and you have this demographic over here, and that's it. It's straight down the middle. Here, you got crime here. You have a crime ridden area here, but across the street, you know what I mean, it's middle class. It's kind of odd. A lot of people that have moved here was like, "That's very odd." There's a lot of Caucasian people that still live in these crime-ridden areas that were predominantly African American.*

Portland's segregation reality is unique not because the City's history is significantly less racist than places like Milwaukee, but because the city and state's racist policies and practices that began before the turn of the 20th century intentionally kept populations of nonwhites relatively low. Those policies included violent sundown laws (Lowen 2005), laws that prohibited black people from living in the state (Nokes 2013), laws that denied black people access to citizenship and the right to vote (Nokes 2013), policies that deported Japanese Americans to concentration camps during World War Two (Executive Order 9066), Indian Removal practices (Lewis 2014), and more. Additionally, laws such as the 1850 Land Donation Act, which gave away 320 acres of land to single white men and 640 acres to a married white couple, encouraged white people to move to the state. These racial policies caused populations of nonwhites in Oregon to be relatively low and populations of whites to be comparatively high, a pattern which persisted into the 21st century (Gibson 2007).

When we take into account that Portland's communities of color make less money, possess lower accumulative wealth, and are more likely to be renters because of past racist policies such as redlining, suburbanization, racial zoning, and urban renewal areas (Portland Housing Bureau 2017) we can see that Portlanders of color are more susceptible to no-cause evictions. Such events and policies were motivated by racial discrimination enacted by the racial state (Goldberg 2002). Then when, we take into consideration Portland's brand of micro-segregation in that large multi-family units tend to have mostly African American tenants, Latino residents, or a mix of newly-arrived refugees from around the world because of the apartments' ties to resettlement agencies, we can also see that no-cause, building-wide evictions around the Portland region dramatically and disproportionately unsettles communities of color, immigrants, and refugees. Portland-style segregation challenges common tools to measure geographic exclusion such as the dissimilarity index, which tend to measure segregation at a census tract or zip code level and are dependent on urban areas with relatively large populations of people of color.

Rosie and Moving Out

Rosie Gonzales described what life was like for her after she received a no-cause eviction that forced her family from their former home at Titan Manor apartments in North Portland's St. Johns neighborhood. She and her children lived there for four years, and it was the sixth home she lived in since moving to Oregon in 1999 from Mexico. Rosie had a warm, earthy-brown, terra-cotta complexion and smooth, dark hair tied into a low bun. A single mom of three, she had two daughters aged 10 and 16 and a 7-year old son. The Gonzales family, along with their neighbors received their no-cause eviction

notices during the Thanksgiving weekend in 2016, and they had 90 days or until the end of February to move out. Without the City's Housing State of Emergency, they would have had only 60 days or until January 26 to move out.

She moved out of Titan Manor the beginning of February, and I interviewed Rosie after one month of living in her new apartment in March, an apartment complex she described as "calm" and "nice." Her new place was located about three miles east of Titan Manor. When I visited, she still had boxes neatly stacked up along the wall. It looked like they had unpacked the kitchen first because the cabinets and drawers were filled. The dining and living rooms, on the other hand, looked bare. There was a bright, rainbow-colored round rug where the dining table would normally go. They had a TV on a stand in the living room, but little other furniture. Rosie graciously pulled out some folding chairs for me and an interpreter who came with me to help with the interview because my ability to speak Spanish was limited to a few phrases. Rosie explained that she is slowly working to save up for a dining set and furniture for the living room, and she apologized about the folding chairs. She sat hunched over on a low, backless, black ottoman on wheels, and we assured her that the metal chairs were more than comfortable.

Eviction Clocks, Eviction Money

After receiving the no-cause notice, Rosie had limited time to find a new place to live. "Sometimes, I work six days, sometimes seven," Rosie shared. After her shift sorting recyclable materials at the plant, which started at 3AM and required her to leave her home at 2AM, she typically arrived home at 1:30PM, giving her a little alone time before her kids came home at 3PM, but it was not much of a break. "When I get home, I clean up, cook the food, and when I'm done, I watch a little TV and fall asleep until the

kids get home." Rosie then spent a few hours with her three children until her 7PM bedtime, but she admitted that "most of the time, it's closer to 8PM, the latest is 8PM." Besides grocery shopping with her sister or cousin or taking herself or the children to medical appointments, this was Rosie's regular routine, which left little time to search for an apartment.

To compound her limited time in search for a new place to live, the end of the year holidays in December and an unexpected snow storm in January also shut down the city for at least a week, which gave her and the other tenants two weeks less for their search. The Community Alliance of Tenants were in the process of organizing tenants at Titan Manor, but their meetings were delayed too because of the holidays and snow storm.

> *December and January were difficult because many offices closed the week of Christmas. We didn't have much Christmas because we had to save for the deposit. I buy as little as I can. It took five or six months of my savings for the $1,500 needed for the deposit. I told my son that we are not going to buy anything until we have our deposit. And my little boy says, "Oh My God I don't know why they kicked us out of there." When they started gathering for the CAT [tenant organizing] meetings, everything got canceled because of the snow, and because they were canceled, you know, one after another. It was time for us to vacate, so I had to move. I really didn't want them to kick me out on the street with my babies.*

The moment renters receive no-cause notices, their eviction clock begins, and neither end of the year holidays nor a snow storm that shut down the entire city for at least a week

stops that timer from moving forward. Eviction clocks wait for no one. At her job, Rosie (like many renters) was paid by the hour, and when she could not make it into work because of the snow storm, it cut into her ability to save for a rental deposit, rent, and other moving expenses. Additionally, even though the city's Housing State of Emergency extended her time to vacate Titan Manor to 90 days, or an additional 30 days, it took about six months of her savings for the deposit needed to secure a new apartment.

In addition to the deposit, when renters move, they usually pay double for rent because they have to secure another apartment before giving their current landlord their 30-day notice to move. Landlords typically require tenants to start their lease immediately after the apartment is available to rent in order to maximize their profits. Thus, although Rosie began leasing her new apartment in mid-January, she had already paid for the entire month of January at Titan Manor. If she did not have money for the deposit nor the money to rent two places at once for the last two weeks of January, she probably would not have been able to secure a new place to live.

Rental Applications in English

Besides a deficit of time, Rosie's second major hurdle was her limited ability to speak English. We spoke over the phone about four times in the six months that we kept in regular contact. Each time I called, I left a message, she would ask her daughter to interpret the message, and her daughter would call back to relay her mother's message to me. This happened when we played phone tag to set up a time and place for the interview, which had to be rescheduled twice because of her evolving schedule of managing three kids. On several occasions, the Spanish interpreter I worked with for interviews also helped me communicate with Rosie and other limited-English speakers.

After the interview, Rosie asked me if I could help find her a referral for a free furniture bank, a place that provided free donated furniture, for her new apartment. In Portland, free furniture banks require a referral from social service providers. When I followed up with her to try to connect her with my social worker contacts, her daughter and the interpreter patiently interpreted for us again. To be expected, it took me at least twice as long to communicate with Rosie as it did with my interviewees who spoke English well. Because of this, I suspected that filling out rental applications would take longer for her than others.

I asked Rosie, "How do you fill out the rental applications? Are they in Spanish?" She answered, "No, no, no," holding her hands up in the air and shaking her head side to side. "My daughter, a neighbor, or someone else helps me." She explained further,

> *I would go in and ask for an application speaking in English. Sometimes, they would have someone who can speak Spanish, but most of the time no. Sometimes, they ask for a lot of information, and sometimes, less information. When there's information I don't understand, I ask someone like my daughter or neighbor.*

With a less than four percent vacancy in Portland's rental housing market, not being able to communicate in English or not being able fill out the application in Spanish meant that she had to take additional time to fill out the application. When she had to take additional time to fill out the application, it limited her choices in a rental market because it took more time for her to get approved. The extra time that it would have taken for her to fill out an application asking for "a lot of information," set up an appointment to view the apartment, and get approved for the apartment because of her limited English

probably meant that as it does in many other situations in the United States, that those with who speak English well would likely outcompete her in securing an apartment.

Getting to Work

Her rental housing choices were also limited because she did not have a car. To arrive to work on time for her 3AM shift, she wakes up at 1AM. She works at a recycling plant in Clackamas County, which is about 50 miles southeast of Titan Manor. A neighbor, who also lived at Titan Manor, worked at the same recycling plant and he kindly drove her and other neighbors/co-workers to their job every morning.

