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**Amy T. Khare<sup>1</sup>, Mark L. Joseph<sup>2</sup>, and Robert J. Chaskin<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

While public housing reforms seek to address poverty among what is a predominantly African-American population, there has been little explicit attention given to the signance of race in the formation of new mixed-income communities. Indeed, the policy framing of these efforts has focused on economic integration and has been essentially silent about racial integration. In this article, we examine whether and how race remains relevant to the everyday life and experiences of residents in mixed-income developments. Drawing on a multiyear research study of three mixed-income developments in Chicago, we examine the nature of interracial and intraracial social dynamics within these (still) predominantly African-American neighborhoods. Consistent with critical race theory, we find that institutionalized notions of “ghetto culture” continue to inhere in the attitudes of many higher-income, nonblack homeowners and professionals in these contexts, and that the relative privilege and power these groups have to establish and enforce norms, policies, and rules generate and reproduce inequality fundamentally grounded in race. Consistent with secondary marginalization theory, we also find that the increasing economic diversity and widening cleavages *among* blacks living in these contexts generate complex intraracial social dynamics

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where relocated public housing residents and other low-income black renters experience marginalization from both black and nonblack neighbors. We argue that because the design of mixed-income development policy frames residents' social identities primarily along the lines of income and housing tenure rather than race, it ignores what we find to be the enduring, if nuanced and complex, significance of race.

### **Keywords**

race, mixed-income, public housing, critical race theory, secondary marginalization

Over the past several decades, public housing in the United States has become characterized by the concentration of poverty, racial segregation, crumbling infrastructures, and extreme violence. By the early 1990s, these factors contributed to the development of substantial political will to launch national reforms of public housing directed at the deconcentration of poverty through two major policy approaches. The first approach promotes the dispersal of public housing residents from areas of concentrated poverty through relocation to scattered-site public housing units and to apartments in the private market with subsidized rent vouchers (Briggs, Popkin, and Goering 2010; Goetz 2003; Varady and Walker 2003). The second approach, the focus of this article, promotes the mixed-income redevelopment of public housing sites through demolition, renovation, new construction, and the attraction of higher-income residents (Bennett, Smith, and Wright 2006; Cisneros and Engdahl 2009; Goetz 2003; Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber 2007; Popkin et al. 2004). These mixed-income developments include those being developed under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI and Choice Neighborhood programs and are being implemented at the largest scale in the United States in Chicago's Plan for Transformation, launched in 2000 (Chicago Housing Authority [CHA] 2000; Cisneros and Engdahl 2009; Hunt 2009).

While these reforms, particularly in East Coast and midwestern cities, seek to address poverty among what is a predominantly African-American population, there has been little explicit attention given to the relevance of race in the formation of these new communities. Indeed, the explicit framing of these efforts by policy makers has focused on economic integration and has been essentially silent on the issue of racial integration. Public housing deconcentration policies in the 1970s, most notably the Gautreaux program in Chicago, had explicit racial desegregation objectives and guidelines

(Polikoff 2006; Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings 2009). By contrast, the extent to which current reforms are an attempt to promote racial equity and to address racial as well as income segregation remains largely unexamined. Scholars have argued that this lack of explicit policy design toward addressing the legacy of racial segregation may limit the impact of public housing reforms on those African-American households that have been most disadvantaged by failed public housing policy (Goetz 2011; Smith 1999; Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings 2009). As Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings (2009) contended, given ongoing discrimination and “structural inequities” (p. 248) based on race, the vital public and private resources necessary to create stable neighborhoods are extremely difficult to attract in predominantly African-American neighborhoods, even those that include higher-income black households. Furthermore, after decades of racial segregation and marginalization, public housing residents face extreme educational, employment, and health disadvantages, as well as ongoing discrimination in the private housing market when trying to relocate using subsidized vouchers.

Beyond the question of racial segregation *per se* and the extent to which mobility programs can adequately address it is the question of how race and attitudes toward race inform the kinds of interactions and the nature of communities being built to replace public housing complexes through mixed-income development. Is race still salient, or is the focus on income integration sufficient to inform these efforts? In this article, we examine whether and how race remains relevant to the everyday life and experiences of residents in mixed-income developments and surrounding neighborhoods. Drawing on a multiyear research study of three mixed-income developments in Chicago, we examine the nature of interracial and intraracial social dynamics in the mixed-income developments within these (still) predominantly African-American neighborhoods.

The article is organized as follows. First, we will briefly summarize the evolution of housing policies that established patterns of racial residential segregation and the transition from race-explicit to economic-focused poverty deconcentration policies. Next, we introduce two theoretical perspectives that frame our analysis: critical race theory and secondary marginalization. We then present our findings about residents and professional stakeholder perspectives on interracial and intraracial social dynamics in the new developments and conclude with implications for mixed-income practice and policy.

## Historical and Policy Context

Public housing policy in the United States has contributed directly to the residential segregation of low-income African-Americans (Hirsch 1998; Hunt

2009; Massey and Denton 1993; Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings 2009). The Wagner–Steagall Housing Act of 1937 initiated federal government support for the construction of public rental housing (Katz 1996). While this policy resulted in over 100,000 units of public housing being built in more than 140 cities by 1942, these apartments were located primarily in segregated minority and low-income neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993; Massey and Kanaiaupuni 1993). In the 1950s and 1960s, when public housing was significantly expanded to rehouse residents relocated by the slum clearance and redevelopment activities under urban renewal, the inequitable concentration of public housing in primarily African-American neighborhoods was deepened, supported by policies reinforcing racial segregation and by the long-standing resistance to public housing construction in neighborhoods comprising primarily of white populations (Hunt 2009; Hyra 2012; Jackson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; O'Connor 1999; Sugrue 2005).

Perhaps most significantly in terms of government housing policies promoting racial segregation, formative post–World War II policies orchestrated federal subsidies for homeownership for middle-class citizens through income-tax deductions, federal mortgage assistance, and tax policies aimed at lowering interest rates (Jackson 1985; Katz 1996; O'Connor 1999). These federal policies actively encouraged middle-class white mobility out of cities through highway construction, subsidized suburban growth, and incentivized homeownership. Redistribution of economic resources away from the central cities to outlying areas was systematically facilitated by government policies and political dynamics that subsidized white flight, racial segregation, and poverty concentration.

