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The Story of Milwaukee WI Reveals the Temporal Preservation of Racial Violence Embedded in Urban Renewal

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The Story of Milwaukee WI Reveals the Temporal Preservation of Racial Violence Embedded in Urban Renewal

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Geography and Africana Studies

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Senior Thesis Draft

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ABSTRACT

Human Rights and The Right to the City are the two most prevalent frameworks scholars use to try and address urban homelessness and housing accessibility. My work uses Milwaukee as a site of historical materialist study to analyze the limitations of current housing frameworks deployed by academics when addressing housing inaccessibility. Historical revisions that center Black communities reveal how the environment that urban democratic discourse and deliberations take place has been established by white imaginaries and their relationship to urban industry. To build this environment of white public dominion, I argue that white collectivism has been exacted against non-white urban communities throughout history to preserve the vantage point white communities have held in the economic, social, and political sectors. This thesis argues that Human Rights and the Right to the City's shortcomings are in their inability to address the dominion of white imaginaries in political discourse that has caused past and present harm to non-white communities. What I find by centering Black housing accessibility in my studies is that until the intentional construction of white accessibility to economic, social, and political sectors is addressed, democratic decisions meant to improve living conditions for the unhoused and housing insecure will continue to actualize white visions that cause racialized harm through dispossession and disenfranchisement.

PROLOGUE

This work originally aimed to center an ethnographic element to center the voices of people who live this work, who have been doing this work, and who have expertise in this work. After reaching out to a few groups and individuals with no luck, it felt very wrong of me at the time to continue reaching out for help me with my college work, especially during a global pandemic. I regret not having more optimism in people wanting to help tell this story and not putting a better foot forward. But, it is now something I need to work without, but address. This work is incomplete and contradictory without the input of those who are currently in Milwaukee living, struggling, and organizing. Without them, my work is removed from the present time, which is evident throughout. But with that, the work transforms and seems to become something that primes us to try and make sense of the present moment and how to approach it rather than explain it from on the ground.

The sources I used are through the same academic and media structures that patronize, silence, and bulldoze over those who need to be a part of this conversation the most. However, COVID, college, and everyday struggles stop for no one, and I must complete this body of work in a certain timeframe. I hope the biggest takeaway from this conversation to be that those who feel the violence of housing inaccessibility, specifically Black unhoused and housing-insecure urban residents, need to be at the center of urban revitalization discourses and deliberation, not as subjects of discourse and deliberation. Nothing here is new, nor my property, or an example of my excellence, but rather a compilation of the work those before me have done.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Pain is universal. We all know pain, and yet we'd rather not deal with it. We push it away, we forget it, we ignore it, and we look past it. But I think we are starting to wake up and realize that pain does not magically disappear. It is stored in the mind and the body. We pass it along to others: lovers, family members, neighbors. I believe the pain of residents can characterize a city. When we look at post-industrial cities such as Milwaukee, WI, we see the pain the city's establishment has so desperately tried to pave and paint over. We see the pain of people who have been left by Milwaukee's industry and left by government infrastructures of social security in times of economic crisis. However, we often gaze past the pain of the Black residents who have yet to be embraced by the city they reside in, the pain of communities that were never welcome to live in the city of Milwaukee. We gaze past the pain of communities labeled hazardous and unworthy of economic investment, neglected by government resources, and eventually bulldozed to make the city more "attractive" and to make white commuters' trips from city to suburbs easier.

On Average, landlords in Milwaukee legally throw 16,000 adults and children out of their homes every year (Desmond, 4). This past June of 2020, in the midst of COVID, Milwaukee saw a 40% increase in court-filed evictions (Minnesota Star Tribune). Court-filed evictions, however, represent only half of Milwaukee evictions, other methods include paying out tenants to leave and taking off front doors (Desmond). Alongside these facts, Milwaukee surpassed New Orleans as the 7th poorest large city in the U.S. in 2006 and as of 2007, ¼ of Milwaukeeans live below the poverty line, and the investment saturating the downtown is surrounded by wide areas of capital flight (Zimmerman 2008, 340). Milwaukee now houses the largest population of

unemployed Black Americans compared to any other large American city and is additionally one of the nation's most segregated cities (Zimmerman 2008, 340). Walking through Milwaukee, residents, and visitors can visibly see the stark differences in lifestyles and amenities from one block to the other or by simply looking across the street. These are the consequences of the pervasiveness of white imaginaries that influence the construction and organization of physical space and resources.

Milwaukee's past urban redevelopment projects have created small pockets of wealth, surrounded by areas and neighborhoods disregarded through austerity and neglect. In attempting to attract private capital and consumers to its downtown, Milwaukee has created fragmented spaces of targeted investment that have done little to uplift the city's post-industrial economic status. Choosing to attempt to attract wealthier residents back to the downtown rather than find ways to support the current historically Black neighborhoods that have resided there since The Great Migration expresses the anti-Black nature embedded in urban renewal and the reconstruction of spaces. Choosing to undergo renewal projects tailored to lure outside residents with racially coded language, firstly expresses an open disregard for Black lives and a perspective that does not see the value in renewing neighborhoods for the people that already reside in them. It additionally reveals generational tactics of Black demolition, dispossession, disenfranchisement, and ultimately racial violence for the sake of profit accumulation. This tells a story of the racial distribution of resources in cities, and I argue that racially violent resource redistribution is the product of non-white economic, social, and political exclusion since the birth of cities.

The pain Black folks are subject to in Milwaukee does not begin and end with slavery or Civil Rights, but each of these legacies carries on, are literally built and inscribed into the social,

political, and physical structure of cityscapes, and will continually be reinforced in new ways until addressed. The byproducts of political, economic, and social segregation through hiring discrimination, suburbanization, housing accessibility, and urban revitalization strategies continue to impact the lives of Black urban dwellers. Many of the first-hand accounts offered by Milwaukee Black residents facing gentrification is the pain of a collapsed community that they built by themselves, for themselves, a pain of once again being cast out, of new neighbors walking past without acknowledging their presence, feeling the loss of Black neighbors that saw the value in their personhood as they get kicked out of their homes. The dispossession and displacement of these individuals and families to make Milwaukee more attractive is founded in visions of cities that discern value added by whiteness in spaces and devaluation of spaces defined by Blackness.

My mom tells me that around the age of three, I had already begun to talk about my future taking place in a city, specifically Chicago or Milwaukee. Growing up in rural Wisconsin, a part of a 1% Black demographic, reflecting back I think being in a space with more brown and Black people comforted me. Once it started to become a more tangible reality that I will soon graduate college, permanently leave my childhood home, and look for a living space of my own, that dream of city-living faded from a fantasy to a potential actuality, and transformed into something that felt scary. I felt forced to reckon with the unhoused positions I found many Black and brown residents in when walking in the streets of downtown Milwaukee. Growing up in a single-parent, lower-middle-class household I began to worry about finding myself in the same position if I didn't find economic stability post-grad.

I could feel the pain Milwaukee holds as a little girl. I remember feeling deeply unsettled seeing people sleeping on the streets, forced into putting their next meal in the hands of

cruelly apathetic strangers that most likely will not even spare what is pocket change to them. This relationship exposed an ugly side of The United States and humanity I was ignorant to in rural Wisconsin; a glaringly apparent failure on the behalf of the nation and its local governments. From as early as I can remember I brought my chore money with me to the city to redistribute when we visited Milwaukee and Chicago. I hadn't yet been exposed to the logic that homeless people were undeserving of help, money, food, or shelter because they are struggling with addiction, mental health conditions, made financial mistakes, maybe went to prison, or whatever the reason. I stopped finishing the dinners I got after basketball tournaments when my mother began to express to me how she felt uncomfortable with me giving money to homeless people and preferred I gave them food. This is something we hear time and time again. 'Do not give money to homeless people because they will spend it on alcohol and drugs.' I used to be angry with my mother for her logic towards redistributing to unhoused people, but as I got older it became how pervasive, almost universal anti-poverty logic is. This widespread logic that drives apathy reverts responsibility onto the homeless community cannot be boiled down to racism or hate. Such ideologies that distinguish who is worthy of social redistribution are intrinsically tied to the historical making of American urban centers, a history of us and them, of included and excluded, of deserving and undeserving. Knowledge of the ideological and physical construction of cities allows a basis of resistance towards anti-Black and anti-poor logics to be addressed. As put by George Lipsitz, "because they are ignorant of even the recent history of the possessive investment in whiteness-generated by slavery and segregation but augmented by social democratic reform-Americans produce largely cultural explanations for structural social problems. The increased possessive investment in whiteness generated by dis-investment in American cities, factories, and schools since the 1970s disguises the general problems posed to

our society by de-industrialization, economic restructuring, and neoconservative attacks on the welfare state as racial problems. It fuels a discourse that demonizes people of color for being victimized by these changes, while hiding the privileges of whiteness by attributing them to family values, fatherhood, and foresight rather than to favoritism" (Lipsitz 1995, 379).

The following aims to illustrate how urban cities have been constructed under spatial imaginaries that support "possessive investment in whiteness," i.e. the lives of white laborers, and has since then been a project of preserving and investing in said white lives and spatial imaginaries to maintain a status quo rather than evoking change. I argue this continuation of political, social, and economic dominion prevents marginalized communities' inclusion in necessary political discourse and deliberation such as urban redevelopment that shapes the city. Until the domination of white imaginaries and interests in public discourse and deliberation are addressed and mitigated, urban renewal that is intended to benefit low-income neighborhoods and communities will continue to fail and inflict harm onto the very communities they are claiming to help.

The Long Fight for Housing Rights

Housing rights play a key role in attempting to qualify the liberation of Black people and other minority groups in the United States. Securing the right to housing validates the humanity of minority groups in recognizing their indisputable human right to basic needs and to exist in a space without continuous struggle. A core foundation of the ever-evolving American dream is owning property. Jones notes that westward colonization sparked a shift in Americans' relationship to private property, intensifying Thomas Jefferson's democratic nation of independent and autonomous landowners, but was also altering his vision through urbanization

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and "strong sense[s] of neighborhood-- usually organized around ethnicity and religion," (Jones 23). Housing was again re-solidified as an aspect of the American dream, and even further, protected and assisted by the government post World War II through Government aid and promises made by President Franklin Roosevelt.

The first U.S. public housing project was constructed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1923, although not intended for Black people to be housed in during a time of Jim Crow segregation. The first significant effort to subsidize housing took place in New York in 1926. Although private property is advertised to be a foundation of American rights and values, the effort to help secure stable housing for American residents is relatively new and was not conceived with the idea of Black people inhabiting such a space.

Activist demands either pushed through media or civil assembly have historically proven to be necessary for oppressed groups to gain the freedoms and privileges white residents do not have to fight for. Without the pressure of demands, these freedoms remain ungranted. The United States government both broadly and locally does not proactively seek the liberation of oppressed groups; they do so when they feel the pressure to. The demand for safe and sustainable housing has always been in the background of the city carried out by groups such as Milwaukee's Urban league[1] during the Civil Rights Era and Fair Housing Wisconsin[2] and Urban Underground[3] more recently. These cries and calls have been carried in and out of the spotlight for decades.

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[1] Milwaukee's Urban League is a branch of The National Urban league established in 1919 to help growing Black populations gain access to employment, livable housing, and public resources.
[2] Fair Housing Wisconsin is a private non-profit organization that promotes fair housing by combating housing discrimination through case intake and counseling, investigative services, and educational outreach.
[3] Urban Underground is a non-profit organization designed to a new generation of young leaders dedicated to creating safe and sustainable communities in Milwaukee.