> *I work hard. I get up at 1AM in the morning, so I can start my shift at 3AM. I work all the way in Clackamas. I must work so that I can pay for my rent and have a home for my children and protect my family. I work in recycling. I recycle all the bottles, boxes, and we separate all of the materials, and that is what pays the rent. It is all the way to Clackamas. Every day, if I didn't have this man who comes by to take me to work, then I wouldn't be able to work. He takes others too.*

Because they began their shift so early, no bus service or public transportation was available. Even if she could catch public transportation to get to work, it would have taken her two transfers and a 1.5 mile walk on busy roads, a 2.5-hour journey altogether compared to a 30-minute car ride without traffic. Put another way, if she could and did take the public transportation to work, she would not have enough time for her usual five to six hours of sleep per night.

Before she moved to her new apartments, she asked this neighbor whom she carpools to work with, "If I move to these apartments, would you still be able to come pick me up?" He said "Yes."

> *"I feel bad because this man gives me my ride to work. He was there at Titan apartments, and he is coming all the way out here to pick me up because well, I do not drive. I told him, "I'm really sorry." He says, "Don't worry as long as we can do it, I will come and pick you up."*

The question of whether this man would still be able to take her to work depending on where she moved weighed on her decision of where she could live. She emphasized that if he did not take her to work, "I wouldn't have anyone to take me there. I would try to find a job where I could catch the bus." It is true that job pressures such as wages affect where families could live, but Rosie's story shows that where people live also affect the jobs they can have. When there is a possibility of being evicted each year from a no-cause eviction; that is, if tenants can secure a one-year lease and continue to pay rent on time along with all the other rules of the contract, it leads to job instability (Desmond and Gershenson 2016). Additionally, the fact that her neighbor brought her to work and offered to continue to take her after she moved speaks to the importance of social networks in multifamily housing like Titan Manor. Yet, Rosie's dependence on this neighbor as a part of her social network to keep her job also complicated the notion of her "preference" to stay in or live near Titan Manor because her "preference" was compounded with interconnected vulnerabilities such as the precarity if her work and the lack of social and economic support systems for her as a single mom. As this chapter will discuss later on, those social networks became important in tenant organizing and

alliance-building efforts in both apartment complexes—Titan Manor and Walnut Tree—mentioned in this chapter (and in Juan's apartment complex from Chapter Two).

New Neighbors and the Ever-looming No-Cause Eviction Threat

"Why don't we go back to our old apartment, mom?" Rosie's son Carlos asked her in English, frustrated about the neighbor's complaint.

"No, we can't do that," she replied in Spanish with an even tone.

"*Why* can't we do that?" Carlos asked her now in mix of English and Spanish, turning his head sideways and moving his arms up and down with every syllable dramatically.

"Well, we were evicted, and here, we have a one-year contract," she answered patiently in Spanish. She scolds her son lightly, "You know, they are going to kick us out of here because you are making too much noise."

"Okay Mama. I will try my best not to make a lot of noise," he said back to her with a reassuring smile.

Rosie's new apartment was an upstairs unit, and the elderly white couple from the downstairs unit came up and confronted them about the noise they made while they moved their belongings into the apartment.

> *The first day I arrived here, the lady down there, she came up here, and she yelled at me. She said, "Can you do a little less noise?" My friend says back to her, "We're moving. We have to make noise. We're getting all the stuff, and we're getting everything up." She just slammed her door. She has not come back up anymore, but husband came, knocked on the door, and said, "Can you make less noise?" My daughter, the older one,*

she said, "You know, the rules are that it's after 10PM, the rules say that you are not supposed to make any more noise, but it's not 10PM, we can still make our noise." He has not shown up anymore.

Yet, even after her daughter asserted the rules on the lease, the couple complained to the manager. This time, the lady complained about Rosie's children making too much noise, particularly her 7-year old son. Rosie elaborated,

Our neighbor downstairs, I'm having some difficulties with her because my two kids and the little one. Well, he jumps, he runs, he walks fast. This lady downstairs, she went and told the manager. She is speaking ill about me. The neighbor told the manager that she's lived here for 13 years, and that she can't be at ease because my children are too noisy. The manager called me, and she told me that if my child continues doing this, that it will be a bad record for me. So I told her, "You must understand me. I have two young children."

Again, Rosie's daughter intervened on her behalf. "My daughter told the manager, 'You know, they're children, we can't do anything. Children are active.' They haven't called me since. Blessed be. It's really good." Rosie worries about having a "bad record" on her renting history because as a renter, when Rosie applies for a new apartment, she will need positive references from the property manager, and having a "bad record" would prevent them from finding a new place to live in the case they need to move again.

After the manager threatened her, she scolded her son, "You know, they're going to kick us out because you're making too much noise." The apartment manager could

interpret her family as “problem tenants” because of the noise her son made. Living in a no-cause eviction state, the possibility of moving again as renters is never that far away. In their current place, Rosie signed a one-year lease, which is typically the longest lease offered to tenants. The lease protects them from moving for at least a year, but after the lease ends, another no-cause eviction may send them moving again, and this time, it may be for her neighbors’ noise complaints.

The Effect on Rosie’s Children

The entire family felt the stress of the no-cause eviction and the forced move. For the 16-year old daughter, she bore the responsibility of advocating and interpreting for her mom and siblings when they were unable to themselves. For her seven-year old son, he bore the responsibility of the neighbors’ noise complaints. Rosie recalled this conversation with her middle child:

“Why don’t we buy the apartment?” she inquired.

“Well, it’s a lot of money,” Rosie answered.

“When I work, Mom, I’m going to buy me a home, and take you out from working. Then, I’m going to have you just sitting,” the 10-year old vowed.

“Well, thank you,” Rosie laughed. Rosie also joked that when their father came to visit, he gave her son a little money, so her son added to this conversation,

“Okay Mommy. Here’s some money, so we can go and buy the apartment.”

“Okay then,” she responds playfully. But when they were at the grocery store, he says to her, “Okay, give me my money back.”

“You said it was the for the apartment!” she laughed again, leaning slightly back.

Although she joked about it with her children, the fear of being kicked out consumed her. Her neighbors tried to convince her to stay and fight. They urged, "No, don't leave, don't leave. Stay at Titan." By the time the tenant meetings started after the snow storm in January, they only had a little over a month left to move out. Also, around that time was when she had her first apartment offered to her during her search, and she immediately signed it. "I was so desperate, so I took it. I didn't have anywhere else to go," she explained. After they moved to the new apartment, tired and exhausted, her 10-year old daughter pleaded with Rosie, "Oh no, Mom, don't let the same thing happen to us here because it's very, very tiring."

As a mother, Rosie was keenly aware of the effect the no-cause eviction and moving had her children, both how it shuffled their routine and disrupted their emotional and social well-being. There were things that nagged at her in their new apartment such as where they would catch the bus or go to school the next year.

> *Over there, the bus would stop right behind our apartments, and here, the kids have to cross a busy road three blocks away to catch the bus. I'm a little afraid of the two little ones, the boy and the girl, taking the bus every day to go to school. I don't really know what to do about schools next year. I don't know what school we should be registering my younger daughter and son. My older daughter, she goes to Roosevelt High School, and now she has to wake up earlier than before. When we used to live there, all she did was walk for 15 minutes to get to school. Now she says, "Oh my God, why did they do this?"*

The Gonzales's neighbors at Titan Manor, according to Rosie were also more tolerant of children making noise, perhaps because many of their children also made noise as they played together.

> *Down there, they could run. They could jump. No one would tell me anything. This is the thing I don't like about it here. The little one is telling me that he wants to go back to the apartments, that he's missing his friends, and that he has no friends here. All of his friends are back there in the apartments. When we were back there for a visit, he said, "Oh please, just let me stay for 10 minutes. Then I just sat down there and let him play. Then, sometimes I think this is why he's a little uncomfortable. He gets all disrupted because he's bored.*

Rosie also worried about their safety because she did not know the new area well. They now lived near a busy street, and her conflict with her downstairs neighbors also made her weary about having her children play outside.

> *They're not going out here. I'm a little scared of letting him out since we don't know this area that well. They want to go out there on their bikes. I say, "We don't know this area that well. We've only had a month here, and it's not easy here." They say, "Okay Mama."*

> *Sometimes, I go to work feeling a little apprehensive. When they come back from school, I feel great. Down there, I never felt this apprehension because we knew the neighborhood. We knew all the neighbors. When he arrived home from school, he would go drop his backpack, and go play.*

And here, no. You know there's nothing. There's no place out to play around here, and because we're on a main street, I'm afraid of the cars. That's why I liked it at Titan because the kids can really play with no restrictions because here, they can only go from the bedroom to the living room to the kitchen, and they get really nervous.