In response to this, civil rights activists, through efforts such as the fair housing movement, squarely confronted policies that promoted residential segregation (Hartman and Squires 2010). Specifically focused on public housing, the Gautreaux class-action lawsuits in Chicago led to a court-mandated program to relocate residents of public housing to neighborhoods that were not primarily comprised of minority populations (Goetz 2003; Polikoff 2006). Starting in the 1980s, however, a transition from the race-based policies of the Civil Rights movement occurred, driven in large part by the arguments of scholars and policy makers that economic inequality had become a more pressing social challenge (Jargowsky 1997; Wilson 1980, 1997, 2012). While the Gautreaux program attempted to tackle racial segregation in housing through an explicit race-based policy, subsequent housing policy reforms focused instead on the social and physical integration of low-income residents into more economically diverse neighborhoods without explicit reference to race.

By the early 1990s, the public debate and political focus had shifted significantly from race-explicit to economic-explicit approaches, resulting in a deconcentration policy framework that is silent on issues of race. Dispersal policies, such as the federal Housing Choice Voucher program (formerly “Section 8”) and the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration project, aim to relocate public housing residents from areas of concentrated poverty through subsidies allowing tenants to use vouchers to obtain private rental housing in lower-poverty neighborhoods (Briggs, Popkin, and Goering 2010; Goetz 2003; Hartman and Squires 2010). While MTO included poverty threshold criteria for eligible relocation neighborhoods, there were no criteria established that attempted to promote racial integration of African-Americans who were being relocated. Federal mixed-income policy as implemented through the HOPE VI and Choice Neighborhood Initiative programs has maintained the focus on income rather than race. Thus, race is now notably absent in the federal and local poverty deconcentration policy. This lack of explicit attention to race may constrain the effectiveness of these reforms in terms of addressing inequity among low-income African-Americans.

## Theoretical Perspectives

Two theoretical perspectives, critical race theory and secondary marginalization, guide our exploration of the relevance of race in mixed-income public housing transformation. Critical race theory helps illuminate the norms, collective attitudes, and institutional structures that maintain racial inequity in the United States. Secondary marginalization helps us understand the choices, constraints, and conflicts faced by African-Americans within economically diverse contexts. (For more on the relevance of these two theoretical perspectives to the mixed-income policy context, see Smith and Stovall 2008.)

### *Critical Race Theory*

Critical race theory asserts that racism is not just a matter of individual behavior or attitudes but is embedded in collective attitudes, political and economic systems, and institutional norms. Scholars from this tradition assert that, despite some degree of progress on civil rights in the United States, there are enduring systemic privileges that whites hold by virtue of their position as the dominant race. White privilege, combined with the power to establish and uphold norms, policies, and laws, generates institutionalized racism (Bell 1994; Bobo 2006; Crenshaw and Peller 1995; Delgado and Stefancic 2011; Mills 2003; Reed 2001; Steinberg 2007).

Critical race scholars argue that liberal ideals of meritocracy and equal opportunity serve to mask the realities of institutional racism. According to Bonilla-Silva (2010), a “new powerful ideology has emerged to defend the contemporary racial order: the ideology of color-blind racism” (p. 25). It is, he argued, an ideology that has promoted the idea that the significance of race is declining, that “blames minorities for their own status,” and that results in an inability to acknowledge racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva 2010, p. 48). One result of “color-blind racism” is the retrenchment of affirmative action and school desegregation civil rights laws (Bell 1980; Bonilla-Silva 2010). Thus, while there have been important civil rights gains in many aspects of society and progress for many individuals, structural racism is argued to still exist within many institutions in the United States, resulting in persistent racial disparities in education, housing, health, income, and engagement with the criminal justice system. Furthermore, scholars argue that the inherent structures of these institutions operate in ways that perpetuate racism, as they do little to reverse latent discriminatory practices. For example, fair housing policies have made race-based discrimination illegal in the marketing, renting, and selling of property. However, these policies are not consistently enforced in ways that promote racial equity and inclusion (M. Alexander 2010; Carr and Kutty 2008; Cashin 2004; Frazier, Margai, and Tettey-Fio 2003; powell 2003; Smith 1999; Smith and Stovall 2008).

As applied to public housing reforms, critical race theory draws attention to the limitations of framing poverty deconcentration and residential integration solely in terms of income, class, and housing status (Smith and Stovall 2008). Explicit attention to informal and systematic racial discrimination and enduring racial disparities provides a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in mixed-income developments as well as sharpens insights about actions beyond housing redevelopment and resident relocation that will be necessary to improve the likelihood of successful and sustained economic and racial integration.

### *Secondary Marginalization*

Building on critical race theory, a body of literature focused on intraracial social dynamics helps to explain how persistent structural racism at the societal level affects dynamics *within* African-American neighborhoods that are becoming racially and economically diverse (Anderson and Sternberg 2013; Boyd 2008a, 2008b; Freeman 2006; Hyra 2008; Moore 2009; Pattillo 2007). Research suggests that African-Americans of different income levels living in close proximity share both a desire for a self-consciously black community and a distrust of white newcomers. However, differences along the lines of



class and “culture” can create intraracial tensions about norms, expectations, and behavior (Boyd 2008a; Cohen 2004; Small, Harding, and Lamont 2010).

Cohen (1999) has developed the concept of “secondary marginalization” to describe how the more privileged members of a marginalized group can take over from the dominant group the function of policing the behavior of less privileged members within the marginalized group. In the mixed-income development context, secondary marginalization can help explain the process of distinction making and subdividing that occurs between African-American owners and market-rate renters who use their economic privilege to reinforce norms established by race and class elites and to informally monitor and sanction the behaviors of the more vulnerable black renters. The concept of secondary marginalization is employed to explain how widening cleavages among black residents living in close physical proximity in a newly developed mixed-income community generate complex intraracial social dynamics wherein low-income public housing renters experience intensified marginalization. The emerging prevalence of secondary marginalization in these new mixed-income contexts is particularly important given that the policy was in part based on the work of scholars such as Wilson (2012) who contended that the black middle class could play a positive role as role models by returning to inner city communities. Whether or not this role is anticipated and intentional on the part of the higher-income black residents (and most higher-income residents, regardless of race or ethnicity, emphasize the economic and locational benefits of these new developments rather than their diversity as factors motivating their move into them), secondary marginalization may be the primary mechanism through which the “underclass” norms identified by Wilson are contested.