On August 24th, 1967 Milwaukee's NAACP Youth Council, led by a white pastor, Father Groppi, in their organizing efforts to end housing discrimination, announced their plans to march into the white, working-class south side. About 100 activists were met by 3,000 white counter-protesters. Another 5,000 met them further along their marching route in Kosciuszko Park. Both groups met the young housing activists with violence in the form of slurs, rocks, bottles, alt-right propaganda, bottles, spit, and direct opposition to Milwaukee's Black resident's rights to live in homes. This did not deter the group from marching 200 more consecutive nights. This organized, sustained action by the NAACP Youth Council and Father Groppit to demand open housing helped bring the northern United States into the national discussion of racial violence.The fallacy of the North as a crusading force for Black rights throughout the Civil War prevents their dark past and ingrained anti-Blackness to be held unaccountable. From historical sundown towns, open displays of white supremacy, hiring discimination, segregation, and racially targeted urban demolition- no state finds itself exempt from anti-Black histories and therefore an intrinsically anti-black present. Anti-Blackness in Milwaukee has led to the preservation of the narrative that minority people who live in low-income housing and cheap neighborhoods are vessels of criminality and laziness, with the ability to overrun areas with violence and drugs. This white supremacist narrative is routinely deployed to reproduce and justify apathy towards human life while placing responsibility onto the unhoused without considering the relatively recent stark shift in Milwaukee economically, socially, and politically. This narrative additionally bypasses how minority dispossession is an evolving white creation of civic and urban investment, actively and passively cosigned by white residents.

The economic struggle taking place within Milwaukee, while holding its own unique circumstances, speaks to the current positionality of other American cities such as Detroit,

Kansas City, and Chicago. American cities that once depended on the industrial sector to produce revenue for their city are now depleted of well-paying jobs. With the loss of industry also came a shift in socio-political urban functionality towards neoliberalism. Milwaukee has found itself stuck in this post-industrial transition stage for over 30 years now. In its projects of wide-scale urban revitalization, each time the city has made choices that reproduced the devaluation of minority lives in Milwaukee. The un-inclusive revitalization plans adopted by Milwaukee display a pattern of disregard for the city's Black and minority populations, ultimately displacing them from their established communities, outside of new investment plans, and economic growth. Milwaukee's intentions in re-envisioning the city prioritized attracting white consumers outside of Milwaukee, who the city saw as valuable and useful to the space while continuing patterns of neglect towards Black and Brown communities that have been historically perceived as unworthy of capital and state investment. Milwaukee continues to choose to participate in speculative redevelopment for imagined residents that have yet to occupy any part of Milwaukee rather than invest in the care and protection of its current occupants.

Due to non-inclusive neoliberal growth agendas taken up in reaction to industrial-urban decline, strategies such as New Urbanism and Richard Flordia's Creative Class have surfaced across the nation. As a direct result, unsettling waves of racialized uneven development, dispossession, and disenfranchisement have swept through American urban centers once again. The President of Milwaukee's Common Council has alluded to noticeable similarities between Milwaukee and Brooklyn's development patterns (Hamilton 2019). Milwaukee's Black and non-white populations have been shut out of economic development and long-time residents who do not fall under the middle to upper-middle class are being displaced by luxury high rise

apartments, and local businesses are being pushed out and to bolster beer gardens and lakeside wine bars in attempts to appeal to white imaginaries.

Accounting for Colorblind Racism

Housing as a human right and the Right to The City have been the two most prevalent approaches to housing inaccessibility. Housing as a human right argues that the right for citizens to be housed is inalienable, while The Right to the City pushes for collective rights over the city as a way of securing housing rights for all. However, housing as a human right is often manipulated by city establishments as justification for removing homeless people from the streets and forcing them into inadequate housing to hide the structural failures that produce homelessness. The Right to the City has also yet to be appropriately actualized on a local level and only exists in abstraction. Housing demands are routinely manipulated by the local governments to support profit accumulation rather than human rights. The pervasiveness of colorblind racism and possessive investments into whiteness are fundamental reasons for the dissociation between housing accessibility ideologies and actualizations.

Bonilla-Silva argues the evolving, longstanding, functionality of racism in the United States while its existence is simultaneously denied or ignored altogether. He argues that any form of 'evidence' backing ideologies of the long-standing existence of racism can always be rejected and highly contested. However, he also argues evidence of America's racial functionality of violent exclusion can be displayed in the racial disparities in income, wealth, education, housing, and the criminal justice system (Bonilla-Silva 2018, 240). Turok et al. corroborate this evidence, by pointing out the existence of the welfare system as a structure to compensate people in need due to the functionality of [racial capitalism]" Turok et al. 2018, 506). Bonilla-Silva explains

modern racism to be subtle, institutional, and seemingly non-racial (Bonilla-Silva 2018, 241). This framework is important in analyzing Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as many northern states hide behind historical abolitionist fallacies of the North to argue the space and its residents to have always existed beyond race. Bonilla-Silva argues that this beyond race framework allows for people to safely distance themselves from racism, creating passivity, apathy, deflection, and a lack of accountability to America's racial reality (Bonilla- Silva 2018, 242). This by-product of apathy and deflection is also expressed concerning the housing crisis, demolition, dispossession, and displacement that takes place in the United States.

Cheryl Harris helps connect how the legacies of chattel slavery and racism inform current property relations in terms of physical property, and also holding a stake in the imaginary property of future spaces, such as the renewal of urban cities. In her piece, Harris writes "undergirding the conquest, slavery, and oppression of Black and Native people is a racialized conception of property implemented by force and ratified law. The origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination. It was not the concept of race alone that operated to oppress Black and native people . . . rather, it was the interaction between conceptions of race and property that played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination," (Harris 1993, 1715 & 1716).

Turok et al. argue the 'Right to the City' ideologies exist primarily in international discourse, specifically with the New Urban Agenda, a global framework for managing urbanization that drew influence from Lefebvre's 'Right to the City', which was expressed through the goal of 'cities for all'. Ommen et al. argue that if the 'Right to City' is captured in this exclusive, international arena, its current existence is only as an abstraction, and prompt to see real efforts of implementation on a local level (Oomen et al. 2016, 23). Turok et. al defines

Lefebvre's "Right to the City' as a collective right and power over urban space, that also allows for the transformation of social and economic relationships concentrated in power structures as a fight against exclusion and displacement and for 'full political participation in the making of the city' (Turok et al. 2018, 495 & 496).

Turok et al. additionally argue that local attempts to implement 'The Right to the City' have resulted in narrowing the focus to 'human rights cities'-cities focused on satisfying human rights, that stray from the core of Lefebvre's theory, collective participation. They argue 'human right cities' co-optation of Lefebvre's "Right to the City' has disregarded and ultimately undermined the purpose and potential successes of actualizing the 'Right to the City' on a local level (Turok et al. 2018, 494). Anucha describes "The goal [of state efforts] has frequently been just to get people off the streets into 'sheltered spaces' that often blur the lines between permanent housing and temporary shelter, while Perry additionally decodes the anti-Black and anti-poor logic that comes along with this narrow, one-track approach to housing rights and security, that are often more founded in the cleansing of public spaces by expelling racialized violence out of sight (Anucha 2016, 9 and Perry 2019, 174). Each piece calls for a more dynamic, inclusive approach, without the narrow focus of solely providing roofs over heads.

Oomen et al. expand on Turok et al.'s understanding of Lefebvre's 'Right to the City' adding that it is "a critique of the expansion of capitalism and its impact on cities and those who dwell within the hegemonic model that privileges the maximization of productivity and profit, along with the crisis of the welfare state in Europe," further supporting housing as a dynamic issue, that must be approached dynamically (Oomen et al, 2016, 117).

Anucha compiled her findings and framework from direct engagement and feedback with unhoused and hard-to-house people argues urban renewal approaches must begin by those in

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powerful positions first working to listen, understand, and learn from hard-to-house people (Anucha 2005, 9). While Anucha argues that those forced to the periphery, the ones who suffer most from housing inaccessibility, must be at the center of housing discourse as a source of needed knowledge, her argument simultaneously exemplifies the omnipresence of white logics and imaginaries in housing discourse. The description of 'hard-to-house' people describes the failures of unhoused individuals rather than the failures of state structures that produce poverty, homelessness, addiction, and likewise. The following thesis gives insight into the construction of whiteness in cities that sets the landscape for racialized relationships of access to participation in political democracy and social resources. This work illustrates how price tags have been put on human rights. The accumulation of profit has been put above the lives of citizens. Because of the drive to accumulate profit and keep capital within white investments, non-white residents are neglected by both the state and private capital. Neoliberal revitalization plans in the form of New Urbanism and Florida's creative class co-opt demands for accessible housing for all and separate citizens between deserving and undeserving of state and private investments and social resources.

Limitations of Human Rights and The Right to The City

Human Rights and The Right to the City frameworks are most commonly used by scholars when trying to address the problem of urban housing accessibility. However, these theories fail to consider how history has shaped the landscape for socio-political participation in urban redevelopment decision-making. Both theories fail to address how history informs the way we frame human rights under a binary of deserving and undeserving. Both theories additionally neglect the roles racial exclusion, dispossession, and disenfranchisement play when investments

in whiteness are cosigned both actively and passively by the masses. In the past, when the collective power of citizens was used to actualize political policy, it was policy that protected the interests of white citizens, and when development was made it was to satisfy white imaginaries. This ignorance leads to a romanticization of the imaging of collective power wielded by citizens, without considering the racialized hierarchy of the democratic influence citizens hold. This blindspot ignores the longstanding effects of said racial violence unaddressed. Without the acknowledgments of the racialized logics that inform democratic deliberation by citizens, without recognizing the ways the interests of white laborers have been used to protect white vantage points in the socio-political and economic sphere, neither theories can address issues of urban housing accessibility. A hope for this thesis is to help compile evidence to reconceptualize housing justice and accountability by exposing the anti-Black nature of urban renewal, and the ways local government and private capital have structurally invested into politics of contempt to create omnipresent social justifications for politics of racialized social austerity. Human rights and the Right to the City are both unfit to appropriately address the harm caused by white ideology that drives the government, white residents, and even people of color who are pacified due to their individual ability to make it work under racial capitalism despite the harm being done to the masses. These frameworks additionally ignore the lesser degrees of pain and suffering all laborers endure every day to be able to have access to food, housing, and basic needs that are withheld through capitalism. These frameworks fail to acknowledge the violence capitalism that is reinforced again and again and who it pushes to the edge of marginalization. I believe that only radical abolitionist organizations and methodology that recognizes who is most vulnerable and violence, harm, acknowledgment, and accountability will appropriately be able to handle the current state of housing inaccessibility.

Guiding Questions:

How did we get here? What needs to happen to be made evident for us to understand the present housing problems? Whose interests does local government serve? By centering Milwaukee's Black community and its historical interactions in Milwaukee, what is revealed? How does the racialized harm embedded in Milwaukee's past urban revitalization efforts impact Black residents and housing discourses today? What failures does racialized housing violence and dispossession in Milwaukee surface?

The Black City: Methods and Methodology

In the broader context of the United States, Black Milwaukee's history is most likely viewed as an insignificant narrative. However, Milwaukee serves as a key area of focus in its relationship particularly to its Black residents that contributes to the discourse and understanding of racial politics in historically white European industrialized spaces. Milwaukee is one of the most segregated cities in America and amongst the lowest-ranked cities in terms of Black employment. In Milwaukee's story of the rise and fall of a booming industrial city built to house European immigrants, white unionization and social democracy, shifting of politics of contempt brought on by WWII and The Great Migration, lies a deeply significant story of state and resident sanctioned racialized violence through dispossession and disenfranchisement that helps us to understand current racial access to economic, social, political and spatial participation. This alternative history of Milwaukee that centers Blackness works to disrupt the use of history to

propagate and preserve fallacies that allow agents and actors of racial violence to avoid accountability.

Recounting Milwaukee's history with a focus on its Black community reveals the ways history is narrativized to accommodate the interests of the masses and the state. Milwaukee's Black history, as comprised by historians and academics, reveals how possessive investments in whiteness dominate narratives, democratic deliberation, and visions of urban renewal. Historical accounts of Patrick Jones, historical accounts of the creation and demolition of Bronzeville within the inner city of Milwaukee, neo-traditionalist tactics deployed in the 1970s, and the shift towards neoliberal social austerity during the same time. Hancock, Lipsitz, and Harvey provide foundations of class and race analysis to argue how past policies created the poverty we see today and continue to play out in the present. In doing so I hope to provide context for my critiques of The Right to the City and Human Rights as limited modes of thought when addressing urban housing inaccessibility. Geography and Africana Studies as disciplines are both critical in studying housing inaccessibility. Exploring the historical-political landscape of cities, firstly provides stark physical evidence of inequality, but also allows for the exploration of how such inequality was made and surfaces the social, political, and economic ideologies that have influenced the spatial and social organization of cities throughout time.