I don't know people that well, and this lady downstairs, if she sees him doing anything out there, she keeps pointing a finger at me with the manager, accusing me with the manager.

Rosie's children constantly tugged at her to move back to Titan Manor, but she confessed that she missed being there too because her sister lived nearby, and her support system as a single mom was there. Again, Rosie's housing preferences to live near Titan Manor was conflated with the need for her support system.

I, myself, I am missing it. I am missing our neighborhood a lot. I also had my sister close to me, and it's kind of difficult not to have her nearby. She lives behind the apartments. Her house is a ranch-style. It's just one level, and she has a lot more space. The kids, they say, "On the weekend, you take me to my aunt's, so we can play because we left our bicycles there." We don't have a place to store them here. The kids have more space over there with more people watching them. I am a single mom, and some of my friends there help me.

I emphasize Rosie's story as representative of families who moved out of Titan Manor or other apartment rentals after their no-cause eviction notices. For the new real estate investor landlords of Titan Manor, it was relatively easy to issue no-cause eviction notices in that they only have to provide a 90-day notice. Yet, for Rosie, and those like her, the no-cause eviction set in motion a series of challenges and events that highlighted her vulnerabilities in the rental housing market. Those challenges included her limited time because she spends most of her day working, her limited English skills, and the fact that she wanted to stay in close proximity to Titan Manor because of the support she received from her neighbors as a single mom. Additionally, although she was able to find a new apartment, she felt harassed by her downstairs neighbors, who complained to the property manager about the noise they made as they were moving in. Rather than assert Rosie's rights according to the lease, the manager threatened that such complaints would earn her a "bad record," which would make it more difficult for her to rent in the future or earn her another no-cause eviction, once her lease expired.

Eva and Tenant Organizing

Eva Martin, a 29-year old single mother of two, also received a no-cause eviction notice from Titan Manor, where she lived for the last five years. With raven-colored hair and light brown skin, she described herself as "a mix of hodgepodge things," because her dad was "Native and Mexican," and her mom was "white and Indian" (from India). She "didn't really identify with anything." Originally born and raised in New Mexico, where her mom lived, Eva moved to Portland in 2006 because her dad lived in Portland. She left home at the early age of 17. In-between her time in New Mexico and Oregon, she lived briefly in California with her grandma. In her early adult life, she aimlessly went on a lot

of road trips and "worked jobs here and there just to kind of sustain." She remembers her freedom during this time fondly, but also characterized it as "not really doing anything" and that she "wasted a lot of time."

I interviewed her in February 2017 during the day, when her 6-year old daughter was in school. That day, the rain poured, and I noticed that being inside her apartment made me colder than when I was outside in the winter downpour. Maybe it was because of the relatively warm humidity outside compared to cold, damp air inside. Her five-month old son was home with her, and I awed at how he drank milk from his bottle with a blanket tucked under his chin without her assistance, something my 4-month old at the time would not tolerate. In the middle of the interview, the city inspector knocked on her door, so that Eva could show him to an unmarked apartment scheduled for his inspection. She woke up her son, who was napping soundlessly at the time, wrapped him in a blanket, and walked out into the torrential downpour. As we trotted over to the unmarked apartment we jumped over large puddles that accumulated in the middle of the courtyard. When we return to her apartment, a small pond of rainwater had seeped through accumulated next to her sliding screen door. She sighed loudly and informed me that the door leaks every time there is a heavy rain. She picked up the mop nearby from when she cleaned up an earlier puddle and began to push it back and forth on the wet floor.

Moving in to Titan Manor

Eva decided to put an application to Titan Manor after driving by. Most people who lived there however, found out the place through "word-of-mouth because they don't advertise." Before Titan Manor, she rented a place out of the Cully neighborhood in Northeast Portland, which was in 2012. During the interview, Eva explained that she

moved from her small one-bedroom apartment in Cully due to "a culmination of things" with one being that her rent had gone up to $875. The more serious catalyst for the move was to hide from her daughter's dad who was abusing her. Eva worked, but she could get approved for a permanent place to live, so she and her 18-month daughter lived mostly out of motels off of a street with a reputation for drugs and prostitution at night.

> *I was getting beat up all the time, and it finally got to the point where my daughter was seeing stuff. He had strangled me and left me. I had blocked out, and I woke up with the baby on top of me, and that was—I left. I left all my stuff there, and locked everything up, and then used the deadbolt key, so he couldn't get in because he only had one key. I didn't go back. I sent somebody else for my stuff, and then me and my daughter were kind of nomading around. On 82nd Ave, they have a lot of really cheap motels, but they're like sketchy, so I made sure we got inside before it got dark. It was like, nobody wants to be there, you know, but the rooms were like $50 a night, supercheap.*

After six months of having her applications rejected and living out of motel rooms for six months, all while avoiding her abuser, she drove by Titan Manor one day by happenstance and decided to stop and apply, and they approved her application shortly after. Typically, to become a renter, tenants enter the landlord's screening process by filling out an application, signing a form that gives the landlord permission to gather other background information (e.g. employment, credit, criminal, eviction, and rental history) and an application fee that covers the landlord's cost of the background check. During my own apartment search during fieldwork, application fees typically ranged

from $35 to $50 per person 18-years old or older. Eva described the application fees as "rough" because

> *You're applying for multiple places, and each application is $35 or more. That's a huge chunk. Like $35 is more than half then what I would be spending at a motel for a night, so at that point, it was rough. I know from one of those Nexus accounts to do a background check on somebody, it's like $15 per month, so what are you doing with my $40? What are you doing with all of our $40? Why are you taking that much? It just seems so sketchy because there's no guarantee of getting the place. God knows what you're doing with that money. You might not even be checking my credit. You might already have somebody in there. God knows where that $40 is going.*

To better understand the intensive screening criteria that renters like Eva, Rosie, and those like them have to pass to be approved for a rental, it is important to understand the standard screening criteria. In analyzing five rental applications, the screening criteria from property management companies, and the information from the Rent Well class (which a 15-hour class that low-income renters take to learn how to be a good renter and to convince landlords to rent to them) that I took during fieldwork, I found that the typical landlord asked for the following:

a) Identification criteria: A valid photo ID, likely in the form of a driver's license or other state ID. To receive either one, you must provide proof of legal presence/identity, an application that asks for your social security number, and

proof of address where you physically live. The ID costs $45 and a driver's license costs $74 (includes the cost of the tests).

b) Income criteria: Monthly, verifiable, legal income need to be three times the stated rent.

c) Employment criteria: Twelve months of verifiable employment, if used as a source of income.

d) Rental criteria:

    a. Twelve months of verifiable, contractual rental history from a current third-party landlord, or home ownership
    b. Five years of eviction-free history
    c. No more than two 72-hour termination or eviction notices for nonpayment of rent within one year
    d. No more than two bounced checks within one year
    e. No past-due or unpaid rent

e) Credit criteria: A consumer credit report without negative or adverse debt, especially to a previous landlord or utility company. According to the Rent Well class, 90% of rentals requires a credit score of 600 or above. Three or more unpaid collections (not medical related) will result in denial.

f) Criminal conviction criteria: Criminal convictions, pending charges, and outstanding warrants will be considered. Some landlords are stricter than others.

Each landlord and property management company use their own screening procedures, so they may include or not some of the common things asked of tenants

above. The Titan Manor landlord who approved Eva's application had less requirements than those of other rentals.

> *A lot of places want your income to be like three times your rent. That's like okay, you want me to be making like $3,000, you know? The nice thing about the owner here, the one nice thing is that she was willing to rent to pretty much anybody. Here, she required your income to be double the rent, and she also took in what I got in from food stamps into account as income. She took that in, which helped me get to standard. Also, it wasn't huge amounts to move in. To move in here, it was first, last, and cleaning fee. There was no deposit so that was helpful.*

While finding permanent housing took some weight off her shoulders, after moving in, she realized that it came "as is," and Eva suspected that the landlord sensed her desperation and took advantage of it.

> *Basically, it was $750 for a two bedroom. They didn't get the carpets cleaned for me. They didn't repaint. It was kind of like, I'm thankful for a place. I'm moving in. I don't really care what's going on, you know? It's suitable.*

> *The landlord knew I was desperate for a place. I told her that I had been working for the last six months, and me and my daughter had been living out of motels. She knew that I was desperate for a place, so obviously, she preyed on that a little bit.*

During the five years that she lived at Titan Manor, they never made repairs and the laundry facilities on site have never been usable. Although they steadily raised the rent to $875, a 16% increase from when she first moved in, “no improvements have really been made.” Even so, she tried not to complain because “it’s still $875 for a two bedroom” which is far less than she could get anywhere else in Portland.