## Development Contexts

Chicago’s history of pervasive racial segregation, epitomized by the location of high-rise public housing complexes in majority African-American neighborhoods, frames the context for this analysis. With the launch of the “Plan for Transformation” in 2000, the city oversaw the comprehensive demolition and reconstruction of 10 public housing sites. In their place, new mixed-income developments were planned to incorporate almost 17,000 units, including 7,700 units for relocated public housing residents and a mix of non-CHA subsidized rental units, market-rate rental units, and for-sale homes. Since then, 3,327 of these public housing units have been built in mixed-income developments (CHA 2013). Of the 16,846 families who had a guaranteed right to permanent housing as they were living in a CHA family development when the Plan was unveiled, 9,388 households are still living in a CHA unit or renting through the support of a CHA subsidy. The remainder of households are

disconnected from CHA for a variety of reasons such as nonresponsiveness, eviction, mortality, or they are residing in the private market while still waiting to make a final housing choice (Chaskin, Joseph, et al. 2012). Only 1,896 households (11%) relocated to one of the newly constructed mixed-income developments. The majority of relocated residents still affiliated with CHA (2011) are renting in the private market with a CHA voucher.<sup>1</sup>

The analysis presented here is based on data concerning three of the mixed-income developments (see Table 1). The neighborhoods in which these developments are located vary in their historical roots and ties to the African-American community. Two—Oakwood Shores and Park Boulevard—are on the city's south side in an area often referred to as Bronzeville which, like New York's Harlem, has an important historical legacy as being the economic, political, and cultural center of African-American life in Chicago (Drake and Cayton 1962; Hyra 2008). Oakwood Shores replaces the Ida B. Wells/Madden Park development, where the ties to the civil rights pioneer (for whom the development was originally named) are kept alive in part by a planned commemorative sculpture. Park Boulevard replaces Stateway Gardens along the State Street Corridor, which was one of the most racially segregated and economically distressed neighborhoods in the nation. The third, Westhaven Park, located on the city's west side, is the second phase of the redevelopment of Henry Horner Homes, the first phase of which was catalyzed by a class-action suit against the CHA by an organized tenant's group, the Horner Mothers' Guild.<sup>2</sup>

Although there are varying degrees of increased racial diversity, African-Americans continue to comprise the majority of the population within the mixed-income developments and surrounding neighborhoods. While the influx of new buyers is changing racial demographics somewhat, many residents and stakeholders across racial and class lines describe a lack of racial diversity compared with what they had hoped would naturally result from the mixed-income development strategy. The racial diversity is more pronounced at Westhaven Park and Park Boulevard, where not only whites but also some Asians and Latinos are among the new homeowners.

In contrast, stakeholder and resident respondents at Oakwood Shores describe how the majority of residents are black, including most of the new homeowners. An African-American owner at Oakwood Shores describes the lack of racial diversity by stating, "If you can count 'em, then that's not really diversity, is it?"<sup>3</sup>

According to developers, all of the subsidized public housing units are leased to relocating African-Americans and almost all of the affordable and market-rate rental units have been leased to black renters. Given that rental units comprise the majority housing type in each of the developments, it is

**Table 1.** Mixed-Income Developments.

	Oakwood Shores	Park Boulevard	Westhaven Park
Former public housing site	Ida B. Wells/ Madden Park	Stateway Gardens	Henry Horner Homes
Total projected units	3,000	1,316	1,317
Relocated public housing units, <i>n</i> (%)	1,000 (33)	439 (33)	824 <sup>a</sup> (63)
Affordable units, <i>n</i> (%)	680 (23)	421 (32)	132 (10)
Market-rate units, <i>n</i> (%)	1,320 (44)	456 (35)	361 (27)
% for sale (affordable and market rate)	27	42	23
Social service providers	Nonprofit, delivered by developer	Nonprofit, created by developer	Nonprofit, contracted out to local organization
Developer(s)	National nonprofit (rental); local for-profit (for sale)	Four local for-profits	Two regional and national for-profits
Initial occupancy dates	Renters—2005 Owners—2006	Renters—2007 Owners—2007	Renters—2003 Owners—2006
Relocation of public housing residents from original development <sup>b</sup>	1,621 original families from this site had a right to return; 205 currently live in a mixed-income development	689 original families from this site had a right to return; 71 currently live in a mixed-income development	699 original families from this site had a right to return; 394 currently live in a mixed-income development
Neighborhood	North Kenwood Oakland, Southside Chicago	Bronzeville, Southside Chicago	Near Westside, Westside Chicago
Neighborhood amenities and institutions	Near Lake Michigan, public parks, Hyde Park, University of Chicago	Near public transit corridor, Illinois Institute of Technology, White Sox stadium, major highway	Near downtown central business district, public transit stop, United Center

Note. Numbers and percentages represent development plans as of 2013.

<sup>a</sup>Includes the villages, a 200-unit “superblock” of 100% public housing residences located in the middle of the mixed-income development; the Annex, a 90-unit rehabilitated development nearby; and 261 scattered-site public housing units in the surrounding neighborhood.

<sup>b</sup>These data are based on data at the end of 2010, reported in Chicago Housing Authority’s (2011) “Update on Relocation” report.

not surprising that the majority population is African-American. For the most part, the early implementation of the mixed-income strategy in these three sites has not produced fully racially mixed environments; rather it has mainly (re)created economically integrated majority black neighborhoods, particularly at Oakwood Shores.

## Data and Method

Our analysis is based on in-depth interviews, focus groups, field observations, and documentary data. Interviews were conducted over three waves of data collection between 2007 and 2010, including panels of both resident and professional stakeholder informants.<sup>4</sup> Interviews were conducted with 85 residents at three sites, including 35 relocated public housing residents, 10 renters of non-CHA subsidized units, 11 renters of units priced at market rate, and 29 owners. Resident interviewees were randomly selected from developer occupancy lists.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 84% of these interviewees are African-American (see Table 2). Most residents were interviewed twice over the course of two waves of interviews, but due to construction delays at Park Boulevard at the time of the first wave of fieldwork, resident interviews from Park Boulevard are only available for the second wave. In 2011, focus groups were conducted with a new, randomly selected sample of 102 residents who were grouped according to site, income, and tenure. The sample for focus groups includes 50 relocated public housing residents, 21 renters of “affordable” units, 17 “market-rate” renters, and 14 homeowners. Approximately 96% of these participants are African-American.

