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Portland Oregon’s “Right to Return” Policy & its Relation to Urban Renewal: A Community  
Psychology Approach

By

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An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

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and

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Thesis Advisor

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### **Abstract**

As displacement begins to be a concerned result of urban renewal and gentrification, city officials are implementing policies to reverse its devastating effects. Specifically, the City of Portland (2015) recently implemented their \$96 million policy “Right to Return” to address issues of mass displacement of long-term black residents through a point-based preference policy for affordable housing. While this policy is commendable and perhaps the first step in correcting a city’s heinous history riddled in racism, it is not enough as it stands. Through an interdisciplinary lens I argue that RTR falls short in four major ways: it ignores and dismisses Portland’s racist history by omitting narratives of trauma caused by urban renewal, it disregards the need of “sense of community” (Kloos & Grover, 2012) for those who would dwell within newly constructed affordable units, it acts as a neoliberal policy that supports “policy-based evidence,” and the funding is strictly being allocated to the construction of affordable housing only and not to providing new or specialized resources for previously displaced black long-term residents. This approach is supported by rhetorical analyses from the Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford’s Family Collection located in Portland State University Library of Special Collections & University Archives in addition to adopting concepts from Community Psychologists. Finally, this thesis provides recommendations for RTR to create actual change and support long-term black residents.

## **Introduction**

Current programs in Portland, Oregon are attempting to amend its heinous history of displacement due to massive waves of urban renewal and its modern successor, gentrification. While this attempt is honorable and perhaps the first step in amending a historically racist city’s eradication of black lives, it falls short in many ways. And while there are different avenues of critique, what will be of focus here is the lack of effectiveness in Portland’s recent policy, “Right to Return” (RTR). This policy’s attempt fails in four major forms: it ignores and dismisses Portland’s racist history by omitting narratives of trauma caused by urban renewal, it disregards the need of “sense of community” (SOC) (Kloos & Grover, 2012) for those who would dwell within newly constructed affordable units, it acts as a neoliberal policy that supports “policy-based evidence,” and its funds are only being allocated to the construction of affordable housing alone. RTR serves as a neoliberal policy through its enforcement of social mix, a practice that integrates lower and middle to upper class residents into a single area of residency rather than creating affordable housing in lower class neighborhoods themselves. Addressing RTR’s shortcomings will be accomplished in two ways. First, I will analyze primary sources through the oral history of long-term black residents who were displaced as a result of federal funding and policies under the ruse of urban renewal, a practice that continues in modernity through gentrification. Second, I will provide recommendations for this policy that will enhance and promote SOC in these new affordable housing that are often in gentrified and/or gentrifying neighborhoods.

## **Right to Return**

A brief understanding of Portland’s newly enacted policy, Right to Return (2015), is needed to address its shortcomings. RTR is a housing assistance policy that is part of the

Portland Housing Bureau's North/Northeast Housing Strategy aimed at mitigating and amending previous displacement. This initiative's objective is funded by \$96 million towards building 100 new and affordable homes each year for ten years as well as preserving buildings, helping families both stay in their current gentrifying neighborhoods or buy back into certain areas that were heavily impacted by urban renewal. RTR plans on enforcing this through a "preference policy" that is designed to (1) give preference to those tied historically in North/Northeast Portland, (2) and for families that are currently dwelling within or have been displaced from these communities. In turn, those who qualify will be rated on a six-point system that is based on how close they live(d) to neighborhoods that faced mass-displacement. These neighborhoods are then divided into three major geographical areas: Area of City Condemnation Actions, which is associated with displacement that occurred due to Emanuel Hospital; Memorial Coliseum Albina Community Plan Boundary, refers to city actions that displaced historically black neighborhoods; and Urban Renewal comprise the city actions that displaced individuals starting from 2000 and present. Families can earn up to six points, those with the highest, along with those who are the direct descendants of individuals that appears on the list of people who had property taken away by the city are given the highest priority ("North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy Oversight Committee", 2015). Due to the policy's vast coverage, my primary focus is on the sense of community, or lack thereof for black residents who will potentially relocate and reclaim their old neighborhoods through affordable housing.