> *I can do my best to keep everything clean. I can keep the carpets cleaned and do a little maintenance on my own. I feel like for $875 with my two kids, I’m not saying anything.*

In Rosie’s interview, she described her apartment being in a similar condition, “There was water dripping from the ceiling. The stove, it only had one good burner. The sink underneath, it was all rotten. On the doors, it was completely in pieces. There were roaches and mold.” Like Eva, she also never received repairs. Rosie explained, “I felt so bad, but the rent was so cheap.” Eva’s strategy to stay quiet about the lack of repairs stemmed from Oregon being a no-cause eviction state—the constant fear of evictions, and she that it would be difficult for her to find a new place that she could afford.

<u>Mobilizing Neighbors</u>

In January 2017, one of Eva’s little 9-year old neighbors came to visit. She was a friend of her 6-year old daughter who had come over to play.

“My mom got a notice,” she announced matter-of-factly to Eva.

“What kind of notice? What’s going on?” Eva asked curiously.

“My mom got a notice that we had to leave. We already found a new place,” the little girl explained.

“Okay,” Eva paused.

"A lot of people didn't get the notice. We already found a new place, and it's not too far," the girl stated.

Eva did not think much about this news until a week later when she noticed a family moving out on the opposite side of the complex from her. Then she started asking around about who received no-cause evictions. "What originally happened," Eva reflected, "was in October, when the investors bought this complex, they sent a letter out to us. It said 'We're your new neighbors. We're happy to make some changes around here.' Like a nice letter, you know, with a phone number on it." At first, she was optimistically hopeful that she could finally receive some repairs. She immediately called the number to discover that "it's not a working number." Eva reported the notice and number to her social worker thinking that maybe her social worker could figure out what was going on, but she did not find out what "making changes" meant until later.

> *Instead of repairing things, they start evicting people, which I thought was a disgusting business practice. I thought that was a terrible thing to do, but the two dots didn't really connect until all of us started getting notices. Then my daughter came home from school saying, 'Titan Manor, please come to this meeting.' I didn't know what was going on, so we went to the meeting, and that's when we met CAT [Community Alliance of Tenants], and they were telling us what was going on. I didn't realize it had snowballed to that point because I hadn't gotten my no-cause at that point. Only half of the residents did.*

After Eva attended the CAT meeting, she started mobilizing her neighbors.

Whoever was from the February notices, I wanted to make sure they all got in touch with the lawyers because I knew that a lot of people who weren't at the meetings weren't at the meeting. I just started knocking on doors, seeing the notices, taking pictures of notices. The word started to spread. People started coming to my house, so I could take a picture of their notice. They were scared, and they didn't know where they were going to go, you know.

Shortly before I interviewed Eva in February 2017, she received the expected no-cause eviction notice in January with an eviction date in May. She spelled out the best outcome she could think of happening.

The best outcome is if they rescind our notices, they give us all a shot at new leases, and they come, and they do some repairs, so that we can all get our ducks in a row. Clearly, it doesn't really matter to them what we think, obviously, but maybe the community pressures them, and maybe they care about what the community thinks, maybe they care about the rental community in Portland and will save enough face to where they would do that. That's the only way its' going to happen.

Eva said that she did not know a lot of her neighbors before her mobilizing efforts, but she shared that "everybody else really talks to each other and seems to know each other. They all kind of speak Spanish. I don't really speak much Spanish." When I asked her where she found the time to organize her neighbors, Eva responded that she was the one of the few people who was living at Titan Manor who was not working at the

time because she was on maternity leave to care for her five-month old son. She wanted to help her neighbors because even though she did not know many people well, they helped over the years, especially because they knew that she, like Rosie, was a single mom.

> *I only knew these people way over here. When I first moved in here, my kid's dad found out where we lived, and he broke the window, where we were sleeping underneath. My neighbors over here came over to where he was. They called the police and held him there. That's the only reason why I knew these neighbors. I'm kind of like the resident single mom. Everybody else has a family, so I don't really talk to anybody. The only people I got with was Jośe and his wife Leah because they really helped me out. They must both be like 70. I think they look after me. They look after everybody really. I see them lending food out to people. I see them giving out pots to people, so they can make food. People send their kids their kids over there, so they can grab something. They're like the resident grandpa and grandma.*

Before the eviction notice, Eva described herself as "always the type of person who's like not going to get involved." The presidential election that put Donald Trump in the Oval Office around the time the eviction notices went out also impacted on her.

> *I'm probably going to handle my well-being before I worry about somebody else. I think that I was like, "if all of us keep handling all of our own well-being, this shit is going to happen. This is bad what's happening right now. The election really took a turn in my head, and then this*

happened. I feel like this is all happening for some larger awakening to happen, and it's kind of like the millennials picking up the pace. I hope we all stand together. I hope we don't be apathetic. That's my motto. Don't be apathetic. Don't let shit just keep happening.

When she first moved in, Eva was content to overlook the lack of repairs and even do some of them herself because she wanted to avoid making waves, but after the no-cause eviction notice, she decided that she had nothing else to lose. If she was going to be evicted anyways, she was going to at least try to fight it. Additionally, the preexisting social networks that she had at Titan prior to the no-cause eviction, even though she said she did not know people well, and the flexibility in time from maternity leave provided her with the groundwork to mobilize her neighbors.

Notices Rescinded and Landlord Retaliation

Even though Eva remained firm in her convictions and beliefs that she was doing the right thing, she feared retaliation from her new landlords and property managers. Because she played a large part in mobilizing her neighbors, she also felt the responsibility to be successful. In the end, she continued to resign to the fact that she did not have many other options.

I'm stressed, but I'm actually more mobilized, and I feel like kind of galvanized by this. I don't want to lay down and just let this happen to us. I'm going to fight for us to stay here. I know I've been on the news, so I see these managers when they come. They know me. They know what I'm

doing, so I don't really know if I want to stay in an environment where people are against me like that. That just means that I have to work that much harder and save that much more money. That's all. This is helping everybody and trying to have us all ban together as a community and fight this is the only way for me to gain any control over this. There's nothing else for us to do.

It's hard to advocate for people, and they're looking at me like you're going to save them or something. It's a lot on you. And this may not end well. It's really hard having all this pressure on you.

A few days into February 2017, Eva's efforts paid off when Portland City Commissioners and the Mayor passed a Renter Relocation Assistance Ordinance, which required landlords to pay moving costs if tenants have to leave for no-cause evictions rent increases of 10% or more over a 12-month period. Relocation costs included $2,900 for a one bedroom, $3,300 for a two bedroom, and $4,200 for a three bedroom or larger. Thirteen months after the ordinance was originally passed, Portland City Commissioners and the Mayor made the ordinance permanent.

After the new ordinance passed, Eva helped to organize her neighbors for a letter writing campaign. The letter, written with the help of lawyers working for the Oregon Law Center, was addressed to their landlords and asked them to rescind the no-cause evictions in light of the new Renters Relocation Assistance Ordinance. At the time of the interview, they were still waiting for a response. Eva commented at the time:

I'm really getting nervous now for all of us. I feel nervous because they haven't responded to the letter, so that's going through my mind. I'm like, "Should I not have done so much press? Are they mad because I put all that out there?" You know what I mean? Then if they're not going to respect our feelings, then why am I worried about whether they're mad or not? I'm feel like I'm a bottle of anxiety since we haven't gotten a response yet.

Three weeks after the new ordinance passed and two weeks after they received the letter, the new landlords decided to rescind the no-cause eviction notice, allowing residents to stay in their apartments. Thrilled, Eva took a moment to celebrate. "Just for a minute, we won a small battle," she acknowledged, but it was already too late for Rosie and others who had already moved out. Yet, Eva quickly pushed on to the next step, which was negotiating for new long-term leases on behalf of those who remained. A reason for this "win" had partly to do with the fact that people received their no-cause notices over a relatively short period of time. Because of this, tenant organizers like Eva were able to galvanize her neighbors.

She spelled out what being able to stay in North Portland meant to her.

I really need to stay in North Portland because I really want my daughter to go to her school, James John Elementary. I think she's doing really well there. She's already a bit behind because we had to do so much moving. As much as I try to shield her from all this stuff, she's always going to know something is going on. Things are just getting stable these last two years. Her father kind of went away, so things are better now. She's able

to really focus because she has more of a routine. She's taking classes and has a library card. The library is across the street from her school, so it's just really nice, you know? I told my daughter we could stay, and she started crying.