The racial demographics of residents who live in the developments are difficult to characterize, in part due to the lack of systematic data. According to subjective reports by developers, relocated public housing residents are exclusively African-American and the renters of non-CHA subsidized tax-credit units closely resemble relocated public housing residents demographically—low income, African-American, with low levels of educational attainment. The market-rate renters are mostly African-American, though there is a small minority of renters who are nonblack. The racial demographics of owners are difficult to determine, because the developers are legally prohibited from collecting data about the race of the buyers of for-sale units. Demographic data of our sample of resident interviewees should reflect the characteristics of residents in the development, as the respondents were randomly selected (see Table 2).

In addition, three waves of interviews with a total of 84 professional stakeholder key informants were conducted, including “development-team” members (developers, service providers, and property managers), “community

**Table 2.** Resident Characteristics: Interview Sample.

	Overall	RPH	AFF RTR	AFF FS	MKT RTR	MKT FS
Number of respondents	85	35	10	15	11	14
% female	74	89	100	60	64	43
Race						
% African-American	84	100	100	60	100	42
% white	8	0	0	20	0	29
% other	8	0	0	20	0	29
Average age	43	44	46	37	46	38
% married	20	6	20	27	30	43
Education level						
% high school graduate/GED	82	60	90	100	100	100
% bachelor's or higher	40	0	20	80	64	93
% employed	69	43	70	93	91	93
Income						
% under \$20,000	40	86	40	0	0	0
% over \$70,000	21	0	10	33	27	64

Note. RPH = relocated public housing residents in units with a public housing subsidy; AFF RTR = renters in nonpublic housing subsidized units; AFF FS = owners in units priced affordably; MKT RTR = renters in nonsubsidized units; MKT FS = owners in units priced at market rate; GED = General Educational Degree.

stakeholders” (such as leaders of nearby social service agencies, community activists, and local public officials), and “macro-level” actors (such as officials with the CHA and public housing advocates).

Interviews and focus groups were guided by a semistructured instrument and were digitally recorded and coded for analysis based on a set of deductively derived thematic codes and refined based on inductive interim analysis. While cognizant of the importance of race in the formation of new mixed-income communities, the broader study on which this analysis is based did not exclusively seek to understand racial dynamics. Rather, the interview protocol included language about differences and similarities among residents based on a variety of attributes, including income, housing tenure, family composition, and race. For interviews with residents, there was one question that made direct reference to race, although interviewers probed about differences between neighbor relationships based on racial diversity.<sup>6</sup> Interviews with professional stakeholders contained more explicit reference to racial diversity, including one question that asked about the relevance of race to life at the development and in the neighborhood.

In addition to interviews, data from 500 observations of community meetings, programs, events, and interactions over five years allow us to contextualize interview material within the specific dynamics of each site. Coding and analysis were done using NVivo qualitative data-analysis software. Based on an initial review of all material that had been coded as “race,” a systematic review took place with a refined coding scheme that aimed to organize respondents’ perspectives relating to the theoretical perspectives used in this analysis.<sup>7</sup> Summary matrices of responses were created to allow for systematic comparison of perspectives across interviewee type as defined by respondent’s race, housing tenure, income level, professional stakeholder status, and the development site.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that the analysis aimed to understand the social dynamics of both class and race, and how the organization of social inequality is experienced in the everyday life of residents living in mixed-income communities. The focus has been to examine the multidimensional nature and complexity of differences (such as race, class, housing tenure) and how the interconnections between and within socially constructed categories play out in people’s lives. This intersectionality of class, race, housing tenure, and other socially constructed categories presents challenges when attempting to tease out particular aspects of social dynamics which are explicitly centered on race, racial segregation, and racism.

## **Interracial Dynamics**

Our analysis suggests that race remains a central factor in residents’ experiences in mixed-income developments. We found evidence that systematic racial segregation and discrimination inherent in broader society are at play directly and indirectly within these developments; directly in the ways in which power and influence over norm-setting are exercised, and indirectly in the ways in which previous disparities and segregation have positioned African-American public housing residents to be seen as inferior and ultimately problematic “others.” African-American respondents across economic backgrounds view their racial identity as central to how they are treated by others. In particular, relocated public housing residents most often frame their experience as related to their racial identity and consider themselves often targets of stigmatization about perceived values, culture, and behavior associated with their race. Most relocated public housing residents, all of whom are African-American, articulate their frustration about how to respond to growing contention in the social environment between black and nonblack residents. For relocated public housing residents, the experience of being stereotyped and targeted is complicated by the intersection of their various social identities (such as their race, class, subsidized housing status,

and gender), intensifying their sense of marginalization. We also found that interracial social dynamics are more intense at Westhaven Park and Park Boulevard, which have more racial diversity, and residents of different racial backgrounds describe more frequent exposure, interaction, and conflict. Challenging interracial dynamics play out both across lines of class (education, professional status) and income and within the population of middle-class residents as well. In addition, non-African-American respondents described discomfort they felt at being the minority presence in these communities.

### *“Ghetto Mentality”: Targeting Public Housing Residents Based on Culture and Lifestyle*

The overwhelming perception among non-African-Americans interviewed at these sites, most of whom are homeowners or professionals who work at the development, is that relocated public housing residents have a fundamentally different sense of values and norms—at times pejoratively labeled by respondents as a “ghetto mentality.”<sup>9</sup> This clearly racialized perception is described by respondents as playing out in the daily behaviors of lower-income African-Americans. For example, according to a property manager, homeowners describe their low-income African-American neighbors “sitting on milk crates” and “standing outside cussing, hollering, and screaming,” which are activities owners associate with low-class standards.

The two main arguments made by respondents about why relocated public housing residents display this mentality blame both the conditions of poverty and the values and behaviors of relocated public housing residents on the individual, rather than on the political and economic structures that create and reproduce poverty. In the first argument, some believe that poverty experienced by relocated public housing residents is brought about by their own values, including a lack of motivation, a desire to remain on public assistance, and a lack of respect for dominant, white, middle-class cultural norms. According to these respondents, rehabilitation is necessary to help public housing residents adjust to the mainstream expectations of life in the mixed-income developments. Even with quality supportive services, job opportunities, and affordable housing, however, many of these respondents doubt that antisocial values and outlook will change.