Chapter narrative:

Chapter two tracks Milwaukee's history centered around its Black residents in concert with the socioeconomic conditions they faced throughout time to narrate the continual reinforcement of the color-line in urban cities through exclusion, disenfranchisement, and dispossession. The third chapter uses the historical context provided to analyze the temporal

withstanding of racial violence in social redistribution of resources and political participation in Milwaukee and the nation more broadly.

CHAPTER 2: BLACK MILWAUKEE'S RACIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL HISTORIES. HISTORICAL REINFORCEMENTS OF THE COLOR-LINE.

I thought my history would solely focus on the history of Milwaukee's Black community, but I quickly realized throughout my research that the construction of Blackness in urban centers is impossible to explain without addressing the initial construction of whiteness in urban centers as well. The following will help illustrate the ways whiteness has been socially constructed and subject to change over time oftentimes in reaction to Blackness.

PART I: BLACK PERSONHOOD, RIGHTS, AND BELONGING IN EARLY MILWAUKEE

Joe Oliver is most commonly credited as the first Black person to reside in Wisconsin. However, the legal personhood of Joe Oliver remains undetermined. Sources are unclear, but it seems as if Oliver did not travel to Wisconsin on his own will, but adjacent to a white family as their cook. It is unknown if he fulfilled this cook position as their property or as a paid servant. Despite Joe Oliver already exercising the right to vote in 1835, when drafting the state constitution in the 1840s, white Wisconsinites chose to deny Black people the written right to vote. (Jones 2009, 13). Like all American cities, Milwaukee did not begin as a place for Black people to live freely.

By 1850, Milwaukee had a Black population of roughly 100 out of its total 20,000 residents. William Vollmar, a white historian of the time, illustrated the Black population as

overall self-reliant, prosperous free men who either escaped slavery or formally bought the recognition of their personhood. Vollmar states the majority of the Black population as literate and filled roles such as artisans as barbers, cooks, waiters, store owners, mechanics, and likewise (Jones 2009, 12). Vollmar also counted five interracial marriages and claimed race relations to be relatively 'good', but within that same year, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 reinforced the color line, and in particular who fell under the protections of being considered a citizen, who deserved to live freely in Wisconsin, and who got to decide. The federal law created a precarious environment for Black people in Milwaukee and other American cities that were, for a short time, considered relatively safe. The Fugitive Slave act divided white residents by their choices to recognize Black rights as inalienable or only legitimated through written law. Many Black Milwaukeeans fled North to Canada, some stayed and began to politically organize with white abolitionists. Local organizing led to a series of local confrontations, one taking place in 1854: the rescue of a recaptured slave, Joshua Glover, from the Milwaukee jail. Glover's organized escape ultimately led to the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision that decided the Fugitive Slave Act to be unconstitutional (Jones 2009, 13). The same lawyer to secure this case would later represent a biracial Black man, Ezekial Gillespie, in the legal battle that would secure Black voting rights in Wisconsin in 1865 (Jones 2009, 13). I argue that this was only made possible through the power of white allyship and the consent white of citizens who were able to leverage their power in ways Black citizens cannot.

The initial presence of Black folks in Milwaukee marks the beginning of local debates of their personhood and rights. These instances show that from the beginning, the humanity and freedom of Black folks in Milwaukee were in the hands of and up for debate by white residents and that despite federal formal law, Back belonging in communities needed a social sign-off by

white citizens. These wins acquired in the courtroom are now utilized by local government to depict Milwaukee's history as one of tolerance, diversity, and progress. Historian Joseph Ranney provides a more true-to-reality version of Milwaukee's history: one that frowned upon blatant discrimination but also frowned upon living amongst and uplifting the quality of life for Black residents (Jones 2009, 13). Despite the very few moments of solidarity highlighted in this section, there was little to no sense of a unified community in Milwaukee that crossed racial lines. Ranney cites reliance on de facto segregation and discrimination shown in a "'pattern of weak racial liberalism' established by white civic leaders," (Jones 13). Ranney argues that this pattern began in the 1840s and continued through the Civil Rights Era. Ranney and many others' scholarly perspectives illustrate the continuity of liberalist values and strategies to preserve covert discrimination and enforce the color line in Milwaukee WI.

PART II: THE RISE OF INDUSTRY, AN ENVIRONMENT BUILT ON WHITE DIFFERENCE -

The spark to creating present-day Milwaukee as we know it began with America's Industry Boom and with it came a population boom. Similar to most American industrial centers, the period between 1870 and 1920 represents the zenith of Milwaukee's industrial expansion (UWM Encyclopedia). The initial establishment and growth of the City of Milwaukee reflect and coincide with the development of many other regions including Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit, to comprise the industrial Midwest, cities not considered to be parts of the US's rustbelt (UWM Encyclopedia). The biggest industries to support the economic landscape were beer, leather, and machinery, but industry dominated the city landscape in various other forms such as fabrication, milling, meatpacking, iron production, foods production, and more, giving Milwaukee the

nickname the "Machine Shop of the World" (Jones 2009, 14). Jones states, while industry

flourished Milwaukee's population rapidly grew from roughly 20,000 residents in 1850 to more

than 285,000 in fifty years later in 1900, and again, doubled to 587,000 in 1940 (Jones 2009, 15).

The majority of population growth throughout the industry boom could be accounted for by

European immigrants, beginning with German migration in the 1840s and by 1890 immigrants

and their children made up 86.4% of the city population. By the early 20th century the majority

of Milwaukee's population consisted of German residents (either directly or by descent) and

their cultural influence was so strong many referred to the city of Milwaukee as the 'German

Athens of America' (Jones 2009, 15). The next largest immigrant population was Irish. The

German population came in an initial wave of immigration while the influx of Irish migrants

came in the second wave of immigration that also included Polish, Grecian, Seberbian, Croatia,

and other, more eastern and southern European immigrants.

   "Almost all who came were white, though not all white ethnics were equal" at the time

(Jones 2019, 15). Earlier, German, immigrants were capable of reserving their positions in social

and economic hierarchies at the expense of newer groups of immigrants. Milwaukee eventually

gained another nickname as the 'City of Nations' to describe the ethnic boundaries drawn across

the city both socially and physically. Ethnic difference, but also the urge to belong and commune

with those with similar cultural backgrounds, influenced the physical construction of different

regions or turfs in Milwaukee. Germans originally inhabited what would become Milwaukee's

"inner core" but began to move outward as they secured their economic and social positions in

Milwaukee. The Jewish community took up their place in what would become the "inner core",

while working-class central Europeans mainly occupied South of the Menomonee River,

established English Americans shared the East with Germans, Italians along Brady street who

were eventually replaced by the Irish in the third ward (Jones 2009, 15 & 16). Despite differences, each immigrant ethnic group depended upon Milwaukee's industry to make a living. During the early 20th century Milwaukee was cited as having the second largest population percentage in manufacturing labor in the nation (Jones 2009, 16). While labor laws were considerably less humane than they are now (although still inhumane), the grueling, under-compensated work still provided hope in its ability to provide economic security. This security not only allowed for families and communities to take care of themselves but to participate in homeownership, additionally feeding into the cycle of belonging and identity in Milwaukee through physical space and class. The newest immigrants getting access to the oldest, 'hand-me-down' homes and neighborhoods usually within a mile radius of downtown left behind from earlier, commonly German, immigrants with an economic headstart as they made their way to 'greener pastures' away from the city (Jones 2009, 17). The picture Jones provides in his historical work illustrates the distribution of space in Milwaukee during the rise of industry to highlight the close interactions between industry, ethnicity, class, mobility and homeownership to create meaning to space in the city. Another way European immigrants worked to secure a sense of belonging and apply meaning to their new environment was to speak their native languages and to preserve "Old World heritage and a traditional way of life" rooted in family, authority, patriotism, and Christianity (Jones 2009, 15 & 16). While ethnic boundaries created a patchwork of neighborhoods throughout the city with single groups occupying blocks, there would also be neighborhoods or boundaries with more of a mix of ethnic groups that would influence both conflict and cooperation across ethnic lines. There was nothing static about these relationships.

Ethnic social and physical boundaries would carry into the 20th century influencing cultural and economic conflict. While many people like to cite this as a significant period of time because tensions existed between white groups, I would like to point out that Black people were not seen as fully human to even be considered in these tensions and also unable to participate in the economy as autonomous laborers. Two of Milwaukee's companies even employed Black people before the civil rights movement. Everyday friction did not exist within race on a large scale basis because Black people were completely segregated and barred from the social and economic aspects of white America especially in Northern America. However, as the very small Black population experienced some growth alongside massive waves of German and Irish immigration to inner-city Milwaukee, intense job competition emerged for the labor positions unestablished immigrants and Black people were forced into. This competition for labor, a livelihood, and therefore security and survival, translated into an eventual escalation of racial conflict (Jones 2019, 12). However, it is important to note, that despite their immigrant status, Milwaukee was very much a metropolis for white immigrants, and while this new wave may have had to struggle harder than the immigrants who settled earlier, they were generally still welcomed into the economic and social life that Milwaukee had to provide, where Black residents were still intensely excluded socially and economically in mass. Additionally, racial tensions put Black residents' lives at risk in ways that white ethnics communities did not have to face. For example, when a fight between two Black and two Irish men broke out in 1861, resulting in the death of one of the Irish men, the predominantly white community took it upon themself to create a white supremacist mob and kidnap and lynch the Black man (Jones 2009, 13). Another example of the unaddressed white supremacist past of Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin includes the 1863 petition to ban any Black people from migrating into the state

(Jones 2009, 13). Historian Jack Doughtery marks this period as a turn-over from the 'friendly'

race relations of the early 1800s. Doughtery notes "most early settlers either died or moved

away. In their place came a newer, less established Black community," (Jones 2009, 13). Despite

Wisconsin's historical depictions as an abolitionist safe-haven, brought into existence by a

majority white support of The Union during the Civil War and stories such as Joe Oliver's court

victories, the majority of white Wisconsinites, in fact, did not support the recognition of Black

people's rights and humanity and were generally illustrated by historians as unsympathetic to

Black struggles after the civil war (Jones 2009, 14). Securing Black rights was abandoned by the

federal government post-Civil War and left local governments and communities (comprised of

white people) to debate the humanity, citizenship, and rights of Black residents. By the 1880s,

the city of Milwaukee and its white residents were back to using both blatant, discrete, formal,

and informal mechanisms of racism and Black oppression through laws, social codes, and the use

of 'tradition' to demonize, dehumanize, and exclude Milwaukee's Black residents and prevent

the growth of a future Black population. This moment is commonly noted as the formation of the

New Jim Crow Era following the "abolition of slavery" as the nation knew it, but the

construction of social and political mechanisms to exclude Black people from the status quo that

whites had created. During this time period, we see a rise in disputes of who gets to use public

accommodations, or in other words who has a right to live in the city of Milwaukee (Jones 2009,

14). When I say live, I mean to be able to have a safe, livable home, walk around in public safely

and securely, to participate in civil democracy, to be able to use the public spaces and amenities

resident's tax dollars go towards- not just the ability to wake up, exist, sleep in an environment,

but to have a broad sense of community and belonging throughout the entirety of the city not just

neighborhoods, or blocks. Therefore, the economic and spatial competition took place between

white ethnic groups, however as Black people began to become more integrated into the city, and into the economy, the groupings and boundaries of tension shifted in Milwaukee.