Eva reflected that before she had kids, she did not place a lot of importance on where she lived as long as she was "okay," but all that had changed after becoming a mother. Now, with her son and daughter, she described Portland as like a "family member almost." The connection to Portland, as a place, felt "weird" to her because she had "never felt that way about a place before." Whenever she crosses the St. John's Bridge near her home, she feels "something" when she passes over it, "like it's a spiritual event." Eva confessed, "I've never felt that way before. Portland is really special to me."

The next and final section followed the story of Maria, who also received a building-wide, no-cause eviction, but who lived in another apartment, Walnut Tree Apartments. Although Maria helped to mobilize her neighbors and collaborated with organizers from CAT and attorneys from the Oregon Law Center, as Eva had done, she was not able to get her and her neighbor's no-cause notices rescinded. In addition, although she searched for another apartment, she was unable to find one, as Rosie had done, which caused her and her two daughters to continue to live in Walnut Tree even as heavy construction began on the apartments.

Maria and Walnut Tree Apartments

Maria Gomez and her two teenage daughters lived in Walnut Tree Apartments, a 43-unit apartment complex, in the suburb of Tigard, southwest of Portland, when they

received their no-cause eviction notice along with all of their neighbors. I met Ana, the Spanish interpreter for the interview, in the Walnut Tree Apartments parking lot, which was entirely empty, except for one other car. Ana pulled up in a 90s-model Corolla next to me and asked, "Do you think we can park here? I just worry about some kind of retaliation from the property." I had not thought about retaliation, but there was no other available parking nearby, and I did not want to be late for the interview, so I told her, "I don't think we have very many options." We parked in front of a large blue dumpster that stood out from the brick background. An employee at the Community Alliance of Tenants, whom I talked to earlier the week before told me that the new manager, started billing the soon to be ex-residents additional trash bills. Families were gutting their apartments so quickly from moving out over a short period that the usual trash services did not suffice. As tenants decided that some of their large furniture was not worth the cost of a moving truck (or that they could not afford one), loveseats, sofas, desks, and entire mattresses began stacking up next to the large trash bins. Trash services charged more for the extra material, and the new owners tried passing on the additional disposal services cost to the tenants. When the City of Tigard found out, they sympathetically paid for the bill.

As Ana and I walked through the complex looking for Maria's apartment, it quickly became clear to us that we were in the middle of a construction zone. Some of the apartment doors were taken apart, the insulation pads were exposed, and men in construction uniforms shouted to each other from atop the roofs. Noise from loud construction equipment filled the air. We found Maria's apartment, a second-floor, upstairs unit. With the rain sticking to her salt and pepper hair, Ana, who had spent the

last two decades interpreting for women like Maria, looked at me silently and seriously. We both took a deep breath, preparing to greet Maria warmly, as I knocked on the door.

Maria welcomed us both into her apartment, which opened up in the carpeted living room. The living space still had a blue sofa and loveseat set. Amidst signs of packing such as bare walls, they left their Catholic alter partially intact, which I recognized because my family is Catholic. At the center of the alter in Maria's living room was a large wooden crucifix. A picture of Jesus with a glowing red heart at the bottom of the frame was hung to the bottom left of the crucifix, the same picture my Vietnamese Catholic parents and grandparents have on their alter. To the bottom right of the crucifix was a picture of Jesus's mother, Saint Mary, the patroness of all humanity. Below the alter, moving boxes sat stacked neatly against the wall.

I interviewed Maria late November 2016 with her two daughters, sitting in the room listening next to us. The two daughters looked like younger replicas of their mom. All three ladies had smooth, shiny, dark brown hair that was mostly straight but curled at the ends. They wore black eyeliner that highlighted the stray, wispy curls that rested along their temples and ears. Maria estimated that 90% of people who lived here were Latino with the rest being non-Latino seniors and people who were disabled on fixed income. Maria guessed that residents lived in the apartments because "they were pretty cheap, and the manager never said anything, never bothered anyone."

Similar to living at Titan Manor, living at Walnut Tree meant that the apartments "were pretty cheap," but the manager and owner were slow to make much needed repairs. For example, although the apartment had a pool, it was never usable and attracted mosquitos.

When the pool was open still, it was really green for quite some time, like with algae or something with a lot of greenery in it. They never washed it. They wouldn't fix it up, and there would be a breeding mosquito ground there.

In another example, Maria told me that in the one and half years that she lived at Walnut Tree, their apartment always had a dripping faucet that would leak hot water. This ran up the cost of both the electric and water bills at least $300 per month. She told me, "I tell them to come and fix it, and they have fixed it three or four times, but it's still the same, the water leak still comes back."

No-Cause Eviction at Walnut Tree

Maria described how she and her neighbors came to receive their no-cause eviction notices in August 2016.

We were living quite calm. We were living okay. We were peacefully living here. Then all of a sudden, we were hearing the buzz that this property was going to up for sale. Nobody told us anything except later on, and then after we heard the rumor, you know. Maybe two weeks or a month afterwards, we got something from a new company. We heard there was a new company, but they didn't show up. They didn't say anything like, "We're the new owners." The management changed. The old manager, he didn't even say goodbye when he left. About a month after they [the new management team] arrived, they sent a 90-day notification.

Before they gave us notification, we were all getting together thinking, "What are we going to do?" There were families with pregnant women. They were almost ready to deliver, and others who had just given birth. There were a lot of families who were disabled here, and some who had lived here for many, many years, and most of their children had lived here for most of their lives. They didn't care, and they insisted that we had to leave.

One of Maria's neighbors confronted the new manager about the no-cause notices and the planned rent hikes from $626 to $1,300. According to this neighbor, the manager responded that "they wanted to get rid of us because they wanted a better community." Upon hearing this, Maria decided that she would go and talk to the manager. She asked the manager, "Is it true that we're going to be evicted?" The manager calmly said, "No. I'm going to be evicting some specific buildings. The people who remain will be moving into the apartments that are ready or the ones that have already been fixed." The manager assured Maria, "No worries. Everything is going to be okay." A week later, on August 15, 2016, Maria received her 90-day notification.

City of Tigard

When the City of Tigard learned about the situation at Walnut Tree, they hosted a meeting for the tenants on September 14, about one month after Maria received her notice. Maria described the meeting.

In the Tigard meeting, they asked about our feelings. There were representatives there from the City of Tigard. There were two attorneys

> *there as well. They talked about the 90 days Walnut Tree gave us to move out, and that it was legal. They said they were giving us moral support. More than anything, they said, they wanted to give us information to see where we could call in case there was discrimination when we made calls to make applications for rentals. They did say in case there was discrimination that we could call Community Action. There were community resources that they gave on the screen.*

I asked Maria if she found the meeting helpful. At first, she said, "Yes," but then added, "They didn't actually help, but they provided moral support." I asked her if she tried calling some of the resources the City of Tigard provided on the screen. She answered,

> *Well, I called 211, the community one. I called, and they gave me some numbers. I call those numbers, but no one is answering. Then, I called another number, and they told me to get on the internet to start searching for apartments, but no they did not help me. I haven't been able to find an apartment.*

From the Tigard meeting, the lawyers from the Oregon Law Center and bilingual organizers from the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) worked with tenants at Walnut Tree to draft a letter to the new owners asking them to rescind the notices. They also asked that if they were not going to rescind the notices, the owners should pay $3,000 to each family in relocation costs. The CAT organizer who told me this admitted that it was unlikely that their demands would be fully met, but she had hoped to pressure the owners to giving something, considering that the owners were not legally obligated to

give anything. The owners agreed to give $500 to each family in relocation costs and their full deposit back. To the CAT organizer, this was a "win" because "without this, they wouldn't have gotten anything." The stipulation to accepting the $500 and deposit was that the tenants had to sign some papers agreeing to not talk to anyone about Walnut Tree Apartments. Maria did not find the result of the Tigard meeting helpful because she was hoping to find someone to help her find another place to live, and the deposit and the $500, "they're good, but they don't really help because we're still here."

Searching for a New Place

After she received the no-cause notice, Maria immediately looked for a new apartment, but she faced similar barriers that Rosie faced in that she did not speak English fluently, so she relied on her daughter to help interpret. She worked 10-12 hours per day as a manager at McDonalds and moving into a new apartment meant that she needed to pay twice the rent for overlapping days as well as potentially thousands of dollars in other moving costs like the deposit, first and last month's rent, a cleaning fee, and application fees. She wanted to stay in the area because she did not want her daughters' schoolwork to be interrupted, and her job was in King City, a nearby town. These were similar reasons that other tenants like Rosie and Eva had for wanting to stay in their neighborhoods. I asked Maria to describe what the housing search was like for her.