The second argument—more often made by professional stakeholders than higher-income neighbors—references the history of public housing and its legacy of disadvantage when trying to explain why the transition of some public housing residents has been difficult. According to these respondents, it

is not their internal values but rather the lifestyle routines that they have adopted that will need to change if relocated public housing residents are going to adjust to the new mixed-income environment.

In both arguments, public housing residents are expected to change their values and behaviors to meet the demands of the new social environment. Most importantly, given the focus of this analysis, these two arguments are inherently connected to race, reflective of notions of the black “underclass” and pertaining to a population—relocated public housing residents—which is exclusively African-American in these sites. Although both arguments center on the reasons why relocated public housing residents need to change to transcend poverty, the second argument takes into account to some extent the legacy of racial segregation in public housing as a relevant factor in the successful transition to mixed-income housing.

Homeowners and professional stakeholders have class and positional privilege that allow them advantages in determining the norms for appropriate behaviors. The combination of enduring racial stereotypes and the greater institutional power wielded by the more privileged members living and working at the developments allows them greater control over the norms and rules that apply in these contexts, and to how they are enforced—primarily on African-American relocated public housing residents and other low-income renters. Owners, who represent a more racially diverse group, exert this power through informal policing of behaviors or making complaints to property management or the police; development staff establish rules, and lease policies and procedures that institutionally delimit renters’ rights and social freedom. These social dynamics play out on the ground through both the regulation and differential enforcement of rules and sanctions (Chaskin and Joseph 2013).

*Regulation of relocated public housing residents.* Almost all of the relocated public housing residents and other low-income residents (all of whom are African-American) in our sample express frustration at having been stereotyped and targeted unjustly by rules enforced by property managers and through informal monitoring by their neighbors. At Westhaven Park and Park Boulevard, these residents consider the behavioral expectations and social vigilance to be a direct result of the influx of nonblack owners, and they often frame these new social norms in terms of race, not just income and housing tenure. For example, this African-American relocated public housing resident at Westhaven Park describes how “they” (referencing the nonblack residents) hold different expectations for the use of public space in the neighborhood:



They have a problem with us standing on the corner. We're colored. That's what we do. We gather in groups. We don't have to be no drug activity or nothing like that for us to gather round. That's how we mingle.

In addition, residents describe how property managers have instituted physical barriers to cut down on "hanging out" such as installing fences around private parks in the developments and locking community rooms. A few of these renters described receiving lease violation notices for overly loud noise or too many frequent guests, while others describe how police were called to break up a party or disperse a group of black teenage youth. This African-American relocated public housing resident at Oakwood Shores describes how she views race as an important factor in actions by a white owner:

I think a white lady owned it and they moved out because to them too many black people [were] coming to this park. They bothered them. She would always call the police on them for barbequing in the park. Isn't that where you're supposed to barbeque at? In the park?

Relocated public housing residents describe how living in close proximity to residents from different "cultures" (a label used by both nonblack and black resident respondents that, in these contexts, suggest clear racial undertones) makes the contrast between their values, behaviors, and lifestyles more readily apparent. For example, according to this African-American relocated public housing resident at Oakwood Shores,

I think with not really knowing another culture you really don't pay any attention to it . . . I'm comfortable with my black brothers and sisters [but] . . . now my awareness that there's another culture here, now I need to be paying attention.

In our interviews, relocated public housing and other low-income, African-American renters, particularly at Westhaven Park, complained that certain non-African-American owners often demonstrate the same sort of improper habits for which they are criticized and sanctioned. However, due to their more powerful status in the developments, owners' behaviors are not subject to the same intensity of monitoring or consequences. This quote from an African-American relocated public housing resident at Westhaven Park describes the unequal authority between different residents based on their housing tenure, which in these settings is conflated with race:

When the condo owner down the hall [is] playing music and smoking pot [and is] just as dysfunctional as everybody else; just got a little more money . . . no one complained to them. And so when the condo president admitted to me [this] was going on but they don't threaten them or call up Chicago Housing Authority on them because they don't have the power to do that . . . So I think it's a different way that people deal with CHA [residents], which I think, is unfair.

Critical race theory helps explain these dynamics of double standards by explaining that dominant groups maintain privilege and power, making it difficult for oppressed groups to express their interests or promote changes that create more equality. In this case, relocated public housing residents have less influence to shape the behaviors, establish rules, or engage formal procedures that would restrict the lifestyle choices of homeowners. Thus, owners have institutionalized privilege in the larger society that translates to dynamics on the ground at these mixed-income sites in ways that are often interpreted by low-income African-American renters as racially driven.

### *Intraclass Relationships Between Owners of Different Racial Backgrounds*

Although much of the interracial tension in these contexts is focused on low-income blacks and the sanctioning of “underclass” or “ghetto” behavior, African-American respondents across economic backgrounds also reported being subjected to racial prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination within the mixed-income developments and broader neighborhoods. Black homeowners described isolated incidents where they perceive their race as an important factor in how nonblack neighbors interacted with them such as by making assumptions about their “culture” or avoiding them due to fear of safety. According to an African-American homeowner at Westhaven Park,

As far as the atmosphere goes, it's gonna take some adjustment because by me being African-American . . . when you try to talk to other people of different cultures, how sometimes they tend to shy away from you, and don't want to speak, and if they do speak, they feel like they have to because you're here . . . But that's the only thing that makes me feel uncomfortable, and sometimes it infuriates me. It really does. It pisses me off.

About half of the African-American homeowners interviewed described negative interactions with nonblack neighbors that they perceive are based on their race. Owners across different racial backgrounds have more frequent

contact with one another due to the physical proximity of their units and their common membership of condominium associations. African-American homeowners at all three sites describe how their interactions with nonblack homeowners were a source of conflict for them, especially when nonblack homeowners made statements or took actions that targeted low-income black renters. For example, this African-American homeowner at Oakwood Shores describes an incident where race played a key but subtle role:

[This nonblack neighbor] sent out an email request to be careful, and he's like, "Look out for young males in white t-shirts and blue jeans." That was it. He's like, "Look out for them." I'm thinking I don't know how up he is in urban stuff, but there's a song called "White T-shirt." Everybody is wearing a white t-shirt and jeans. He didn't say ethnicity, but I know he implied they were black kids.