PART III: AN ENEMY TO THE WHITE WORKER - WHITE UNIONIZATION AND WHITE CHAUVINISM

The stronghold of Milwaukee's industry on the city's economy is attributed as the cause of strong support of the labor movement that began to emerge in the late 1800s, as most individuals and families depended on industry wages to survive. Industry workers at the time were working six days a week with ten to twelve-hour shifts, yet were still unable to fully provide for families. While most urban laborers in cities such as Detroit and Chicago found themselves in similar socio-political climates during this time period, the city of Milwaukee's path proved to be significant in its forming of political unity amongst the labor movement and the white progressive left during the first half of the 20th century, which ultimately lead to years of social democracy (Jones 2009, 17 Wisconsin Historical Society). Despite the small Black population in Milwaukee, freed Black people, no longer being used as tools and machines in the economy through slave labor, were still seen as an enemy to the white worker. Someone coming to steal the fruits of their labor and the quality of life that were perceived to be owed to whites, that Black people were not entitled to. An example of such would be the government working with labor organizers to ban all Black strike-breakers from being sent into the city by local industries, and stating if they do, the government has no responsibility for the violence that would ensue, choosing to abandon the safety of Black laborers, while additionally choosing to completely ignore Black laborers in their fight for labor rights (Jones 2009, 18). This is likely because so few Black people were able to formally participate in the industrial sector. However,

government and white unions did not take up that issue either. Their fight was for white lives, white rights, white economic security by choice.

The Bayfield Massacre, which resulted in the death of seven protestors after the Wisconsin state militia fired into a crowd of 1,500 protestors marching for 8-hour workdays, is often noted as the beginning of the peak of the labor movement's bargaining power. This incident made blatant enemies of the state government, militia, and private corporations and led to a united front between Milwaukee's Progressive and Socialist parties to gain bargaining power, and eventually labor reform (Jones 2009, 17). Unions utilized various means to win back their rights as laborers including strikes, boycotts, and the holding of mass meetings/rallies. Wins, such as pay raises and shortened workdays, occurred across several fronts: iron and steel mills, on the docks, in railroad shops, and in the printing trades. In July 1880, three unions formed the *Milwaukee Trades Assembly*, asserting their willingness to form a unified front of resistance against employers despite historic ethnic tensions. The Assembly grew quickly and soon had its "First Annual Picnic and Festival" at the Milwaukee Garden, garnering over 2,000 attendees (UWM 2016). During this period the Trades Assembly additionally shifted their focus from securing an eight-hour workday to securing political leaders that they felt sympathized with and would politically represent industry workers (UWM 2016). Due to the collective bargaining unions organized following the formation of the Milwaukee Trade Assembly, they were able to achieve electoral victories for the People's Party in both 1886 and 1887 elections. However, electoral victories of the Labor union would prove to be in a constant influx of power and influence as local government responded to the advancement of collective labor demands by consolidating the power of Democrats and Republicans into the "Fusion Committee".

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Following the loss of political election holdings due to the "Fusion Committee', workers and union activists continued to search for power through politics and many unionists unified with progressives to give their support to Milwaukee's Socialist Party at the end of the 19th century. Frank Weber is credited as the main organizer to steer the new Federation and eventually the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor towards socialist positions. In 1910 Emil Seidel was elected as the city's first socialist major and the first to be elected in a large city in America. This moment ushered in a 50 year period that is known as Milwaukee's 'sewer socialism'.

(Henzl 2019 and UWM 2016). Projects during this period bolstered public access including beach accessibility and public housing. However, these new amenities and projects were ushered in by socialism during a period of stark segregation and came to fruition for the use of white residents only.

This moment in Milwaukee's history is highlighted not just locally but nationally due to the exercise of social democracy. The use of collective power and bargaining to bolster the interests of the people against the will of capitalist industries for such a long period of time with support from local government parties rather than suppression from the local government we saw in early unionization and see today is significant. The people felt like their interests could actually be heard and enacted through civic processes and that they had a collective say in the city, while additionally using a class analysis to propose and enact policies. This moment seems to illustrate something close to an actualization of Lefebreve's Right to the City. However, the collective interests of 'the people' were the white laborers and residents of Milwaukee. And these were also white socialists whose mixtures of ignorance, racism, and apathy made it so they could do little to nothing about the hardship that Milwaukee's Black laborers faced.

This unified front and show of chauvinism benefited Black America in no way. This period, when Black livelihoods are centered, marks just another period of segregation and exclusion through housing and hiring discrimination and physical enclosure. Through these systems, Black residents were additionally kept from citizens' the collective practice of rights described in the 'Right to the City'. Economic exclusion kept Black residents from political participation such as unionizations' collective bargaining and civic involvement. And due to the small Black population size, Milwaukee's Black laborers and community had little to no bargaining power to leverage. So nothing had to be done, for their oppression and exclusion did not disrupt the status quo and daily flow of the city and its business. The city's Black population of roughly 3,000 remained generally barred from white social and economic life. Even now, since Milwaukee's Black population has grown exponentially, making up 40% of the population in 2019, it doesn't seem like there is a unified labor force, class, or white solidarity to leverage collective power or kind of organization to control city government seats and policies.

This period that ushered in "social democracy" also marked the beginnings of The Great Migration. Few Black workers were attracted to Milwaukee during World War I and the peak of labor unionization in Milwaukee. Unlike Michigan and Illinois, Wisconsin's harsh segregation and hiring discrimination made it so few job opportunities were available for Black workers which made the city generally unhospitable to Black people compared to cities such as Chicago and New York (Wisconsin Historical Society). 1915, the year before the beginning of The Great Migration, Milwaukee counted only 1,500 Black residents. (UWM 2016). The emergence of the cotton gin diminished the need for a large population of Black labor in the south, resulting in a shift in Black social and economic relations to the white America that previously viewed Black people as products and tools (Miner 2013).

PART IV: A CITY WITHIN A CITY, THE RISE OF BLACK MILWAUKEE

  While it is said that northern employment opportunities, segregation, and Jim Crow all prompted The Great Northern Migration from the South, this sub-chapter makes evident that the same racism and hiring discrimination waited for Black people in the North. The shift in Black people's relationship to the economy took them North and West beginning in 1916 in search of new employment opportunities, and also marked the birth of Bronzevilles. Bronzeville is not exclusive to Milwaukee or specific to Northern Cities. There are Bronzevilles in Los Angeles, in Chicago, Brownsville in New York, and many more scattered throughout American industrial cities. Bronzeville is Milwaukee's local manifestation of a national pattern that took place in reaction to the Great Migration. This pattern was the result of housing being transformed from a basic need to a tool and a weapon to deter, exclude, control, and contain emerging Black populations in American urban centers through Bank loans. Bronzeville is the product of a shift in Milwaukee and the nation's socio-political landscapes caused by shifts in the economy from many catalysts such as the cotton gin, growing industry, and WWII. In reaction, we see Milwaukee with its local government, housing coalitions, financers, and residents exert more effort to reject, exclude, and even destroy Milwaukee's Black community. I will later analyze this shift with Hancock's politics of contempt and disgust due to perceived economic threats to the white worker. These perceived threats to white economic security and livelihood from the emergence of a prevalent Black community-led groups and individuals to actively or passively (through consent or apathy) perpetuate harm to Milwaukee's Black residents through systematic investments in whiteness.

Between 1916 and 1950, as Black individuals and families began to become more prevalent in urban centers, they were not allowed to join the local community but were separated and contained into their own communities physically, socially, and economically (although white people could often come and go from 'negro districts' as they pleased). These confinements were referred to as "Black Metropolis", "little Africa", the "Black belt", most commonly Bronzeville, but later in Milwaukee will be referred to as the inner core (Jones 2009, 13 & Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). Jones explains a mixture of choice, economic necessity, housing exclusionary practices, discriminatory real estate and loan practices, and overt racism to combine in the creation of an identifiable thirty-five block "negroe district", however, most historians highlight banks refused to give Black individuals and families housing loans outside certain boundaries and the cosigning of neighborhood residents through societal prejudice to manipulate the construction of these segregated and financially neglected neighborhoods that would later be recognized as 'ghettos' (Jones 2019, 13). However, I have a hard time pinpointing where choice comes to play as both lower and middle-class Black families were forced into this space, unlike white ethnic migrants who were able to move as they found economic mobility. This moment marks an organized white resistance to the growth of a Black population in Milwaukee (as well as other American cities, although Milwaukee's came later for reasons mentioned above).

John Williams, a Black prospective teacher with a bachelors' degree helps to further illustrate the socio-economic conditions that the migrating Black population were introduced to in Milwaukee. Williams was forced to settle for a job in Milwaukee's steel industry, despite his qualifications and the practice of hiring Black teachers in the south. Very limited industries hired Black people during the 30s and when they did it was to fill the lowest paid and most unpleasant positions, Williams explained, such as feeding blast furnaces and slaughtering animals

(Dougherty 1998, 121). White union workers organized to keep Black laborers out of the industry out of fear of employment competition. During WWII less than a dozen of Milwaukee 2,000 factories hired Black men (Jones 2009, 20). Outside of industry, Black workers were only permitted to occupy positions such as house cleaners, janitors, porters, launderers, cooks, elevator operators, waiters, and likewise (Jones 2009, 14). Those who were hired by factories worked within segregated environments until the start of World War II. Labor shortages and high demands catalyzed by the war made Milwaukee more attractive to Black individuals in search of work.

The boundaries in the late 1930s of Milwaukee's Bronzeville had expanded north and west but not to the south or east in Milwaukee. Milwaukee was not fit to and did not want to make itself fit to house and employ such a large number of Black people, and so it didn't. This created undesirable and unsafe living conditions for the Black population. 97% of the Black population rented from white landlords, housing that was among the oldest in the city, absentee-owned, neglected, deteriorating, and in violation of building codes meant to protect people's lives (Jones 2009, 14). Any slight promise of economic opportunity that influenced Black southerners to migrate to Milwaukee were thrashed by The Great Depression. It is noted by historians that due to the racist economic climate in Northern industries, the Black population was hurt the most by the recession. The first to be laid off and the least likely to get any sort of government assistance. Anthropologist Ivory Adena Black describes Milwaukee's Bronzeville as a "city within a city", completely self-sufficient (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). Black industry workers were already few and far between during this time "both the Wagner Act and the Social Security Act excluded farmworkers and domestics from coverage, effectively denying those disproportionately minority sectors of the workforce protections and benefits

routinely channeled to whites," (Harris 1993, 9). Additionally, "The Federal Housing Act of

1934 brought homeownership within reach of millions of citizens by placing the credit of the

federal government behind private lending to home buyers, but overtly racist categories in the

Federal Housing Administration's (FHA's) "confidential" city surveys and appraisers' manuals

channeled almost all of the loan money toward whites and away from communities of color"

(Harris, 9). These two examples of government intervention alone can quickly illustrate the

exclusion of Black laborers from any sort of financial protection that is withstanding for white

residents. It could be assumed that the interests of local governments, employers, and the nation

were to protect and preserve whiteness during this time of hardship while neglecting the

humanity and needs of non-white citizens.

Bronzeville's physical geography expanded significantly beginning in the 1940s as Black

workers flocked from Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas to labor in factories, foundries,

tanneries, and meatpacking plants (Wisconsin Historical Society & Miner 2013). Historians

argue the opening of industry to Milwaukee's Black residents would not have been possible

without the tireless work of Milwaukee's Urban League. They spent much of the '30s trying to

negotiate deals with white employers as the Black population suffered through The Great

Depression with little to no government assistance (Jackson 2019 and Official Website of the

City of Milwaukee). However, while the work of the Urban league should be recognized, it was

not necessarily their bargaining that created some type of understanding between Black

laborers/migrants and white employers, but wartime demands that influenced the opening of the

industrial sector to Black workers despite the wishes of the white union worker. I argue that The

Great Migration clearly illustrates a shift towards Hancock's politics of contempt, which she

theorized to have emerged later in the 1970s. As Black laborers began to join the white-

dominated economy outside of their socially accepted positions as sharecroppers and cleaners, white urban masses and local government made a concerted effort to exclude the Black community from the resources of white urban dwellers.

PART V: WWII, THE PEAK OF THE GREAT MIGRATION, SHIFTING POLITICS

World WWII influenced a shift from the white collectivism of social democracy based on exclusion to more overt and violent efforts to preserve whiteness in Milwaukee. This unified resistance to Blackness came as a result of emerging politics of contempt influenced by labor competition as Milwaukee's Black population continued to grow and join the white-dominated workforce. The commodification of quality of life influenced white residents to protect their own interests. This led white interests out of the city and into suburbs as the government worked to preserve its investments into whiteness.