Despite the implementation of black residents' input on this policy, it still falls flat towards successful execution. More than 450 residents have shared their experience and history with city officials in terms of displacement (Saltzman, 2017). First, it doesn't recognize nor emphasize the importance of race. Second, the funding is strictly being allocated to the

construction of affordable housing only and not to providing new or specialized resources for previously displaced black long-term residents, which in turn can impede the opportunity in creating high levels of SOC. Over a thousand applications were received for the first round of affordable housing under this policy, and of this set, it was unknown to its enforcers how many of those applications were of black residents (Korn, 2017). Omitting race from applications reinforces the idea of RTR being a neoliberal policy that is attempting to find a quick fix to a deeper-rooted issue of structural racism as well as justifying policies that are already in practice. Additionally, affordable housing units are not being allocated (Monahan, 2019), and out of a goal of helping sixty-five families with mortgages, only nine were successful because of their positive financial standing that qualified them (McGlinchy, 2018). The issue wasn't that not enough residents were interested, it was due to the complexities that this policy ignores, such as the devastating financial longitudinal impact urban renewal had on the black residents of Portland. Once again, RTR as a policy fails to implement needed resources for black residents.

### **Key Events & Concepts**

With a better understanding of RTR as a policy, it is now possible to integrate and briefly define two key events and two key concepts that explain how this policy was influenced by both previous federal policies as well as present practices: urban renewal, gentrification, neoliberalism, and SOC. Urban renewal was the cause of mass displacement of black residents throughout the United States, and RTR is attempting to amend its negative impact in Portland. A similar pattern of displacement continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, only this time it is supported by updated policies. Gentrification is a continuance of urban renewal practices but is instead now supported by neoliberal policies. In addition to these key events being defined, it is of equal importance to understand how neoliberalism interacts with this thesis. Specifically, the

significance of the market in terms of policy practice. Neoliberal policies will refer to two assumptions that are based from 18<sup>th</sup> century liberalism. First, "the free and democratic exercise of individual self-interest led to the optimal collective social good," and that "private property is the foundation of this self-interest, and free market exchange is its ideal vehicle" (Smith, 2002, p. 429). This is to say that RTR is influenced by the interest of the city rather than amending both previous and current displacement caused by urban renewal and gentrification. Instead of creating and implementing a program to benefit disenfranchised blacks, city officials guided by neoliberal policy practices are creating socially mixed neighborhoods for their own benefit.

Often when historians discuss Urban Renewal, it is rarely ever concerning a single matter or policy. Instead, it is a multitude of policies and acts that were widespread across the nation in hopes of bettering the United States, or so were the claims. It is first important to distinguish Urban Renewal in the sense of this essay since there are multiple waves and policies/acts that occurred throughout this phase. Federally funded policies and acts, such as The Housing Act of 1949-1961 and The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, were enacted in the mid twentieth century and will be observed and discussed in the latter portion of this thesis in relation to the narratives uncovered in the archival analysis. Federally funded acts and policies showcase the matter of the ineffectiveness of neoliberalism in humanitarian crisis'. Its enforcement is done without proper examination of the city as a whole and how it functions as well as using it as a panacea for mass poverty and its related issues. The same could be attributed to RTR as a policy. Specifically, RTR is seeking to solve a crisis of displacement caused by urban renewal through an oversimplified policy aimed at only creating affordable housing instead of addressing the root issue of the high cost of living. This policy is strictly allocating their funds to building affordable housing rather than providing necessary resources to escape poverty.

Although Urban Renewal's wave of urbanism strategy has ended, it has instead been replaced by its modern successor: gentrification. Because of its modern replacement, it is essential to first clearly define what wave of gentrification will be of focus and then acknowledge the common view of it being a solution to urban decay (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Gentrification has been present throughout the United States' history, especially as urbanization increased. This essay will adopt Hackworth & Smith's (2001) third wave definition of gentrification: this wave extends into higher-risks areas with the support of state as well as adding, upgrading, and replacing existing building stock. This definition highlights RTR's policy flaws that includes a neoliberal agenda of justifying policies already in practice, also known as "policy-based evidence" (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). RTR as a policy is far too simplistic to create actual change for black long-term residents that the city of Portland displaced.

A concept just as important and interactive as gentrification is sense of community in relation to RTR. Some may oversimplify the concept of "sense of community" and attribute its name to its definition. In actuality, SOC is multifaceted, and it must be clearly defined and as should its relational concepts. Sarason (1974) first proposed the idea of SOC but has since been properly expanded and defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986) to four principles that must be present to fully define SOC: membership, mutual influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Membership refers to personal investment and feelings of belonging; mutual influence occurs when members of the community have power and are able to exert it in a group dynamic; integration and fulfillment of needs concerns shared values and the exchange of resources amongst members; and, shared emotional connection can be thought of as a "spiritual bond" – a bond that doesn't necessarily translate religiously, but can only be experienced and recognized by members themselves through community experiences (Kloos &



Grover, 2012). In combination these principles create a rich and complex SOC that is omitted, but desperately needed in RTR. By incorporating McMillan and Chavis' principles, the City of Portland can help create and amend the vast social networks it demolished during urban renewal for its black long-term residents.