While racial prejudice was mentioned less frequently in interviews with homeowners as compared to interviews with relocated public housing residents, these experiences make clear that perceptions of racism and racist actions to some extent transcend housing tenure and class categories in ways that negatively impact African-Americans' experiences living in these developments.

### *Minority–Majority Dynamics of Nonblack Residents*

Further complicating the interracial social dynamics are the experiences of nonblack residents who are in the minority racial group in the specific context of these neighborhoods but are part of the majority or dominant racial group in larger society. Among the nonblack owners whom we interviewed, half of them discussed incidents they perceived were driven by race.<sup>10</sup> Some of these involved face-to-face interactions with African-Americans who made comments to them like "go back to your land"<sup>11</sup> and "too many white people in the neighborhood."<sup>12</sup> Other incidents were more serious in nature, such as property vandalism, where respondents speculated that race was a factor in their being targeted. Most of these homeowners describe changing their daily routines such as not going out at night and being more cautious about forming relationships with black neighbors whom they see on a frequent basis. Others have increased security measures to protect their property, and some consider moving out of the neighborhood. While some of these owners acknowledged their own stereotyping of African-Americans, most of them also expressed, in racial terms, fear for their personal safety due

to their minority status in these traditionally African-American neighborhoods. As a white homeowner at Westhaven Park put it,

Just being [in this neighborhood], you put 100 black people and me together and of those 100 people, 99 of them are not gonna do anything, but there's that one nutball that because of the situation, wants to go make an example of somebody . . . If racial tensions really flare up, this is an obvious place where someone's gonna want to make a point. Here comes a gentrified neighborhood . . . let's take care of this guy.

We argue that because the design of the mixed-income development policy frames residents' social identities primarily along economic lines or by housing tenure (owners or renters) rather than along racial lines, it has ignored—and may underestimate—the significance of race. Residents' experiences of witnessing and experiencing individual acts of what they consider race-based targeting within these places lead to a broader question about how the mixed-income development strategy, by failing to focus explicitly on race, may reproduce and even exacerbate the dynamics of institutionalized and individual racism.

## Intraracial Social Dynamics

An additional complexity exists in racially diverse environments when African-American residents are the majority—both renters and homeowners. Secondary marginalization theory suggests that while shared racial identities may help facilitate connections among black residents across class differences, this solidarity is often compromised when higher-income African-Americans perpetuate prejudice toward lower-income residents. We found that black homeowners and market-rate renters did have positive experiences of common ground with lower-income black neighbors, but they also articulated complaints about these same residents as failing to adhere to acceptable cultural norms. Although, as noted above, some black homeowners and market-rate renters described their own personal experiences with racial affronts from their nonblack neighbors, their comments to us in turn reflected dominant racist and classist stereotypes and condoned marginalizing actions toward relocated public housing residents whose behaviors they condemn as pathological. Indeed, the sentiments about “ghetto mentality” described in the section on interracial dynamics above were not limited to non-African-American residents. While this dynamic was present in Westhaven Park and Park Boulevard, it was particularly pervasive at Oakwood Shores, where more residents, including homeowners, are African-American.

## *Racial Solidarity Among African-Americans Across Class Differences*

Complicated dynamics emerge for African-American homeowners and market-rate renters who find themselves at once aligned not only with higher-income residents of other races but also with a unique opportunity, if they so choose, to engage with lower-income residents on the basis of their shared racial background. It is important to note, however, that there is a range of perspectives among African-American owners and market-rate renters and that only some of them describe the importance of shared racial backgrounds. These black respondents share examples of how they engage in casual connections such as speaking to each other in the hallways, socializing at nearby parks, or talking while waiting at bus stops. Informal interactions among African-American residents of different class backgrounds occur more frequently compared with interactions between black and nonblack neighbors. African-American residents describe the need to know each other as a strategy for preventing criminal activity or in response to violence in the development. An African-American homeowner at Westhaven Park, for example, described his interaction with relocated public housing residents after a shooting in the parking lot, where he was surprised to encounter shared interests with subsidized renters, noting how they

made these comments like, you know, "I'm tired of those people in that [public housing] row house . . . They need to knock that down. We're trying to live in a nice community" . . . I thought that that was impressive that you had [relocated public housing residents] who [would] chum up and say . . . this is enough.

Racial solidarity across class differences among black homeowners and market-rate renters primarily manifests itself through empathic sentiments of "having been there" due to the shared experience of being black and, for some affluent residents, of having less income earlier in their lives. For example, an African-American homeowner at Oakwood Shores describes the importance of her shared racial identity as one reason she developed a friendship with one of the black low-income renters:

We're black females . . . It's like my sister . . . Right away when she was like, "hey what's up?" I was like, "Hey, what's up?" We sat on the bus and started running our mouths like we were family.

A few of the black homeowners went as far as criticizing other owners whom they felt lacked understanding about the life circumstances of black

low-income renters with less economic security. According to an African-American homeowner at Westhaven Park,

This is not Lincoln Park . . . I think [some homeowners] expect [the renters] to . . . act like they act . . . behave like they behave. But it's totally different. I mean you've gotta go deeper into their history, why, and their family . . . They don't have the income that most of the people in the neighborhood have . . . They are not as fortunate as others are.

Thus, the experience of shared racial identities may help facilitate connections among black residents across class differences in ways that are more rare for residents of different racial backgrounds.

### *Secondary Marginalization: Distinction Making and Cultural Differences*

At the same time, some black homeowners and market-rate renters, particularly at Oakwood Shores, articulated complaints about their low-income black neighbors whom they suggest lack adherence to mainstream cultural norms. As one African-American homeowner at Park Boulevard puts it,

Renters who come from places who don't have a sense of pride . . . who have no understanding of what homeownership means . . . ghetto . . . I really don't want to see people hanging out on the porch, loud music, people who blow their horn to get people to come out . . . It's a cultural thing.

Just as their white homeowner counterparts did, these respondents critique the "ghetto mentality" and behaviors of those they assume to be subsidized renters. Beyond annoyance at particular behaviors, their concern also lies with how the behaviors of their lower-income black neighbors reflect on them personally and more generally on all African-Americans. According to one African-American homeowner at Westhaven Park,

It bothers me because they're African-American . . . Why are they acting like that? Why do they always stand out and drink 40 ounces and smoke weed? That's a reflection on me. So it bothers me a lot and it frustrates me. It makes me angry.