> *When I'm out there looking for new apartments, even when the sign is there, they say they don't have anything anymore. I've been to three apartments, and this is what they are telling, and the only one I found available was costing $1,300. That's too much for me. We were looking at*

a place in Beaverton. At one of the places, there was a lot of white people, and we were walking, and they were talking behind our backs. It was pretty uncomfortable.

The discrimination she experienced during her housing search contributed her inability to find a new place to live.

Six weeks of spending all of her limited time that she was not working searching for a new place to live, Maria found an available apartment in October. It was a one bedroom for $850 per month in Tigard. The person who showed her the apartment said that the unit would be available October 15. This gave her hope. When it was time for them to move into their new apartment two short weeks later, however, there was a delay. Maria explained, "This lady told me it wasn't ready, and she was going to put in new carpet. She told me there was a water leak and that she had to pinpoint where it was coming from." On November 1, she checked on whether the apartment was ready, and still again, the lady told her to check back later.

"Did you sign a contract?" I asked.

"I gave her a $500 deposit," Maria responded.

"So, when there was a water leak, and the apartment wasn't ready, did she give you the $500 back?" I inquired further.

"No, she just said that she would try to give me the apartment as soon as possible, but that if I found another apartment, she would give me my $500 deposit back," Maria said as she shifted in her seat.

On November 1, she used the rent money she was saving for her new apartment to pay Walnut Tree for the month of November, even though her notice told her that she

needed to vacate by November 15. “I paid my rent for the whole month, and they accepted it,” she explained. “They cashed the check.” The manager called her around this time to make sure that Maria and her girls would vacate by November 15.

> *The manager said that I had to leave the apartment on the 15th. I have to move out on the 15th, and that if I didn’t, I had to tell her exactly the date I was moving out. I told her that I didn’t have any place to move to, and that my rent had already been paid for. She said she was going to give me my money back, my rent back. She was going to refund my rent. She said, “Well, I’m going to give you $500 bonus that we’re giving everyone who is moving. Plus, I’ll give you your deposit back.” I said, “This is no good for me. Where am I going to live with that money? What I’m looking for is for you to help me find an apartment.”*

Maria continued to look for other available units, but never received a call back. She put in an application for the apartment behind Walnut Tree the week before November 28, the date I interviewed her. “When do you expect to hear back from them?” I asked her.

> *The lady there, she called me yesterday to ask me for some paperwork, and I did the paperwork. She said she would check to see the background or I don’t really know what. Then, she said I had to pay her for the deposit, but it was late when I was done with work. When I sent my daughter, the manager wasn’t there, or she didn’t open the door. It’s the one right next door. We are awaiting to hear what she’s going to say.*

The No-Cause Effect on Family and Community

Maria described that since the no-cause eviction notice, her 15-year old daughter, the older one, "has really lost focus for school. She's got music lessons. At first, she was practicing all the time, but now, she doesn't do it anymore." Her daughter, who was sitting on the couch in the same room with us listened in on the entire interview added, "Well, if we move far away from Tigard, our grades are not going to transfer, so it doesn't really matter. It's just going to start all over again." Additionally, as her neighbors moved out and construction increased, she began taking her daughters to work with her "just because there's a lot of men coming in and out from the apartments." Remembering that Maria worked 10-12 hours a day, I asked her, "What do your daughters do when they go to work with you?" The daughters answered, "We just talk and stay there. She takes her tablet, and we watch videos and songs. Stuff like that or do homework." The younger sister teased the older sister, "You don't do your homework." The older sister laughed it off, but her mom frowned disapprovingly.

I asked her if she knew what happened to her neighbors. She answered that one neighbor, went to live with someone else as a roommate. The pregnant woman went "up there where Christian used to live." Another pregnant neighbor, who had just delivered, found a place in King City. One neighbor with an autistic child stopped eating. "He was crying all the time not knowing where they were going to go. He wanted to be here close to his friends and neighbors." A few people, like Maria, were still living in at Walnut Tree, but most had moved out, even if it meant homelessness.

> *Down on the corner, there are people who are still living there. This man who used to live here, where they're stripping the apartments, he was a white man. The manager was telling him insistently that she wanted the*

apartment. He couldn't find another apartment, and I believe he put all his belongings in storage. He told my girls that he would go sleep in his car."

In her search for a new place to live, Maria experienced discrimination. Places that advertised their available units told her none was available when she tried to apply. She tried both private and public apartments, but most of the time, never received a call back. The one place that did give her hope, took her $500 deposit with no concrete move-in date, which seemed like a scam in the end. She tried tapping into community resources provided by the City of Tigard, but it led to further dead ends and more numbers to call. Meanwhile, as she continued to sink more money into application fees with each application, her daughter lost focus in school because she did not feel like her efforts would have made a difference. Maria worried about sexual predators once strange men, construction workers, replaced neighbors she knew well in the apartment complex, so she began taking her daughters with her to work. While she worked her usual 12-hour shifts, her daughters spent that time in the breakroom. When I last interviewed her, she only had three days left until her rent paid days ran out, and it was uncertain what she would do after. She reasoned that perhaps "because of the Thanksgiving holiday, [the apartment managers] haven't called so far, and maybe they'll call me today. Who knows?" As Ana, the interpreter, were getting up to leave, Maria's phone rang. Maria recognized the Walnut Tree manager's number and let it go to voicemail. She plays the voicemail on speaker, and we listen to it together. The manager explained that the water will be turned off today and that she left a notice on Maria's door today. Maria scoffed that there was no notice, and that they had been home the entire day. She joked, "The good thing is that we already took our showers."

Conclusion

The way that tenants at Walnut Tree, now renamed Tigardville, found out about the sale of the apartments through a "buzz" and "rumors" seemed similar to the stories of other complexes. First comes the sale of the property to a hard-to-trace shell company, the property managers change, and then the building-wide, no-cause eviction notices follow shortly after. At some point during these events, tenants tried to organize themselves to try to resist the evictions like they did at Titan Manor. Yet, in many cases, tenants may have benefitted from organizing long before receiving their no-cause eviction notice because most need serious repairs. Tenants like Rosie and Maria often do not organize themselves before their eviction notices because they work 10-12 hours a day, five days a week, sometimes more. They did not have the time.

Eva, who lived at Titan Manor, was only able to help organize her neighbors when she did because she was on maternity leave, which was a full-time job (or more) so to speak, but it gave her more flexibility with her time. Before she went on maternity leave, she worked at least 50 hours a week as a manager at Chipotle. Even if they had the time, many tenants feared that rocking the boat would make them target. Although retaliation is illegal, it is impossible to prove, and ultimately proof would not matter because Oregon is a no-cause eviction state. Thus, tenants typically did not begin to organize themselves until after the no-cause eviction notices were already issued.

For Walnut Tree tenants, banding together after receiving their no-cause notice helped them directly in a few ways, even if they did not get their notices rescinded. The new owners offered $500 for relocation costs, they offered to return the residents' full deposits, and the City of Tigard paid for the additional trash bill that the new owners tried to pass on to the tenants. City of Tigard staff who hosted the meeting that Maria and other

Walnut Tree residents attended, recommended Tigard city leaders "provide tenants with a safeguard against no-cause evictions" by "adopting a local ordinance that protects vulnerable residents, like the former Walnut Tree occupants, from rapid eviction processes" (Tigard Affordable Housing Strategies 2016:28). As of March 2018, the City of Tigard continues to fund community groups like Unite Oregon and the Community Alliance of Tenants to continue to organize around housing-related issues, but no ordinances or additional renters' protections have been passed lawmakers.

For Eva Martin and other residents of Titan Manor, now renamed The Melrose, the fight continues as 30 families received new no-cause eviction notices as of November 2017, 10 months after the original notices were rescinded. The families banded together to ring in the 2018 new year by filing a lawsuit the first week of January. The lawsuit alleges that the new no-cause notices were a form of retaliation when the Titan Manor Tenants Alliance sent a letter to the new owners and management asking them not to increase the rent $75, particularly because they have yet to address the over 400 code violations noted by the City of Portland, possibly the highest violations of any one building, according the Community Alliance of Tenants. An Oregon Public Broadcasting reporter talked to a spokesman for the apartment owners, who disputed that the evictions were a form of retaliation. "He said moving people out of the units was the only practical way to bring the apartments into compliance with city code after years of neglect by the building's previous owners," OBP reported. Similar to what the Tigardville manager told residents after they confronted her about the no-cause evictions, the spokesman for The Melrose said, "Because of the significant investments that are being made, the apartments and homes will be significantly better, healthier, and safer than they were under the previous owners." The lawsuit, however, disputes that the evictions were to bring the

units up to code because four of the households that received no-cause eviction notices were living in units that had already been fully or partially renovated.