Many Black residents of the city began to notify friends and family members in the South about the jobs that were now being made available. Black families were actively recruited to come to Milwaukee (Jackson 2019and (Wisconsin Historical Society). While it was said that Black southerners could enjoy (segregated) occupations that Black Northerners could not, it is also stated that Black industry workers would receive wages unheard of in the South. Although laborers were finally able to join in the industrial economic sector in the 1940s, Black politician, Calvin Moody, explains the fight for civil rights in the 1940s to be centered around securing jobs. Black people were still forbidden from joining other industries often referred to as the service and professional sector (Dougherty 1998, 121). During this time, 81 years ago and 80 years after the abolition of slavery, Milwaukee had yet to hire its first Black teacher. This is the same professional/service sector Milwaukee's Black residents are expected to thrive in to survive

today. This also clearly illustrates that Black workers were not welcomed into the industrial sector because their capability, humanity, or needs were recognized, but to benefit national production and capitalists in the wake of labor shortages during wartime. Additionally, Black laborers did not have access to industry jobs the same way white laborers did, although they found some opportunity for economic security, half of Black men were still unemployed in 1940, while only 13% of Milwaukee's white men were looking for work (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). This details how inaccessible the economy was to Black people just 81 years ago, how this reflected in the physical geography Black communities were afforded, and brings reminiscence to the present as Milwaukee strives to bolster industries such as technology that are known to be generally inaccessible to Black workers and widely accessible to white workers and generally struggle to attain housing ownership.

Nevertheless, roughly half of the Black community was now able to experience economic mobility and stability with industry wages. So despite half the population continuing to struggle, the other half fueled the hopes and imaginations of the American Dream and the Black population that stood at 8,821 in 1940 increased in the decades following. Bronzeville grew to a seventy-five block area in 1940 and housed more than 90 percent of Milwaukee's Black population (Jones 2009, 18). As the Black population continued to show growth white Milwaukeeans outside of the inner core uniformly resisted what they saw as an intrusion of Black people into their neighborhoods. White residents continued their efforts alongside real estate agents, banks, insurance companies, social welfare, public utilities, local, state and, federal law enforcement worked to maintain racial segregation physically, socially, and economically through housing (Jones 2009, 19).

Throughout the six years of wartime (1939-1945), although professional sectors and the middle class remained generally inaccessible to Black workers, industry allowed for a significant decrease in the Black poverty rate and an increase in Black median income, and the number of Black owner-occupied homes increased as well (Jackson 2019). The model of economic mobility through industrial employment that served the European immigrants gave promise to serve Black migrants as well. Rejjie Jackson writes in the Milwaukee independent that "in one place at one time— Milwaukee, 1940 to 1970— [B]lack Americans found it possible to go from peasant to proletarian to upwardly mobile blue-collar property owner all in one generation," (Jackson 2019). I will argue, however, that these improvements would prove to be much more temporary.

PART VI: POST-WWII, URBAN RENEWAL AS WHITE INVESTMENT AND RACIAL VIOLENCE

Post-WWII, Bronzeville's independent economy began to boom as the Black population in Milwaukee continued to grow, as Black workers were forced out of their industrial jobs to make way for returning white workers, as industrial demand decreased, and government neglect continued. Black employees were the first to be laid off. Just permitted entrance into Milwaukee's industrial economy and with no support from white unions, Black workers had no leverage to protect their livelihoods and were driven to alternative means of income.

A nightlife industry of entertainment, gambling, and bootlegging that started to emerge in Bronzeville during the 1940s took off in the 50s. These industries are cited by historians as alternative routes of economic survival, especially as Black workers who found decent wages during war-time were replaced and forced back into lower-wage service jobs such as elevator

clerks and janitors. Survival, economic security, and the hopes of social acceptance and belonging were once again taken out of the reach of Milwaukee's Black community. Despite hardships, the Black population in Milwaukee continued to grow, from 8,821 in 1940 to 21,772 in 1950 and so did Bronzeville's economy as it serviced the expanding Black community (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee).

The growing presence of a Black population alongside enticing federal housing loans influenced white residents to migrate to the suburbs of Milwaukee. By the 1950s Bronzeville had created its own thriving business and entertainment district along Walnut Street that included Black-owned grocery stores, car washes, restaurants, law firms, just to name a few. Milwaukee had the highest per capita Black business ownership rate in the country but was targeted for demolition as it began to flourish. As a result of the Housing Act of 1949 the City of Milwaukee began to prey upon housing that had been neglected by private and state finances for 'redevelopment', but instead transformed the area, building fewer more expensive homes to replace "urban slums'. This left those who inhabited those "slums" displaced. Simultaneously planning for the construction of I-43 began to actualize. This interstate was meant to aid commutes for white suburban workers into the city. It became evident that "redevelopment" was to achieve white visions of what the city should look like, and to demolish was deemed undesirable. More than 8,000 homes and the thriving Black community grounded around Walnut street were destroyed within a 10-year process of "redevelopment" (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). After independently establishing a sense of place, the Black community was left scattered physically, economically, and socially.

WWII industry demands opened up the economic sector to Black laborers which incentivized Black people to flock to the industrial North for a means of survival. As Black

laborers joined the industrial sector en masse harsh racial divisions that once defined the

economic sector began to morph and redefine. As a result, we see a stronger, more unified

resistance against Milwaukee's emerging Black population. A unified politics of contempt

actualized into various reinforcements of the color line. While reinforcements came largely from

local and federal policy, it was the cosigning of the collective interests of white urban dwellers

that allowed such policies to remain.

PART VII: DEINDUSTRIALIZATION'S EFFECT ON MILWAUKEE'S BLACK COMMUNITY

During the 1960s Milwaukeean industries came into harsh competition with the

emerging manufacturing economies of countries such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. One central

reason being that these countries were able to capitalize on products equal to U.S. quality at

lower labor costs, was due to a lack of labor unions, and therefore lower product prices (UWM

2016). Long-time companies rooted in Milwaukee began to flee throughout the 60s and 70s and

reposition in areas without strong labor unions to continue profitable business. An example of

such would be the move of Schlitz Brewery to Dallas, Texas (UWM 2016). Other companies,

such as Albert & Sons leather company decide to close their doors for good (UWM 2016).

42,000 manufacturing jobs were lost between the period of 1960 and 1973, and the population

holding manufacturing jobs was cut into half (UWM 2016). Many companies that left claimed

they had insufficient funds to pay pensions, and others such as Pabst Brewing Company refused

the payout without explanation. The sharp decline in the manufacturing industry was taken up by

service jobs with significantly lower hourly wages and more racially exclusive hiring practices in

comparison to industry. The abandonment of Milwaukee by private capital left a sharp loss in

well-paying manufacturing jobs, a growing population of impoverished residents living in the central city, an expansion of segregation between the urban poor and the outer-city advantaged classes that can afford to relocate deepening tensions between economic classes starting in the 1960s, a fleeing young population, and an edition to the "rust belt" of America. Below I include segments of Reggie Jackson's testimony of the hardship that ensued for Milwaukee's Black community in the wake of American deindustrialization:

"My family moved here in 1973. I can recall as a young child seeing many men in the neighborhood leaving for and returning from work in uniforms from places like A.O. Smith, Allis-Chalmers, Pabst, Master Lock, Eaton Electric, and other similar employers. That economic vitality would not last… What made Milwaukee so different for blacks was that we depended on those jobs more than in any other city. In 1970, 42.9 percent of blacks in Milwaukee worked in blue-collar jobs, a rate higher than in Detroit...There were 118,600 manufacturing jobs in Milwaukee in 1967 at the height of the Civil Right movement and Open Housing campaign. Ten years later only 91,400 of those jobs were left. Many had begun to move to the suburbs of Milwaukee. Eventually even those places lost manufacturing jobs too. During my junior year of high school in 1982 the city had only 77,900 manufacturing jobs left...Six of the ten largest employers in the metro area were largely gone (Allis-Chalmers, A.O. Smith, AC Electronics, American Motors, Schiltz Brewery, and Pabst Brewery). The other four on the list had downsized their workforces significantly (Briggs & Stratton 6,890 less jobs, Allen Bradley [Rockwell Automation] 5,750 less jobs, Harnischfeger [Komatsu] 3,550 less jobs, Miller Brewing 2,400 total jobs in 1970 now has only 630 jobs in the plant making beer with an additional 600 other jobs...The late 1970s and early 1980s were a difficult time for the U.S. economy. The recessions of the early eighties were critical to the decline of the city. From 1967 until 1987, Milwaukee lost 54,700 manufacturing jobs, and 14,000 of those had been lost between 1982 and 1987. The national unemployment rate in 1982 reached double digits for the first time since 1941 – in the last stages of the Great Depression...Because jobs were no longer plentiful, Milwaukee saw a drastic change in

its black communities...Our local, state, and national leaders decided to deal with the healthcare crisis of addiction in the black community by locking people up – unlike the push to provide treatment for opioid addicts today who are mainly white...The recession following the 9/11 attacks was followed by the Great Recession and housing crisis in 2007. Job losses, and foreclosures became the norm for black Milwaukee. There were 304,155 jobs in Milwaukee in 2008. By the following year that number dropped to 279,705. Losing over 24,000 jobs in less than a year increased the despair within the city. By 2011 the number of jobs recovered to 300,054 but dropped again by 2013 to only 282,237. That roller coaster ride impacted the black community, as well as the Latino communities in Milwaukee. Levine explained that 'between 1995 to 2000, when the employment situation for city of Milwaukee residents began to deteriorate, all of the net job growth in metropolitan Milwaukee occurred in the suburbs'...The spatial mismatch in jobs was clearly shown by analyzing who worked in the city of Milwaukee in 2015...By 2015, according to Census Bureau records, whites held 74.4 percent of the jobs in the city. Blacks comprise 40 percent of Milwaukee residents but held only 20 percent of the jobs in the area. Latinos make up 17.3 percent of the population but had only 8.1 percent of the jobs in Milwaukee in 2015. Every Monday through Friday, 68,318 whites that live in the suburbs and exurbs travel into Milwaukee to work...Whites, who often complain about the city of Milwaukee, seem to have no problem making money in the city and taking it out to their comfortable suburban communities where few black, Asian, and Latino people live...What is happened to Milwaukee has and continues to happen to smaller majority white towns across the country, to a lesser extent with the same negative situations arising. Yet the people in those places are not blamed or shamed for their economic collapse," (Jackson 2019).

Jackson's testimony affirms which communities feel the harshest impacts of economic recession, the neglect of local government in the wake of recession, and why urban infrastructures of care are necessary to provide socio-economic security in times of private capital flight. The loss of capital left cities across the nation and its residents in despair, but while this pain was not exclusive to Black communities, the late securement of employment rights left

them especially vulnerable to the shifting economy. The local and federal governments chose to let Black and other non-white communities flounder and left circumstances in the hands of private financing- a sector that had been evidenced to openly avert any sort of investments into Black communities. In attempts to attract more private capital that local government claimed was needed in order to address social needs, cities began to refashion themselves both physically and socially to attract homeowners and business investments. In other words, cities ventured back into urban redevelopment to recreate the city in a fashion that would further appeal to white spatial imaginaries of what a city should look and function like.