The increasing economic and racial diversity in these neighborhoods may intensify the social pressure asserted by middle-class black residents and professionals on low-income African-American residents to adhere to middle-class norms. The response by some black homeowners and market-rate

renters is to further distance themselves from stereotypical images and behaviors associated with the so-called “ghetto mentality.” As an illustration of these dynamics, an African-American market-rate renter in Oakwood Shores comments,

I’m an African-American black female. I have a master’s degree. I mean I don’t stunt my growth because of the environment that I’m in . . . I can see that there’s some jealousy and envy . . . because I’m not going to revert to some of their negative ways which is, you know, the talk, the walk, the clothes. I’m not gonna do that. I’m gonna be me. And my car’s been scratched up. My mirror’s been broken off. I can’t put my name on the mailbox. They keep taking it off . . . It’s very frustrating and very discouraging because it’s my own people, you know.

Almost all of the African-American homeowners and about half of the African-American market-rate renters in our sample describe desires, habits, and strategies that distance themselves from the “ghetto mentality” stereotypes and from black, low-income renters whom they negatively associate with this stereotype. According to one African-American market-rate renter at Westhaven Park,

I’m a serious product of black community, but not *that* aspect of it . . . I’m not above anybody, but certain types of behaviors and certain types of ways, if you’re gonna live around civilized people, I just expect that.

While these higher-income black residents identify as members of the “black community,” they also distinguish themselves from lower-income residents whose behaviors are assumed to reflect the prejudicial stereotypes of black culture institutionalized by dominant white society. As an African-American stakeholder at Westhaven Park describes it,

I live in a predominantly black community. I don’t want to hear a bunch of music when I come in. I don’t want to hear or see you hanging out all over everywhere. I’m black, and the people I live with are black. So that’s a culture. I don’t see that as a racial thing . . . those are cultural things, and I think when you have another race complain, then it seems like it becomes a racial [thing]. If I complain about the same issue, is it a racial thing or is it cultural? I think it’s a combination of both.

Furthermore, the attitudes and stereotypes about black ghetto culture held by affluent black residents are magnified when these residents are in positions of power such as leadership roles on the condo boards and neighborhood

associations (Chaskin, Khare, and Joseph 2012). In our fieldwork observing neighborhood associations and other participatory forums, we witnessed numerous examples of affluent black homeowners critiquing the behaviors of low-income black families. The economic privilege of black homeowners, in addition to their formal positions of power in neighborhood associations, provides them power to reinforce race-based norms and to informally “police” the behaviors of the more vulnerable black renters. Secondary marginalization perpetuated by affluent blacks is more apparent in these mixed-income settings where the class interests of black and nonblack homeowners align more readily. For example, after describing an incident in a meeting where a homeowner was particularly vocal in distinguishing between rights that should pertain to homeowners alone, a Westhaven Park African-American stakeholder stated,

Incidentally, she was a black professional, not that race is the total story, because it's not, it's race, class, economics, and she did something that I know somebody white sitting in that room would be thinking, but never say . . . [Neighborhood associations] put black folks in leadership positions . . . so that they become the official attack dogs for the organization, and they'll do and say things that the white members are feeling, but the white members would never publicly do.

While these tensions around identity, values, and normative expectations for behavior are clear among the higher-income black residents we spoke with, it is more difficult to assess the experience and perceptions of relocated public housing residents, as the majority of the references that they make about “owners” do not make reference to the differences between homeowners by race. On one hand, relocated public housing residents often use the lens of race and racism in describing their marginalization by homeowners and development professionals. On the other, given the demographics of these neighborhoods, there is good reason to believe that they feel pressure from all homeowners, including African-Americans. A white professional stakeholder at Westhaven Park observed that public housing residents feel “looked down upon, not because they're looked down upon by white people, but they're looked down upon by the black people that live there too.”

Taken as a whole, these findings show how the increasing economic diversity and widening cleavages within the black community of residents living within close physical proximity generate complex intraracial social dynamics where black relocated public housing residents and other low-income renters experience marginalization from both nonblack and black neighbors.



## Conclusion and Implications

The stated aims of current policies focused on public housing reform and poverty deconcentration, like Chicago's Plan for Transformation, are largely silent about addressing institutionalized racial segregation. The focus has been on demolishing public housing projects, building and rehabilitating housing, dispersing the poor from public housing developments, and physically integrating residents of different income and housing tenures. African-American residents' experience of racial prejudice and discrimination within these places leads to a broader question about how the mixed-income development strategy, by failing to focus explicitly on race, may reproduce or even exacerbate the effects of institutionalized and individual racism. We argue that because the design of mixed-income development policy frames residents' social identities primarily along the lines of income and housing tenure rather than race, it ignores what we find to be the enduring, if nuanced and complex, significance of race. Consistent with critical race theory, we find that institutionalized notions of "ghetto culture" continue to inhere in the attitudes of many higher-income, nonblack homeowners and professionals in these contexts, and that the relative privilege and power these groups have to establish and enforce norms, policies, and rules generate and reproduce inequality fundamentally grounded in race. Consistent with secondary marginalization theory, we also find that the increasing economic diversity and widening cleavages *among* blacks living in these contexts generate complex intraracial social dynamics where relocated public housing residents and other low-income black renters experience marginalization from both black and nonblack neighbors.

There are several possible dangers to the lack of an explicit focus on race and racial disparity in these contexts. First, it leaves open to speculation the intent of policy makers in the context of this highly controversial policy arena. Among the existing, mostly black population in high-density public housing, it fosters the perception of the policy as a displacement effort, in line with urban renewal policies of the 1950s and 1960s that James Baldwin provocatively referred to as "negro removal" (Clark [1963] 1989). In addition, given the historic challenges and failures of racial integration in America, without an explicit focus on the dynamics of race and racism, it is possible to understate the magnitude of what is being attempted and fail to adequately prepare all involved for the complexity of the task at hand. One unintended consequence is the maintenance and exacerbation of social dynamics where public housing residents and other low-income African-American renters experience significant marginalization, ultimately undermining the goal of reintegrating public housing residents into mainstream society.