Finally, to fully adopt and implement an ecological perspective, it is necessary to first define what community translates to as a recommendation to RTR's policy. As community psychologists have established, a community has several forms and isn't based solely on an individual's immediate surroundings. For this reason, the type of community discussed here will be locality based: a more traditional understanding of community that includes city blocks, neighborhoods, small towns, cities, and rural regions (Kloos & Grover, 2012). To provide a tangible possible preliminary solution, my recommendations discussed in the latter portion of this thesis will be for the King neighborhood but can also be adjusted for other neighborhoods.

### **Racism in Portland, Oregon**

Urban Renewal in Portland, Oregon's history is seldom discussed and acknowledged amongst many of its inhabitants. It is because of this ignorance that modern forms of oppression continue to thrive and impact the same communities. Specifically, gentrification, a modern form of urban renewal, continues to displace the very same community: black long-term residents. By ignoring Portland's history, and those who were impacted by urban renewal, we allow for the continuance of displacement and marginalization of this community. It is necessary to not only acknowledge, but also uncover the hidden narratives of the black community within Portland when urban renewal was devastatingly taking place. Uncovering these narratives as well as the overall racism in Portland will aid in addressing RTR's shortcomings by acknowledging the historical oppression black long-term residents faced. This in turn will help create a SOC for

those within neighborhoods that are either currently undergoing gentrification or are completely gentrified.

### **Methodology**

It is critical to uncover both Portland's lesser known history with oppressive racism, and the lost narratives of those who endured the traumatic experience of Urban Renewal. The primary sources collected for this thesis include first-hand accounts, also known as oral history, of black long-term residents who were displaced. I will also provide supplemental evidence on Portland's racist history that contributed to urban renewal. To uncover these hidden narratives, I will rhetorically analyze primary sources in the Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford's Family Collection located in Portland State University Library of Special Collections & University Archives. From there I gathered the incredibly and meticulously crafted collection regarding local zoning pamphlets/booklets from 1975-1998, the History of Portland's African American Community, and the Cornerstones of Community Buildings of Portland's African American History. My objective included the displacement of Black individual's due to the Urban Renewal. The following documents support the central textual analysis below: "Demolition and Displacement Are Forever!," "Displacement for Emanuel Hospital Expansion," "Displacement for Memorial Coliseum," "Planning in Albina," and "Vanport Flood." My central text, "Real Renewal: It's About Time!" focused on the collective narratives of concerned black citizens in Portland due to Urban Renewal.

I am approaching this issue through an interdisciplinary lens considering its vastness and complexity. Because of this I will provide recommendations for RTR's policy to successfully address its shortcomings by applying concepts developed by community psychologists after I have completed the analysis. There are a variety of views within community psychology, but this

thesis delves into an Ecological Perspective created by Kelly (1968) that stresses the understanding of interactions between environment and individuals. Although Kelly's model consists of four concepts, what will be used is the idea of "succession" to understand a "systems history before they plan an intervention in that system," something RTR's policy currently fails to implement. Next, I will utilize community psychologists' conceptualization of "sense of community" (SOC) (Kloos & Grover, 2012), and how this is a vital component that is altogether missed by RTR as well. Combining both a historical approach as well as integrating concepts developed by community psychology as a field is necessary to address omitted critical details that in turn will ultimately benefit and create a SOC for those dwelling within RTR's area of development.

### **Historical Racism**

Portland, Oregon is often considered a liberal and progressive city, a place considered equal and welcoming of all. This assumption and reputation of Portland is proof of continued public ignorance. Although it may be uncomplicated to reduce its problems to ignorance alone, it would be a hasty generalization. Portland's reputation is ill-defined for not recognizing the silencing of its marginalized voices, specifically, those of black citizens. Therefore, it is critical to examine a history that continues to eradicate black individuals in Portland. There is a current housing crisis that affects black individuals to an alarming degree, and this stems from historically rooted issues that has yet to be acknowledged and well represented by black residents. By ignoring the racist history of Portland, blacks will continue to face oppression. It is time to deconstruct Portland, Oregon's heinous history in order to address the shortcomings of RTR (Chandler, 2013; Serbulo & Gibson, 2013; McElderry, 2001; Thompson, 2018). This analysis includes hidden narratives that serve as the manifesto of black individuals in Portland in

the twentieth century regarding displacement due to an array of issues that were obscured under Urban Renewal. These issues primarily included federal funding and support, policies that translated into construction and expansion of establishments, and laws that forbade black individuals from existing in the public sphere. Altogether, the mass displacement and removal of blacks was often known as the "Negro Removal Project" amongst Portland's black community.