PART VIII: RACIALIZED SOCIAL AUSTERITY POLITICS EMBEDDED INTO ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIES - REDEVELOPMENT THAT APPEALS TO THE WHITE SPATIAL IMAGINARY

Instead of government intervention to mitigate the harsh consequences of deindustrialization for laborers, cities turned away from government social spending during this time and toward politics of austerity. Rather than provide social security for those who felt the harsh effects of deindustrialization, across the nation American cities fell into a new internal competitive capitalism amongst each other to attract homeowners and private investment. Strategies consisted of image curating and material regeneration. After small failed efforts, such as redesigning the city logo, Milwaukee's municipal leaders and wealthy elite eventually turned to a New Urbanism, a neo-traditionalist and neoliberalist, redevelopment model in the 1970s to rebrand and remodel the city's metropolitan area. Milwaukee's leaders further extended this neoliberal agenda in the early 2000s by adopting Richard Florida's "Creative Class" urban

redevelopment blueprint, a newer refashioning of New Urbanism. The goal was to construct Milwaukee as the "Genuine American City" in 1995 (Kenny 2004, 74). The discourses and aspects that comprised The New Urbanism strategy consisted of the financial investments and public planning of neoliberalism, cultural enhancement of neo-traditionalism, and physical planning of New Urbanism (Kenny 2004, 74). The strategy of New Urbanism plays upon an assumed feeling of longing and nostalgia for a previous era associated with the perceived loss of civility and safety in the midst of diversity and also contrasts itself against the hyper-individualized isolation and gross materiality associated with suburban living. To summarize, the goal of New Urbanism was to appeal to white imaginaries and reconstruct a time before suburbanization, before the loss of civility and prevalence of crime in cities, and back to a time of white urban dominion. In other words, the goal was first, to re-attract white individuals and families that had moved to the suburbs, and secondly, do so by trying to refashion the city in the image of "better times", before the Black population grew in urban centers. This led to an attempt to reincarnate the white ethnic Milwaukee of the past as a city to embrace its past industries and dominant German culture of the past (Kenny 2004, 79). New Urbanists believed by focusing on such aspects, an appeal could be constructed around immigrant and industrial populations to reflect the cities past, present, and future. The New Urbanism campaign focused its energy on downtown Milwaukee, which was a majority Black community, to attract a larger tourist market, business owners, homeowners, and affluent taxpayers back to urban centers (Kenny 2004, 90). The New Urbanist strategy focused exclusively on physical and social aesthetics of the street landscape through transportation and design practices assumed to address the problems brought on by diversity that had created a disconnect between street life and commerce (Kenny 2004, 78). To clarify, New Urbanist strategies defined non-white urban

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residents as the problem for capital flight, and hopes to rectify the issues brought upon by their presence. Endeavors to achieve such included the construction of the Wisconsin Civic Center downtown in a German Renaissance style that prized Milwaukee's white European past (Kenny 2004, 80). The terms used to define the New Urbanism strategy such as "genuineness" and "tradition" reveal a racialized nostalgia tailored to appeal to white interests and predispositions. The New Urbanism has bypassed themes of racial violence perpetrated through economic, social, and physical exclusionary practices. Instead, the strategy places these issues of urban neglect and disenfranchisement under an umbrella of problems that can be solved with new urban designs tailored to the groups of people that will bring "value" to the space (Kenny 2004, 76). Neoliberal strategies overtly placed racialized value on human lives which did nothing to revitalize the space, but to replace the people occupying said space. New Urbanism succeeded in its goal to attract middle and upper-class residents back to the city, with waves of migration of such classes to downtown Milwaukee and adjacent neighborhoods beginning in the late 1990s (Kenny 2004, 80). This pattern has not led to the mixed-use, vibrant neighborhoods idealized by New Urbanism, but has displaced long-time residents and influenced the deepening of racial and economic disenfranchisement and displacement in the metropolitan area. New Urbanism's attempt to gloss over such issues of race and class by trying to construct a homogenous immigrant-welcome and post-industrious white-dominated image has done little for the current longtime residents being uprooted from their homes. The neoliberal foundations of new urbanism can still be found in the city of Milwaukee's new urban planning focus tailored to Richard Florida's Creative Class.

Richard Florida provides a refashioning of racially exclusive revitalization tactics of speculative redevelopment to potentially enhance cities' ability to sell themselves to investors

and homeowners. 2002 marks the publication of Richard's book based on his "creative class" thesis, which doubled as a planning blueprint (Zimmerman, 230). Florida's creative thesis identified young, creative professionals as the catalysts for sustainable economic growth. Richard Florida implored cities to attune their planning strategies to satisfy the creative class' lifestyles, cultural practices, and consumption habits (Zimmerman, 230). Florida came to such conclusions with his own observations of an economic revolution, similar to the industrial revolution, sweeping advanced capitalist societies, described as the shaping of a new economy characterized less by its dependence on labor input and the location of raw materials, and more dependent on human knowledge and innovation (Zimmerman 2008, 231). Florida's thesis framed human creativity into the economy's most prized commodity and the catalyst for economic growth, and young professional "creatives" to be the determining factor of the shape, direction, and geography of new economic development. Florida additionally subdivides the creative class by the "super-creative core" comprised of scientists, engineers, University Professors, poets, novelists, entertainers, designers, architects, and opinion-makers, and "creative professionals" consisting of financial, high-tech, legal, and healthcare industry workers (Zimmerman 2008, 231). The majority of the occupations mentioned in Florida's creative class are widely white-dominated and inaccessible to Black workers. Despite this, Florida argues that cities should alter their physical landscapes to satisfy this exclusive population. Florida asserts that the creative class has expanded over the 20th century to make up the nation's largest labor force. However, that percentage of labor adds up to almost thirty percent of the nation's population, creating a sense of invalidity in the idea that entire cities should be attuned to satisfy this labor class (Zimmerman 2008, 232). Additionally, on a global scale, this percentage makes up about 2.6% of the population. Despite this, Florida's ideas were quickly co-opted into the

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paradigm of urban entrepreneurialism across America, especially in slow growth metropolitan areas such as Milwaukee because of its appeal to white imaginaries.

To implement Florida's ideas the city of Milwaukee was prompted to focus all of its attention and finances towards creating a city that appealed to young professionals. Suggestions included constructing a downtown museum district, mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and major increases in housing and marketing initiatives that highlight the city's "coolness factors" (Zimmerman 2008, 231). The creative city growth strategy repackaged non-inclusive, top-down, downtown-based, property investment-led, neoliberal development patterns. The focus of the speculative development initiative was the "live/work/play" phase, which focused on reconstructing Milwaukee's central area to fit the presumed needs and wants of the creative class and promote the place of Milwaukee as an ideal home for young professionals (Zimmerman 2008, 231). This included the establishment of the "Young Professionals Association" to aggressively market the city's new imagery of a "youthful and creative," "culturally modern," and "sophisticated" place (Zimmerman 2008, 231). White visions of creative place-making were contrived through the establishment of on-demand entertainment, coffee houses, bookstores, nightlife districts, museums, showcase condominium towers, the expansion of pedestrian projects, factory loft conversions, streetscape improvements, and other experiential activities with a "presumably open and tolerant culture" (Zimmerman 2008, 232 & 233). As a result, public projects and central city real estate investment have become intensely geared towards satisfying a population that has yet to comprise the majority of Milwaukee or the United States. Zimmerman argues the Milwaukee growth coalition's most recent activities are no more than an optimistic experiment within a broader neoliberal agenda. This neoliberal agenda dictates that urban space must be transformed into an ideal arena for market-oriented economic

growth and elite consumption (Zimmerman 2008, 231). I argue these tactics are not an experiment as Zimmerman proposes. When put into historical context, it is evident how Richard Flordia's creative class is nothing but a proposed new aesthetic for white investments that draws upon the same mode of exclusionary politics from the past. Scholars have highlighted the fact that Florida's ideas did not rise to fame due to their novelty and revolutionary nature, but because his creative thesis seamlessly fit into the already existing conservative, neoliberal, urban political landscape (Zimmerman 2008, 233). Zimmerman also notes, if Florida's growth model is being co-opted by cities across the country, it will be unable to give any city a competitive advantage (Zimmerman 2008, 339). Cities such as Cincinnati, Memphis, Minneapolis, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh either have or are attempting to reconstruct in accordance with Florida's blueprints, making Milwaukee's aggressive campaigning silent amongst a sea of "buzzing" and "trendy" cities (Zimmerman 2008, 239).

The Revitalization of Bronzeville:

In 2000, during the beginning phases of racially violent neoliberal redevelopment strategies, then-mayor John Norquist announced plans to reinvest into Milwaukee's Bronzeville neighborhood. The plan was to revitalize the area with investments between West North Avenue between N. 4th street and N. 7th street. The city intended on creating a new entertainment district and would be anchored by America's Black Holocaust Museum. However, revitalization got put on hold until current Mayor Tom Barret revitalized it and $3.6 million was invested into numerous projects including commercial loans, building redevelopments and street improvements (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee).

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Bronzeville is now being utilized as a tool to artificially bolster the city's diversity by creating a state and private capital manufactured cultural and entertainment district, while simultaneously pushing Black residents out of the area and failing to recognize how the "blight" of Bronzeville was manufactured. The city's stated plan was to "improve the physical character of the commercial district and the surrounding residential neighborhood, create investment and employment opportunities, support tourism, and celebrate racial diversity" (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). This revitalization choice by the local government was in accordance with Richard Flordia's revitalization blueprint, rather than a true recognition of the harm that was unleashed onto the neighborhood not long ago.

The domination of white values and imaginaries is evident in the superficial and contradicting focal points of the project's goals, revolving around "cultural celebrations, safety/crime deterrents, commercial development, and community involvement" (Official Website of the City of Milwaukee). However, the pervasiveness of white imaginaries became most evident upon discovering the Bronzeville Advisory Committee assembled to oversee redevelopment. The group contained three business executives, a CEO, and one long-time resident of Bronzeville. Although all Black, it became apparent those with access to capital and therefore those able to maneuver within white imaginaries were those who gained access to the committee. The Black imaginary is easily seduced and co-opted by omnipresent white imaginaries that tell us profit accumulation is needed to address resident's needs. This seduction of Black folks existing within marginalization, but not pushed so far to the margins that they are entirely excluded, illustrates how white residents are not the only people with stakes in white investment.

Roughly 17 years later the promises of low-income apartments were finally fulfilled, but with one complex. Additionally, after 17 years, America's Black Holocaust Museum is set to open in the fall. In the name of revitalization, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee continues to acquire property in Bronzeville characterized as 'blighted' to be renovated or demolished. Chicago's Bronzeville is similarly undergoing revitalization projects that have threatened to demolish physical anchors of Black Histories in the area such as churches and monuments. Spatial markings of Black belonging have continually been threatened by demolition influenced by white imaginations of urban futures.

CHAPTER III: THE CONTINUITY OF RACIAL VIOLENCE; WHY ARE HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY FRAMEWORKS INSUFFICIENT TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS?

PART I: WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHAT HAS HISTORICAL MATERIALISM DONE? WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

I argue that the past affects the future, and to have discourse about present housing issues, there needs to be a widespread and local understanding of the history of housing and its close working relationship to economy, race, and the dominion of white visions that have shaped what housing has come to be. Racism is ingrained and entrenched into the functioning of America. The "past" is not as far as we think it is and that past informs the present. The past is manipulated to preserve and center narratives that do not disrupt the status quo of white dominion in economic, social, and political spheres. When centering Black lives, a very different story of Milwaukee comes into view. We see a story with various agents and tools of racialized violence including industry, physical landscape, housing, local government, and white and non-white local establishments that have cosigned racial violence both actively and passively. I argue that the current use of housing as a mechanism of violence is influenced by both the politics of disgust, born out of politics of contempt instigated and manipulated by the state. I will now deploy the work of Harris, Lipsitz, and Hancock to display how Milwaukee's history is a unique microcosm of more broad themes taking place in the macrocosm of the nation.

PART II: WHITENESS AS PROPERTY: SOMETHING TO PRESERVE. SOMETHING TO INVEST IN.

Residents and their needs have been turned into investments. Whiteness has been distinguished as an identity that has been favored by the economic and private financing sector. The economic and private funding sectors influence and are influenced by the social climate set by occupants of an area. During the birth of cities, capital investments into urban landscapes were inherently investments into whiteness because white laborers occupied the nation in mass as citizens, while most non-white people did not. Since then we have seen state manipulation to actively preserve these capital investments that has yet to be acknowledged and rectified. The desire to protect past investments into whiteness innately lends to the concept of Blackness as invaluable or a bad investment. Cheryl Harris and George Lipsitz help us understand the construction of Milwaukee through the construction, reinforcements, and investments into white identity that reflects and informs the political socio-economic environment. Harris explains the process of manufacturing whiteness as the use of cultural (defined as economic, societal, and physical) exclusivity, to bridge unity amongst a white race that was once divided (Harris 1993, 371). Something made evident through the story of Milwaukee is that racism is constantly responding, transforming, and renewing. Harris and Lipsitz also take it upon themselves to recount a less edited, manipulative version of history in attempts to undo some of the fallacies and erasures that preserve temporal reiterations of racial violence. I will now insert summarizations of Harris', Lipsitz's, and Hancock's historical revisions and analyses that help to cement and expand upon my critiques of Human Rights and Right to the City frameworks to

address housing violence by bringing them into a national context beginning with Post-WWII. Their work helps to illustrate the ways in which historic patterns of exclusion make the environment for political deliberation in America unconducive to a true form of democracy that The Right To the Cityand housing as a human right both depend upon to be actualized. This story helps to illustrate the construction of American whiteness, with housing and more broadly access at its center.