In this chapter, I attempt to show how the rental housing market, through the use of building-wide, no-cause evictions, displaced renters into uncertain housing conditions. Presumably, as low-income renters look for new affordable rental housing, they will re-segregate in those places that provide cheap rents within the price range they can afford. But because those places like Tigard, are outside of Portland's city limits, unfortunately, the Renter Relocation Assistance Ordinance will not apply to Tigard residents, even though they feel the burden of the rental housing boom emanating from Portland. In addition, coalitional efforts between the Oregon Law Center and the Community Alliance of Tenants can teach us about how intersecting vulnerabilities such as renter insecurity the need for increased legal representation join together to produce fruitful alliances to serve low-income people. Lastly social networks and having flexible time allowed tenant organizers such as Eva to be effective in pushing for and winning renters' protections such as the Renter Relocation Assistance. Even so, the new round of no-cause notices also show that more protections are needed to ensure that families like Rosie, Eva, and Maria's can stay in their homes and do not continue to remain vulnerable to investor/landlord profit motives.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Housing Emergency for Whom?

In the Fall of 2015, the City of Portland declared a Housing State of Emergency. The Emergency allowed city leaders to waive city code to permit temporary emergency homeless shelters, to open day storage areas, and to use city properties to address the growing housing crisis. Portland city leaders also joined with Multnomah County in a vow to spend $30 million on homelessness to address the estimated 1,800 people living on the streets. In addition, City Commissioners and the Mayor increased the minimum required notification for no-cause evictions and rent increases of 10% or more from 30 days to 90 days. Then in February 2017, Portland also passed Renter Relocation Assistance, requiring landlords to pay tenants' relocation costs if they issued a no-cause eviction or rent increase of more than 10% over a 12-month period. A year later they made the Renter Relocation Assistance a permanent ordinance and removed loopholes for landlords with one investment property, since there was no way to ensure that landlords did not hide behind multiple shell companies. In January 2018, Portland held its first Rental Services Commission meeting, which convened a group of experts to provide recommendations to City Commissioners and the Mayor about rental housing law and regulation and renter-owner programs and services in the City.

While I think that such attention to increasing renters' protections move us in the right direction to provide more stability for renting families and individuals, I also think it is important to acknowledge that many African American, immigrant, and other low-income families had long found themselves in a renters' state of emergency without much notice from the City or County governments. In the three ethnographic chapters

presented in this dissertation, I focused on highlighting the stories of such renters in long-term crisis. Chapter One looked closely at the experiences of Shaniqua and Colin Jones and their movement out towards the suburb of Gresham in search of rents they could afford. Through their stories and the stories of their parents and grandparents, the Jones family teaches us about the seemingly permanent instability experienced by the black community in the Portland region. We can miss the importance of community unsettlement when we only look at singular displacement events such as the Vanport Flood, URAs, or gentrification. Indeed, although scholars and activists today place much attention on African American displacement due to gentrification more research is needed to understand where people are going after gentrification and other displacement events and how they are experiencing those places.

In Portland, as in other places, black residents are moving out the suburbs, where rents are less expensive, and in doing so, are being re-segregated in those areas that have little to no experiences with black people. The serial displacement of African Americans in Portland also importantly shows us that after displacement, black Portlanders are also serially segregated, driven to live in the few places available to them due to racist housing policies and practices and the rental housing market that builds off those policies and practices. Additionally, black residents also carry with them intergenerational, experiential knowledge about displacement, which continues to shape how they interact with people and interpret programs in their new neighborhoods, especially those programs with implications towards their further displacement such as Rockwood Rising. While marketed as an inclusive community-based development project that will help to stem the housing crisis in Gresham, this project is built on a set of mistaken assumptions

about how "improving" the area through attracting businesses and upscale renters will benefit the current renters.

Despite continued efforts by community organizations in public forums, no one has answered the basic tenant questions: what measures are in place to protect current residents from rent increases? What is being done to guarantee a friendly and safe climate for those who already reside in Gresham? URA staff tagged their project as "neighborhood revitalization without displacement" –referring to the project's lack of direct displacement– in their mission statement (Rockwood Rising 2018). City council members, who are also redevelopment commissioners, and the mayor continuously tout 'the high level of community involvement' in the Rockwood Rising project, which is mostly focused on design feedback, and how they have learned important lessons from Portland about gentrification so that will not reproduce those same mistakes in the future. However, their lack of an anti-displacement plan and slow movement on passing renters' protections for Gresham's renters show that they have actually learned very little in terms of keeping low-income residents in place. As residents continue to experience serial displacement and segregation, they carry with them intergenerational, analytical knowledge that counter the narratives used by URAs, urban developers, economists, and city planners (and those that work for them like EcoNorthwest discussed in Chapter Two) to justify the displacement of vulnerable families and community members in the name of neighborhood "revitalization."

Interconnected Vulnerabilities and Strategic Alliances in Global Suburbs

Unsurprisingly, African American residents were not the only ones who moved to Gresham due to its more affordable rents. Immigrant and refugee families also resettled

in Gresham because they can afford the rent there as housing costs soared in Portland. Chapter Two discussed the experiences of one such family—the Hernández family. As a mixed immigration status family, the Hernández family tried to escape renting by buying a home only to realize that the parent's undocumented status and Juan's DACA status made it difficult to purchase a home, forcing them to remain renters. Juan was additionally deterred from homeownership when ICE picked him up and placed him in a detention center, emphasizing his vulnerable immigration status. However, his heartbreaking experience in the Tacoma detention center motivated him to start Pueblo Unido to help families, like his, with vulnerable immigration status navigate the dizzying and expensive legal immigration system. When he realized that Pueblo Unido's clients were having to choose between paying for rent or paying for a lawyer, the organization mobilized to oppose the City of Gresham's urban renewal plans because they believed it would serve as a spark to gentrification in the neighborhood. Such a spark would make it more difficult for his family, friends, and neighbors to stay in the community. Juan's story highlighted too that for DACA recipients like him with undocumented family members, moving is not simply inconvenient and costly, but also dangerous as it encourages more visits from ICE, which Juan states, "puts the entire family in danger." From protesting Rockwood Rising, Pueblo Unido, in collaboration with the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), shifted to push for renters' protections for all of Gresham.

The strategic alliance formed between Pueblo Unido and CAT suggests how coalitions of immigrant rights and housing rights organizations can result in policies and practices that are more inclusive for all renters, not just immigrants. Additionally, in Chapter Three, CAT's strategic work with the Oregon Law Center strengthened the appeal of how coalitions between housing rights organizations and other organizations

focused on community concerns such as legal representation, food access, and education can result in more effective policies and practices for low-income people who experience multiple, simultaneous, and interpolating socioeconomic pressures related to livability, safety, and economic mobility. Across Chapters Two and Three, I discuss the interconnected vulnerabilities of housing insecurity, fear of detention/deportations, and the precarity of work.

Black renters like Phylicia and other people of color, immigrants, and refugees, who rent, move out of Gresham, due to rising housing costs, the "global" part about Gresham being a "global suburb" seems to be waning, as renters, who are part of the global economy, take their formal and informal businesses, including their labor, with them. Global suburbs, like Gresham, facilitate the concentration of wealth in city centers by re-segregating low-income people of color, immigrants, and refugees and low-income whites into those suburbs. However, as residents are priced out of Gresham, they are forced to move even further from Portland's city core to places like Sweet Home, Sandy, or Scappoose. This dynamic becomes problematic as cities like Portland rely on those low-income renters to fill low-wage jobs needed to keep the city going such as sorting recyclables, food services, accommodation services, retail, educational services, health care, and social assistance, which were all jobs held by the low-income renters who taught me about renting during my research.

Portland region can learn from large cities like San Francisco, which has the highest median rents in the country and faces a dire teacher shortage due to the high cost of housing and low wages/salaries since the Great Recession (Knight and Palomino 2016). For renters with family members, who have vulnerable immigration statuses, they face the additional fear of detention/deportation. Since most who go through

detention/deportation are breadwinners, their detention/deportation not only likely cuts off an important source of income for their family, but in doing so, also makes it more difficult for families to pay rent, increasing their chances of eviction. Additionally, those families also have to make difficult financial decisions between paying for rent or paying for attorneys who critically assist in the detainee's legal hearings to be able to stay in the country and not be deported.