Racist policies and practices serve as pillars of structural racism that permeates a variety of agents performing different roles. It allowed for a successful clearance and displacement of black long-term residents through urban development and real estate issued by urban renewal. With the support of realtors and city officials, it was possible to confine and segregate the influx of black migrants to unwanted locations. By 1940, half of Portland's blacks were confined to crowded and inadequate housing at the Williams Avenue in Albina (City Club of Portland, 1957; Gibson, 2007) due to legal discriminatory realty practices and the support of the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP). Realtors were able to enforce their "code of ethics" that stated property values declined when black individuals were to reside in white neighborhoods (Helper, 1969), thus, HAP restricted them to segregated sections of Vanport (Gibson, 2007). These policies and practices represent how effortless it was to disenfranchise black long-term residents to successfully execute urban renewal. By 1999, blacks in Portland owned 36% fewer homes while whites had increased by 43% (Gibson, 2007). The lack of rights black residents was obvious through their lack of homeownership and confinement by city officials. It is evident as to why urban renewal occurred with ease. The missing critical component of race in RTR as a policy is now necessary to address. If historical errors are not examined, this policy may face similar issues and create irrevocable damage to black residents once again.

To fully recognize the displacement individuals faced in the black community, it is not only vital to comprehend Portland's laws that forbade black individuals to exist in the public sphere, but to understand the reality of displacement. Additional realty practices and forms of housing segregation in Portland were heavily present well within the 1940s. One clause stated:

No person other than those of Caucasian race shall own, use, lease, or occupy and portion of said premises, providing that this restriction shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race employed by an owner or tenant and occupant of the premises occupied (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [a]).

This blatant act of segregation led to the city controlling where and under what conditions black individuals could live. When individuals in the black community weren't being displaced, they were simply denied and excluded from housing altogether. The first exclusion law was passed in Oregon on June 26, 1844. The bill was designed by Peter Hardeman Burnet who believed it was necessary "to keep clear of that most troublesome class of population" (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [a]). While exclusionary laws gave certain agents support to create and enforce segregation, subtle forms of structural racism allowed for lawless segregation into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A segregated housing pattern began to form in Portland between 1920 and 1930, included in this timeline was the opposition from whites on black individuals from buying homes or renting apartments in white neighborhoods (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [a]). When heinous laws were abolished, they were partly replaced with subtle racist practices and policies that are still present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Mass displacement continues to work in modernity as a tool for removal of the city's long-term black residents. Instead of relying on previous policies to create segregation, city officials now implement the process of gentrification as an urban strategy to separate the classes. To lessen the overtness of this urban strategy, city

officials implemented RTR to enforce socially mixed neighborhoods. Although the strategy of social mix does integrate different classes into one area, it does not alleviate the historical trauma of emotional displacement and contributes to low SOC. Neglecting this very aspect of emotional displacement showcases the ill-fitting nature of RTR.

### **Urban Renewal**

The displacement of black long-term residents in Portland caused by urban renewal can be attributed to two major federally funded acts: The Housing Act of 1949-1961 and The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, as will be revealed in the hidden narratives from my archival analysis. With the financial backing of over \$11 billion (Collins & Shester, 2013), it was possible to revitalize urban landscape. The primary goals of both acts can be summarized into two categories: financial incentive and removal of unwanted individuals. Those with business interests believed that Urban Renewal would increase land and property value as well as draw in white middle and upper class to the city all while pushing out black middle class residents, increase tax revenue, and it would allow for buildings to become modernized and thus leading to higher foot-traffic and spending (Teaford, 2000; Gibson, 2007; Talen, 2014). What is infrequently discussed is the federally funded clearance of blacks in order to make it all possible. Each act contributed to mass displacement for long-term residents in different forms. The Housing Acts were administered to clear slums and "blight" while The Federal Highway Act had a twofold objective: to serve as a tool to transport middle and upper class citizens into the central business district, and to serve as a "protective device" between blacks and the city, as was stated by Ivan Allen Jr, president of the Chamber of Commerce (Gibson, 2007; Avila & Rose, 2009). Despite federal claims of Urban Renewal's purpose of revitalizing cities across the nation, it is unmistakable that the cost of urbanization and revitalization is at the expense of long-term black

residents. The incongruency between claims and execution can partially be determined by Title I of the 1949 Housing Act. Title I’s ambiguity of how federal funding would be allocated to “slum clearance” and “urban redevelopment” permitted commercial development. Developers could work around the ill-defined term of “blight” for redevelopment, leading to funds being allocated to expanding universities and hospitals as well as refusing to build affordable housing since it wasn’t mandated (Teaford, 2000). Nonetheless, city officials were successful in clearing what they deemed “blight.” Both federally funded acts demolished approximately 910,000 units, 100,000 businesses were displaced, and roughly 2,600,000 total net units were lost over a span of three decades (Talen, 2014). It is sufficient to say that the majority of demolished units were of those comprised of racial minorities. The Housing Acts and The Federal Highway Act worked in harmony to both displace and create a physical barrier for black long-term residents. Through this form of urban renewal city officials were able to successfully reintroduce legal acts of segregation.