Post-WWII trade unions negotiated contract provisions giving private medical insurance, pensions, and job security largely to white workers in unionized mass-production industries who accepted them rather than fighting for more collective goals of full employment, universal medical care, and old age pensions for all or for an end to discriminatory hiring and promotion practices by employers (Harris 1993, 10). White workers were pacified from their own exploitation because they were granted an artificial gift of security that was unobtainable to non-white populations of workers, making white laborers feel secure in vantage points above non-white problems. As pointed out by Harris, It was another policy that widened the gap between resources available to white people and those who were non-white, hurting non-white workers the most, but preventing both groups in obtaining true rights as laborers, residents, and citizens. Housing was also used strategically to pacify white residents from the commodifications of their own basic necessities and later on to pacify white laborers and assist them in transition to service sector occupations as industry significantly decreased in America.

Harris argues the most damaging long-term effects come from the impact of the racial discrimination embedded into the policies of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and urban renewal's role as the catalyst of transforming housing relations and transitioning away from the industrial economy. During the 1950s and 1960s, federally assisted urban renewal

projects were taking place not just in Milwaukee, but all over the nation. Urban redevelopment was originally advertised as projects to create more low-income housing, but time helped to reveal the intentions of local governments to in fact rid the city of low-income housing in order to create properties and amenities that would attract investments. This led to the destruction of 20 percent of the central city housing units occupied by Black residents. Even as government-backed urban renewal programs were completed in the 1970s, Black central city residents continued to lose housing units at a similar rate (Harris 1993, 373). Urban renewal projects helped to subsidize the development of downtown office centers on land previously occupied by low-income residences. This would divide and disrupt low-income communities from the rest of the city with buffering zones of demolition or new development. As cities worked to make themselves attractive to private capital, "federal urban aid favored construction of luxury housing units and cultural centers, such as symphony halls and art museums, over affordable housing for workers" (Lipsitz 1995, 375). Ninety percent of the low-income units removed for 'renewal' were never replaced. Instead, commercial, industrial, and municipal projects took up more than 80 percent of the land cleared for these projects," (Harris 1993, 374).

One way cities were able to fund such speculative development was through the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA and private finance lenders actively flowed money from already federally and locally neglected inner-city neighborhoods and towards investments into white suburban homes, central city construction, and commuting infrastructure between the two. The local government supported federal and private investments into white preservation through segregation by routinely providing water and sewage amenities for white suburban neighborhoods in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, while continuing to neglect non-white needs. From 1960 to 1977, four million whites moved out of central cities, while the number of whites living

in suburbs increased by twenty-two million and by 1993, 86 percent of suburban whites still lived in places with a Black population below 1 percent (Lipsitz 1995, 374). This was not a new event, exclusion, or act of harm but another reinforcement of the state's role and preservations of whiteness in urban centers, another securement of resources that were perceived by white communities as too scarce to share or universally secure without their own detriment. The demolition of neighborhoods and highway constructions, also justified through urban renewal, was another national process that aided the act of fortifying white identity. The demolition of Bronzeville to construct I-43 was not exclusive to Milwaukee but also took place such Los Angeles, Houston, and St. Louis as well, displacing and bisecting neighborhoods (Lipsitz 1995, 375).

Although American industries began their flight in in the 1960's the mass of deindustrialization and its effects were felt in the 1970s and 80s, with the Black community amongst the most impacted. Almost half of Black workers during the time of deindustrialization worked blue-collar jobs. Black access into the nation's industrial economy was one of the first large-scale paths towards Black economic security. Wages that gave promise of upward mobility, to the possibilities of homeownership, and more. However, Lipzits helps explain that because the 1964 Civil Right Act came so late, formally deterring racist hiring discrimination that shaped the white economy, Black people who had gained a more formalized employment standing, still faced disproportionate job security due to seniority-based hierarchies that generally protected the jobs of white laborers (Lipsitz 1995, 376). The recession of the 1970s, as industry fled the nation, we see another reinforcement of Black disposability and white investment. Younger Black families are cited to have experienced a 50 percent drop in real earnings between 1973 and 1986 (Lipsitz 1995, 366). During this time of recession, we see neoliberalism take its

stronghold on the nation as local and national governments begin to fully abandon all forms of state intervention and spending, and instead openly allow private capital to influence the futures of the city. Neoconservatives such as Nixon and Reagon piloted attacks on all forms of social spending: disowning spending for public housing, health, education, and transportation, further constricting the populations who did not have the economic opportunities to invest in their own housing, transportation, and more. Government both local and national increased support for overt and covert racial violence to aid the redistribution of wealth back to the ruling classes and white masses, in their refusal to acknowledge racism in its many forms, such as housing, educational, and economic segregation, as a problem of the past or present.

Lipsitz points out the overall ignorance Americans have to the historic choices by local, state, and national governments and white masses that have produced the living conditions for non-white people in urban centers. Opinion polls conducted among white Americans display little recognition of these devastating changes. Seventy percent of whites in one poll said that Black people have the same opportunities as white workers to live a middle-class life, almost three-fourths of white respondents in a 1989 poll believed that opportunities for Black people had improved during the Reagan presidency. (Lipsitz 1995, 380) A 1990 poll similarly revealed that 50 percent of white Americans saw Black people as inherently lazy and less intelligent than white Americans, over half of White Americans believed that if Black people do suffer through economic and housing industries that it was because of their own choices, and over half of white Americans believe that Black citizens prefer welfare over employment (Lipsitz 381). While this poll may seem outdated, more recent polls can confirm how these racial legacies survive throughout time. A UMass Lowell poll demonstrated that 73% of white Americans that responded to the poll believed white and Black residents are treated completely the same and that

white privilege did not exist (UMass Lowell 2019). Almost 40% of white Americans believe nothing more needs to be done to restore rights to Black Americans (Horowitz et.al 2019). However, it is solely ignorance, apathy, and histories of perceived economic competition that have influenced white American masses to think this way, but the extensive effort of local and federal governments alongside capitalists to manipulate, erase, and complicate histories of blatant racial violence. Hancock's theorizations make sense of such racial fallacies as a politics of disgust that still drives white perceptions and apathy towards racial violence in a more modern context.

Hancock's *Politics of Disgust* shows how stereotypes and politically motivated misperceptions about race, class, and gender were effectively used to instigate a politics of disgust amongst white masses in the transition to neoliberal urban functionality in the 1970s and 80s. The deployment of politics of disgust, I argue, was first made possible by what Hancock refers to as a politics of contempt. While Hancock argues these politics emerged in the 1960s, As I argued earlier in chapter two, they were established in the early 1900s during American industrialization to prevent labor unionization against racial lines and built upon the racial exclusions that followed this period. Either periodization leads to the same outcomes, however, contempt becomes the basis for political sentiments that explain how white imaginings inform and shape social welfare policy and the lives of those who use it. Hancock demonstrates how Blackness became openly demonized and devalued as a public identity over generations, undermining the potential for socio-political participation by Black citizens.

The foundations of Hancock's argument are as follows: political culture is the primary influence on policy decisions. There are unspoken, assumed, and agreed-upon background contexts that deliberation takes place within that exists within and beyond the particular moment

(Hancock 2004, 17). Race and gender are notable distinguishing factors in American political culture due to long-standing political [and historical] differences. Hancock uses this to argue for a demand for democratic attention that urges the masses to consider their predispositions of other citizens that impact personal judgment that feed into the public consciousness and public interests (Hancock 2004, 17). Hancock focuses specifically on how the government was able to transition into social austerity politics by manipulating pre-existing predispositions Americans held in order to distinguish those who rely on social welfare as deserving and undeserving, and how such distinctions constrict and exclude groups of people from participatory forms of democracy in America. Hancock's work reinforces my central thesis to consider whose history and which experiences shape the assumed factual background that drives public interest and public deliberations surrounding city landscapes. In doing so, Hancock reveals how minority groups' public identities are not constituted on their words or actions but manufactured by federal and local manipulations of white perception and interpretation (Hancock 2004, 18).

The emergence of politics of disgust was made possible through the abundance of social inequality constructed through histories of exclusion. Those who are targeted by these politics were already excluded, silenced, or overpowered within the public and political sphere before the 1970s and 80s. Hancock notes how under these conditions of exclusion, participation in political deliberation are based on status, power, and privilege. With the absence of representation outside of the powerful and privileged comes widespread misinformation and developments of inaccurate attitudes towards that outside of political deliberations without acknowledgment of their absence in the matter (Hancock 2004, 18). What is born out of this misinformation in the echo chambers of status, power, and privilege are policies that justify targeted social austerity. Hancock highlights how such context for political deliberation manipulates democratic attention

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to ignore and dismiss the populations excluded from discourse (Hancock 20). This pattern of exclusion makes the environment for political deliberation in America unconducive to a true form of democracy that The Right To the City aims to achieve.

The historical lack of solidarity, and instead politics of contempt between the white working class and Black Americans sets the conditions for such politics of disgust to become prolific. Because of this existing contempt, in the shift to neoliberal paradigms national and local political figures were able to manipulate perceptions surrounding welfare recipients while disregarding the racial social, economic, and political exclusions that have resulted in the need for social resources. In order to eliminate government spending in the name of neoliberal theory, politicians such as Reagan and Nixon, propagated infrastructures of judgment and punishment, deserving and undeserving, to justify a lack of infrastructure of social security and redistribution (Hancock 2004, 23). This tactic simultaneously had great appeal due its ability to allow the government and white residents to subvert all forms of accountability for the physical construction of poverty through racially exclusionary practices of the past.

These effects of white investment continue to play out in modern housing contexts. A Los Angeles study found that loan officers more frequently used dividend income and underlying assets as criteria for judging Black applicants than they did for whites and in Houston, the NCNB Bank of Texas disqualified 13 percent of middle-income white loan applicants but disqualified 36 percent of middle-income Black applicants (Lipsitz 1995, 377). An analysis of sixteen Atlanta neighborhoods found that homebuyers in white neighborhoods received conventional financing four times as often as those in black sections of the city and in many circumstances high-income blacks were denied loans more often than low-income whites."(Lipsitz 1995, 366 & 377). Nationwide, financial institutions get more money in

deposits from Black neighborhoods than they invest in them in the form of home mortgage loans, making home lending a vehicle for the transfer of capital away from Black savers and toward white investors," (Lipsitz 1995, 377). Lipsitz's evidence displays the ways Black individuals and families are forced out of economic investment, and when included are used as tools of white profit accumulation. These issues are left unaddressed due to the domination of white voices in the social and political sphere. Lipsitz cites research by Mary and Thomas Bryne Edsall that indicates white residents base almost all of their decisions about politics, housing, and education in revulsion to Blackness (Lipsitz 1995, 383). As stated in the introduction of this thesis, racism is not something of the past that ended with the abolition of slavery or the Civil Right Act, but continues to play out in a never-ending struggle to preserve and assert whiteness.