In the third chapter, I emphasize the experiences of renters who were issued no-cause evictions. As multifamily real estate in Portland became more profitable, investors issued no-cause evictions to dozens of apartment complexes, where thousands of renters lived, which created mass displacements of low-income families. The stories of three single mothers—Rosie, Eva, and Maria—show the vulnerabilities that low-income renting families face in Oregon's largely unregulated rental housing market where landlords can evict thousands of families or double or triple the rent without cause. As I stated throughout the dissertation, if as a society, we insist on forcing people to rent because they have no other alternatives except homelessness (which is not a reasonable alternative), then we must provide stronger renters' protections for those families to stabilize their homes and wellbeing.

Serial Segregation and the Rent-Gap

In this dissertation, I have discussed serial segregation, forced renting, and forced evictions experienced intergenerationally by African Americans, families with mixed-immigration statuses, single mothers, and other low-income and vulnerable renters. One important question I have yet to answer is: Why does serial segregation happen? I posit that serial segregation occurs because investors in the rental housing system profit from it

by way of encouraging and increasing the rent-gap, making serial segregation integral to our capitalistic, housing market system. In the debate on the causes of gentrification, geographer Neil Smith, argues that an increased rent-gap leads to gentrification. The rent-gap is the difference between current rent and the potential rent possible if it were developed to its "highest and best use" (Smith 1979).

There are two major ways that landlords and investors increase their profits by encouraging and increasing the rent-gap. First, many renters shared that their landlords defer major and minor maintenance and repairs to the property; yet, residents continue to see their rents increase over time. Arguably, small, steady rent increases are supposed to offset the cost of repairs for landlords. When landlords neglect paying for those repairs, they pocket the rent increases meant for those repairs, and in doing so, increases the rent-gap by devaluing the property. Sometimes, such as in the cases of Titan Manor and Walnut Tree apartments, former slumlords also cash in when they sell their dilapidated properties to eager new investors, who are looking to flip those rentals to increase the rent and their profits.

Secondly, devaluing property is important to increasing the rent-gap because it ensures that developers and other real estate actors can purchase property at low prices, develop on that property, and maximize their rate of return. The wider the rent-gap, the more profitable the investment. Serial segregation plays a crucial role in devaluing property by confining nonwhites to a designated area of town and then severely divesting in those segregated areas. This increases the rent-gap, which leads policymakers to call for development and policies in the form of urban renewal areas or "neighborhood revitalization" to fight neighborhood deterioration.

Housing is a composite good, whose price reflects the house, the land it sits on, and a full range of locational amenities and disamenities. The reason why two identical houses' market values differ based on their location, despite their identical use-value, is because their locations provide or deny the inhabitants access to elements which affect their quality of life. Increasing amenities in a location improves property values because it raises demand, while increasing disamenities harms property values because it lowers demand. Public and private investors make decisions on increasing locational amenities or disamenities. When they decide to invest in an area, they are simultaneously deciding not to invest in another given their limited budget. The fact that housing is a composite good, shows that our desires, lifestyle, and racism (e.g. beliefs about who makes good neighbors among other beliefs) all impact the price of property.

With housing as a composite good, new development causes property values to increase, displacing African Americans and other low-income and vulnerable residents into another area, continuing the cycle of displacement caused by racism. After rising property values displace residents, the small supply of affordable housing pushes them to rent in places that they can afford, re-segregating them into another area town.

Limitations of this Study

There are several limitations of this study that I will point out in this section. First, the in-depth qualitative methods used this study helped me to identify serial segregation as long-term problem in the Portland rental housing market that exacerbates inequality generation after generation. However, those qualitative methods also limit my understanding of how wide-spread the problem is, from quantitative and demographic standpoints, and on a larger geographic scale. More research is needed to answer those

questions. Second, the findings in this study could be strengthened by engaging and discussing the role of the racial state (Goldberg 2002), specifically how state institutions contribute to and benefit from serial segregation, the making of global suburbs, and the interconnected vulnerabilities of housing. Further understanding of the state's role would create a more complete and important piece in understanding why and how serial segregation continues to happen and what to do to stop it Third, this dissertation's heavy reliance on the experiential knowledge of renters yield rich descriptions of events from the point of view of renters, but it also means that there is a risk of inaccurate information, since I did not witness all of the events reported in this study firsthand and I do not have the ability to empirically cross-check all the stories shared with me by the participants.

Limitations of the Housing State of Emergency

While the City of Portland provided some renters' protections in their Housing State of Emergency policies, the reach of these policies only protected those who could afford to stay within Portland's city limits. Ironically, by the time Portland passed some protections for renters and dealt with homelessness, housing forces already displaced many black and immigrant families outside of the City's jurisdictions so that those policies would not benefit them. The same can also be said if Pueblo Unido win their campaign in Portland for universal legal representation, an attempt to have judges appoint attorneys for immigration cases so that families like Manuel and Analee do not have to pay $15,000 to plead their case, which I discussed in Chapter Two. As Leo reminded me, "If we win, it would only apply within Portland, not Gresham, but the thing is, people can't afford to live in Portland." The reality is that the epicenter of rising rents in the

Portland region is originating in the City of Portland and the City is moving to pass renters' protections. However, many of the most vulnerable renters can no longer afford to live there, so they cannot benefit from those protections as they move to live in adjacent suburban cities.

Additionally, in the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session, tenant rights organizations such as CAT and others pushed for the passage of a Renters' Protection Bill, HB 2004, which passed in the House, but did not make it to the floor for a vote in the Senate because the bill lacked the votes needed to pass, so the bill died in committee. If the Renter's Protection Bill had passed, statewide, it would have provided extended notice for no-cause evictions from 30 days to 90 days and lifted the state ban on rent control, which prevents most local regulations that would slow the tide on rising rents. But because the Renters' Protection Bill failed, organizers at CAT must now go to each municipal jurisdiction, rally renters, and convince city leaders to pass protections for renters. At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that the bill's passing would have done little to protected mixed-status families such as the Hernández family.

I have observed different responses from three suburban municipalities, but all three responses call for the collection of more information before they can decide to pass or not legal protections for renters. The City of Gresham created a housing taskforce with no publicly-shared criteria for selecting members, and whose members will create a list of nonbinding recommendations to City Council and the Mayor, who will use it to discuss and decide the best approaches to address housing needs in the City of Gresham. The City of Tigard funded CAT and Unite Oregon, an immigrant rights organization with focused efforts in areas southwest of Portland known as the SW Corridor, to facilitate a leadership cohort to provide nonbinding recommendations to City Council and the Mayor

on how best to deal with the regional housing crisis. Lastly the City of Milwaukie, held several focus groups held in multiple languages asking renters to come to share their views on whether more action needs to be taken by City Council and the Mayor. The Portland State University Researcher conducting the focus group will create nonbinding recommendations based on comments and stories provided by the focus group participants.

In these suburban municipal jurisdictions, there seems to be a lack of urgency on the part of lawmakers to meaningfully act in this rental housing crisis. I illustrated this sentiment in Chapter Two by comparing the Gresham Redevelopment Commission Advisory Committee (GRDCAC) meeting with the Gresham Housing for the People (GH4PPL) meeting, but taking the Cities of Milwaukie and Tigard's responses into account helps to echo (or make salient) the question: Housing emergency for whom? Not only do these taskforces/leadership cohorts/focus groups fail to convey the appropriate sense of urgency to large numbers of households potentially facing homelessness through building-wide, no-cause evictions and exorbitant rent increases, but they also show that community members need more political power than the ability to make non-binding recommendations to their elected officials.

In recognizing that some families long stared down a housing state of emergency, advocates and activists are asking, "Why pass protections now?" or "Whose emergency counts?" If they had recognized the housing emergency that black families faced due to the Vanport Flood, URA plans, redlining, and gentrification, for example, perhaps those who are a part of Portland's black community would not be facing the serial displacement and segregation threats they continue to face today.

Finally, I want to emphasize that places like Gresham, Sweet Home, and other smaller, perhaps not-yet-urban jurisdictions are morphing into a kind of global suburb, as new populations are being displaced and re-segregated there. Those new populations include people of color and other low-income families who are initially motivated to live there by the temporary low cost of housing, specifically rents. More research is needed to learn more about what community life is like for old and new residents as they try to adapt to their new environments and neighbors. Policy makers and housing advocates should continue to look at where increasing rents may push low-income renters next and help those places prepare for such changes while they rally for policies that will stabilize those families. Ultimately, we cannot continue to rely on so-called efficiency in the housing market to balance out supply and demand to provide housing for everyone who needs it.

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