Race-conscious poverty deconcentration policy would be explicit about the historical and contemporary forms of racial discrimination, stigma, and exclusion that contribute to the ongoing marginalization of low-income African-Americans. As with the Gautreaux program, the design and the evaluation of housing policy would include attention to racial integration. At all levels of policy design and implementation—housing authority, private developers, local community organizations—there would be an expectation of considering race as well as income in setting goals and formulating strategies. We can suggest two specific areas of practice that could be built into future mixed-income development policy, one focused on local governance practice and the other on more general facilitated dialogue and sharing within the new developments.

Our findings demonstrate how tensions around identity, values, and normative expectations for behavior between residents of different economic backgrounds and housing tenures lead to increased experiences of marginalization among relocated public housing residents. The economic privilege of white and black market-rate renters and homeowners, in particular the formal positions of power for condominium and homeowners in associations, provides them authority to regulate the informal behavioral norms of lower-income African-Americans. This positional inequality could be addressed through policy requirements and operational interventions. Public housing authority leaders and other development partners can shape local policy directives and site-based interventions to proactively address strained social dynamics that are compounded by the class and racial differences. Mixed-income sites could be required to institute governance mechanisms, such as a committee comprised of residents who differ in their racial and economic backgrounds, whose role it is to promote and nurture a more integrated and equitable social environment. Issues of common concern, such as safety or local amenities, may serve as a potential bridge across perceived and real differences in residents' background, if inclusive and well-moderated forums are created for discussions and decision making. Opportunities for leadership development and participation in shaping decisions about the rules, management practices, and future design may facilitate more meaningful engagement by relocated public housing residents and lead toward more equity across class and race differences.

Less formally, facilitated dialogue among mixed-income staff and residents that aims to explicitly address structural racism and how it plays out in the class and race dynamics in the mixed-income sites could lead to deeper awareness about race-based prejudicial attitudes, stereotypes, and experiences of perceived discrimination and more effective staff practice and resident interactions. Developers, community-based organization leaders,

property managers, and others could develop safe spaces to converse in mixed-race and mixed-class groups about these topics. There are a multitude of national organizations with information and resources to support more race-conscious work.<sup>13</sup> These conversations could be useful both among organizational partners and residents at the site level but also at the more macro-level among policy makers and others involved in shaping and implementing these housing reforms.

There are no easy solutions to combating the legacy of racial segregation, in which U.S. public housing policy has been complicit. By focusing only on economic integration, the strategy of mixed-income public housing redevelopment downplays the importance and challenges of racial integration. Economic integration may be a more politically feasible means to address the problem of racial segregation, but questions remain about the extent to which these public housing reforms ameliorate the social and economic positioning of African-Americans. Our hope is that by drawing attention to the pervading silence about race, racial tensions, and perceived discrimination within mixed-income developments, these findings will contribute to discussions about the importance of race-consciousness in the future of national mixed-income public housing redevelopment policies and practices. Economic integration should no longer be a proxy for racial integration. Race remains relevant to the experiences of residents in mixed-income developments and surrounding neighborhoods in ways that require more explicit and sophisticated policy approaches.

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### **Notes**

1. These data are current as of the end of 2010, the last period of time when Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) has reported such relocation data.
2. The Horner Mothers' Guild initiated legal action against the CHA in 1991 on behalf of Horner residents (Wilen 2006). This lawsuit led to a consent decree that established the Horner Residents Council to guarantee that public housing residents have direct representation in decisions about the redevelopment process and the new mixed-income site (L. T. Alexander 2009; Wilen 2006). This Council provides public housing residents with more leverage than is available to residents in many other redeveloping sites to engage with developers, property

- managers, service providers, elected officials, housing authority executives, and neighborhood association leaders. They have, for example, effectively influenced decisions about one-to-one replacement of units, tenant screening, work requirements for tenants, future development phases, and security measures.
3. This quote was taken from focus group data.
  4. We made conscious efforts to have respondents interviewed by researchers who were demographically similar in terms of their race and gender. Interviewers and respondents' racial backgrounds matched in 55% of the resident interviews and 69% of the professional stakeholder interviews.
  5. Each of the three developments' occupancy lists were used separately to draw the sample, rather than pooling together the lists prior to sample selection. Interviewees are evenly distributed across each of the three housing sites, except at Park Boulevard where at the time of the data collection included no tax-credit affordable or market-rate rental units. Initial response rates varied somewhat across housing tenure of respondents, with the highest response rates for relocated public housing residents of 71.9% and the lowest for market-rate owners and affordable renters of 45.5%. We did follow-up interviews with 81.5% of our original resident sample. It is difficult to speculate about the direction of any potential nonresponse bias. Reasons for nonresponse could include personal and household challenges, avoidance of engagement with perceived authorities, or lack of time due to workforce engagement and other responsibilities.
  6. This question was phrased: "Given this is a new mixed-income community, you may have noticed differences or similarities among people here. For example, there are people with higher or lower incomes, people of different races, people who are renting and those who are owners, people with kids and without—and there may be other differences you've noticed. Do differences seem to matter when it comes to who you interact with? Why? Of the residents that are different from you, who do you interact with?"
  7. The refined coding schema captured respondents' perspectives about a range of topics, including the changing demographics of traditionally low-income black neighborhoods; the policy aims, implementation, and potential outcomes of the mixed-income strategy as related to institutionalized racism and classism; race-based prejudicial attitudes, stereotypes, and experiences of perceived discrimination; and descriptions of specific examples of interactions, relationships, and dynamics where respondent invokes racial dynamics.
  8. The majority of quotes included in this article are from interview data, rather than from focus group data. When a quote from a focus group participant is used, it is acknowledged in a footnote.
  9. This quote was taken from a focus group but invocations of "ghetto" mentality, lifestyle, behavior, and so forth, were made frequently. The respondent quoted here was an African-American homeowner at Park Boulevard.
  10. The findings in this section are limited by the sample size of 14 homeowners who are non-African-American.
  11. This quote was from a homeowner at Westhaven Park who identified as a Pacific Islander.

12. This quote was from a homeowner at Westhaven Park who identified as white.
13. See, for example, the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change (2013) work on structural racism, The National Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity Project at Wellesley College (<http://www.nationalseedproject.org>), Dr. Mica Pollock's (2008) antiracism work at Harvard University, and The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (<http://www.pisab.org/>).

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