It was a national trend for white residents to once be divided amongst ethnic differences, it was a national trend for white identities to unite under a singular identity as Black populations began to emerge in industrial cities, it was a national trend for white residents to exit cities in reaction to The Great Migration, it was a national trend for the state to support and influence racism, it was a national trend to use racial socio-political climates to continue national legacies of profiting off of Black disenfranchisement, exclusion, and violence. This story allows for Urban Renewal to be acknowledged as a racialized tool of the state and white masses that has exacted violence onto Black and other non-white communities. These racist housing practices installed in the recent past still affect our present and future. Realtors, sellers, and buyers continue to profit off of socially, politically, and economically manufactured Black devaluation, exclusion, and constraint. They additionally continue to profit off of white laborers looking to preserve their favored economic and social standing amongst state and capital produced states of "crisis". Until the use of propaganda, government politics, economic exclusivity, urban

redevelopment, and violence are recognized as continued tools of the state to preserve white capital accumulation, masses will continue to believe liberalist fallacies that Black, non-white, and poor people suffer deservedly due to their own inability to be competitive and maximize the opportunities offered to them. Acting in solidarity "requires regarding others as capable of taking an interest in the world and speaking for themselves, capable of political action and therefore meant to be listened to . . ." (Lipsitz 27). Because of this, I argue that racialized structures of democracy that give preference to white voices and interests must be addressed before The Right to the City can be used to frame the ways we think about urban housing accessibility. The way citizens have failed to show up for violence against marginalized communities in the recent past must be addressed in order for citizens to collectively show up for housing rights now.

PART IV: NEOLIBERALISM, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

David Harvey helps describe the function of neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2006, 145). In other words and shorter terms, this theory argues that in order to advance human rights, the market must be free to maximize profits so people can accumulate said profits. It argues that collective rights and public amenities begin with profits. Additionally, the role of the state is to provide and maintain institutional frameworks and an environment that would help support private companies and trade. The state has to be concerned, for example, with the quality and integrity of money and must also set up those military, defense, police, and juridical functions required to secure private property rights and to support freely functioning markets and after that

have very minimal state intervention with market affairs (such as having high taxes for corporations) (Harvey 2006, 145). Harvey also includes a generous amount of evidence that neoliberalism is now the most dominant mode of thought driving economic socio-political patterns:

> "State after state, from the new states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union to old-style social democracies and welfare states such as New Zealand and Sweden, have embraced, sometimes voluntarily and in other instances in response to coercive pressures, some version of neoliberal theory and adjusted at least some of their policies and practices accordingly. Post-apartheid South Africa quickly embraced the neoliberal frame, and even contemporary China appears to be heading in this direction. Furthermore, the advocates for the neoliberal way now occupy positions of considerable influence in education (the universities and many 'think tanks'), in the media, in corporate boardrooms and financial institutions, in key state institutions (treasury departments, the central banks) and also in those international institutions such as the IMF and the WTO that regulate global finance and trade. Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse, and has pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way we interpret, live in and understand the world." 145

For the political ideology of neoliberalism to take its stronghold over the globe, the theory must express "fundamental concepts that become so deeply embedded in common-sense understanding that they become beyond taken for granted and beyond question," such as the foundational values of our countries freedom and the white history we are taught in school, what is meant to be competed for and what we are entitled to (Harvey 2006, 146). Neoliberalism plays upon these unquestioned truths and centers them in its theory with values such as individual

liberty and freedom at the core. Politicians, academics, and overall large beneficiaries of capital would claim these values to be threatened not just "by fascism, dictatorships, and communism, but by all forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgments for those of individuals set free to choose," (thrashing through/ tearing through/overshadowing) the need for collective discourse and action, and the reliance of such throughout history, so enact policies that secure the rights of citizens (Harvey 2006, 145). Neoliberal politicians have played upon economic fear to stoke politics of disgust and contempt masked with words such as liberalism and traditionalism. All of this cosigned by citizens in attempts to persevere the entitlements whiteness holds, but with little benefit to them but instead to maintain the status quo of capitalists.

Neoliberalism became abundant during the 1970s as the economic crisis of capital accumulation caused increasing unemployment and inflation (Harvey 2006, 148). Harvey points out how neoliberalism has proven not to be so good at revitalizing global capital accumulation but excels at restoring the organizations of class power through the privatization of public provisions and the opening of business markets (Harvey 2006, 147 & 149). This displays a model of life with profit accumulation at its center rather than creating an environment that supports the lives of its citizens. But neoliberalism has been a huge success from the standpoint of the upper classes. It has either restored class power to ruling elites (as in the US and Britain) or created conditions for capitalist class formation (as in China, India, Russia and elsewhere) (Harvey 2006, 152). Countries that have suffered economically from shifting towards models of neoliberalization follow the same patterns that funnel more money towards the upper classes. And, despite neoliberalism's apparent failures to accumulate private capital that is said to be

needed to accommodate basic needs for citizens, the US continues to rearrange the organization of people's lives both locally and globally.

Harvey agrees that elite interests are pushed through the media and history and are regularly pushed by the media, dominated by upper-class interests and allowing myths and fallacies to circulate around competitiveness, freedom, and liberty to preserve and enforce the power of ruling capitalists. If conditions among the lower classes digressed it was due to their own failures, personally or culturally, to enhance their own human capital through dedication, education, responses to 'adversity', work ethic, and likewise (Harvey 2006, 152). Also known as social Darwinism. This logic connects a human's worthiness of access to housing, necessities, public goods, healthcare, experiences, happiness to their ability to perform in the economic sector, economic sectors that have historically prohibited their presence and undervalued their labor. Neoliberalists believe this harm through exclusion will stimulate innovation and economic growth. Harvey points out that if capital isn't being accumulated, the class rearrangements seen must be from redistribution of wealth and income from the mass labor population towards upper classes and more broadly, from vulnerable countries to richer countries (Harvey 2006, 153). I believe the history of Milwaukee compiled throughout this thesis leads way to which communities are most targeted by these policies, however, it does not exclude non-Black and even white laborers from its victims. For dispossession to take place, there must be processes in place to transfer these assets.

This brings us to Harvey's theory of accumulation by dispossession, an extension of Marx's theorizations of accumulation. Harvey details the actualizations of such as commodification and privatization of land, forceful expulsion of peasant populations, conversion of property rights, suppression of the commons, the commodification of labor power and the

suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption, colonial, neocolonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); taxation, particularly of land; the slave trade, the national debt and the use of the credit system (Harvey 2006, 155). The state's role is to back and promote these institutions oftentimes through violence, locally with the police, and through the military on a more wide scale.

During the peak of industrialization and labor unionization, the state's role became an agent of redistribution, to intervene and help reverse the flow of capital back to the laboring class. However, when that was the role of the state, Black laborers were hardly recognized to be in that class and oftentimes excluded from any state benefits or recognition. Now the state's role has dramatically shifted, especially when it comes to housing, even labeled as public, becomes blurred between the public and private sector. I argue neoliberalism has taken its stronghold on housing before Margaret Thatcher's housing act in 1949, this is when the effects were felt by the white masses as well. The neoliberal foundations of housing, that we see pushing 'justifiably' disposable low-income families out of neighborhoods and cities as 'justifiably' disposable occupants began with waves of urban renewal following WWII and continues to viscously cycle violence, but bogged down and muddled in neoliberalist rhetoric of the natural inevitable flows of capital and markets.

The rise of surveillance, policing, and violence ramping up in the 1970s, during the "urban crisis" was in fact to manipulate social control of the masses to undergo such a transition. We see this tactic deployed, again and again, naming crises within housing, crisis surrounding "scarcity" and climate change, all to avoid the true crisis of capital accumulation that has commodified basic needs. Now we have grown accustomed to low-level military warfare in reaction to opposition to the state, private capital, and the prison industrial complex. The tactics,

myths, and fallacies of neoliberalism seem never-ending as it is an evolution and long-living legacy of dispossession for accumulation, steeped in histories of tradition: traditions of liberalist white entitlement, racism, exclusion, disgust, contempt, and violence. Housing theories framed by Human Rights and The Right to the City are not enough to address these legacies.

"Discourses of human rights and collectivism do not challenge hegemonic liberal and neoliberal logics or the dominant modes of legality and state action," (Harvey 2008, 23). In other words, human rights and The Right to the City as a framework to housing and urban renewal remains passive to the fact that privatization and profits are and have been prioritized over human rights and profits have also been placed on demands for human rights. In Harvey's theorizations, The Right to the City promotes fighting for collective rights without recognition of the racialized values that have already been put on rights. "The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights," (Harvey 2008, 23). I believe this sentence perfectly sums up my critiques of Lfevebre's Right to the City even with Harvey's additions. While Harvey does recognize that it is marginalized groups who firstly and most harshly feel the effects of neoliberalism, he fails to address the ways white public interest have aided and abided racialized violence of the state and private financing. It is a romanticization and an abstraction from the past and the present. I argue that this romanticization of The Right to the City comes from its willingness to ignore how the collective power that white citizens can wield to socially construct urban landscapes has been utilized as a weapon of harm to preserve whiteness by excluding Black and non-white voices from collective power, to contain and exclude Blackness, to retain economic, physical, and social positioning.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have given the reader a better sense of the present moment by bringing them into the past. In order for progress to be made, citizens must hold a collective understanding of how past decisions inform the present moment and what's at stake within current urban revitalization deliberations, especially if these deliberations continue to be dominated by white interests and imaginaries. If the reader takes away only one thing from this, I hope it is the stakes and consequences of ignorance, apathy, and disregard when it comes to marginalized voices, housing accessibility, and the overall access to the basic needs of citizens.

Cities are a product of white visions of landscapes with intrinsic ties to the industrialization of America. The industrialization of America took place before the abolition of slavery with slave labor as one of its principal foundations. However, following the abolition of slavery, Black laborers were seen as incapable of filing hired positions to perform the same work. With industry at the core of urban cities, white laborers' relationship of access to local industry allowed their interests to dominate the geographical landscape and culture. A city originally spatially organized based on white difference, came to form a united identity of whiteness when unionizing for labor rights. While, yes, labor rights should be fought for, the racially exclusionary basis for union organizing demonstrates the violence that materializes in collective organizing if not for the sake of universal rights. Bronzeville and residing downtown neighborhoods in Milwaukee serve as material evidence of the poverty that is manufactured from political and social strategies of racial exclusion that fortified in the 1940s. White reactions to

economic competition, defined as Hancock's politics of contempt, revealed the drive to preserve whiteness in urban spaces. This context laid the way for racialized politics of social austerity to be ushered in by neoliberal politicians.

Human Rights and The Right to the City as approaches to housing accessibility are unable to address the issues of exclusionary politics, collective bargaining, and racial violence underlined in this thesis. In order for the form of collective democratic participation that The Right to the City envisions, unequal access to political participation must be addressed, and the harm exacted onto communities through dispossession and disenfranchisement must be reconciled. Until then, collective interests will continue to be dominated by white imaginations of the future. For that to happen, citizens must actively recognize and question the influences and motivations of their political interests.

American citizens must recognize that there is not a "housing crisis", but rather housing cannot function as a commodity of capitalism. In so many ways we are complicit to this pain. Many of us have invested our own time and energy into the white imaginary, giving us reason to preserve it. The commodification of housing leads to a competitive nature around human needs, creating a mirage that wants us to decide which citizens deserve to have their needs met and which citizens don't. Those of us, including myself as a college education biracial Black woman, who are not pushed to the edges of marginalization become pacified by our vantage points of political, economic, and social accessibility. In doing so, we become agents of white supremacy ourselves. But, when passivity is applied to issues of human rights, human lives become casualties and we begin to accept more brutal forms of state-sanctioned violence such as the public executions that continually bring the Black community into the streets to protest.

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Publicly sanctioned racialized violence is an urgent issue throughout the nation. We see it manifest in a multitude of ways: unemployment, housing inaccessibility, lack of government aid, demolition, predatory private finance practices, wage inequality- the list goes on. These racialized exclusionary politics have repeatedly brought Black citizens to protest. We saw it in the 1930s, 1941, 1955, the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 2001, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2020. Black and non-white people have been in a constant struggle to secure inalienable rights of safe inclusion. Although Black rights may not have been the main focus of all of these protests, specifically 1968-1971, Black people have historically joined in solidarity and have been in the streets because of a deeper understanding of how injustices across racial and international lines tie into their own. Rioting and protesting is nothing new in America, but the collective bargaining power of non-white citizens has proven to be insufficient in provoking radical policy or reorganization of political frameworks, especially when non-white imaginaries are vulnerable to the omnipresence of white ideals.

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