Not only did the Housing and the Federal Highway acts displace black long-term residents, it also proved to be ineffective in its initial objective. Part of each Housing Act’s objective included creating public housing, but this was just as unsuccessful. First, tenants did not return to the new structures once they were built (Marquis & Ghosh, 2008). This refusal of inhabiting the newly constructed spaces could be for a plethora of reasons, but the two of most significance regards the actual buildings themselves (Teaford, 2000) and the possibility of culture clash. The newly constructed units were overt and visibly different from its surrounding units causing an eyesore for new residents and a reminder of returning residents of what was and what is. Instead of returning to their familiar surroundings, displaced blacks are now greeted to an unfamiliar socially mixed environment that they must now learn to navigate. If long-term

residents were to move back, they could also experience microlevel segregation and conflict in a now mixed-income neighborhood (Hyra, 2011 & Tach, 2009). Second, there is also the matter that clearing slums along with blight doesn't eradicate the issue at hand: severe levels of poverty. Displacing long-term residents only exacerbates the issue by simply causing the potential decline of another neighborhood (Hartman, 1964). Conclusively, both federally funded acts under Urban Renewal were successful in clearing black long-term residents as well as proving the ineffectiveness of policies that are created by individuals who are not impacted by the issue of poverty. While both acts were pervasive throughout the United States, the matter of urban renewal must be examined through the lens of displaced black long-term residents themselves to fully comprehend how heinous these acts truly were.

"Real Renewal: It's About Time!" consists of the narratives of individuals in the black community in regard to displacement due to Urban Renewal. This text was archived within the Rutherford Family Collection. The origins of this artifact are unfortunately unknown, but it manifests in the form of a flier and serves as an urgent call to action as well as a plea to black and white individuals. In it, the creators take a stern and unapologetically demanding approach, which draws an audience effectively. Rather than politely requesting its readers to care about the matter of mass displacement following urban renewal, the creators urge both the citizens of Portland and city officials to listen and create actual beneficial change for the black community. The flier is composed in urgency and as a demand for attention from the white citizens of Portland in hopes of not only revealing their struggles, but also in creating allies. From within, the authors break the white comfortability of citizens in Portland by listing and naming infrastructures and establishments that have displaced the black community. The author's incitement is documented within the first few lines: "Every time you drive on I-5, the Fremont



Bridge, the Broadway Bridge, and onto Interstate Avenue, or walk into Emanuel Hospital, or Lloyd Center, you do so on the backs of people whose homes were condemned and livelihoods were destroyed” (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [f]). As a result of previous narratives that were created with civility in mind, some may classify this remark as boorish and vulgar due to the author’s bluntness, but this further exemplifies the author's rhetoric by emphasizing the displacement of black long-term residents as an urgent matter. It uncovers the hidden narratives of black residents who suffered the consequence and violence of revitalization and urbanization. Due to concern of displacement, the individuals offer a plea of actual renewal “The City now has an opportunity to do what is right – provide projects and programs that bring real renewal to North and Northeast Portland, rather than condemning and tearing down our buildings for land assembly for projects that do nothing for the people who live and own business here. We demand equity” (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [f]). The plea continues with demands of replacement value, opposing any and all condemnation, the opposition of removal of existing parking to handle traffic, the creation of job opportunities, the preservation of standing housing and protection of rising property values due to gentrification, the aide in black owned businesses, and the respect of black history. To add to their compelling rhetoric that includes the naming of construction of various developments for the sake of revitalization that ultimately destroyed their homes, over twenty black residents sign the document demanding real renewal.

Additional colloquial narratives echo the political rhetoric of “Real Renewal.” These include the documents “Demolition and Displacement Are Forever!,” “Displacement for Emanuel Hospital Expansion,” and “Displacement for Memorial Coliseum.” Pauline Bradford and Cathy Galbraith composed the text found in “Demolition and Displacement Are Forever!” as two concerned black women residing in Portland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bradford and Galbraith

elaborate on the construction of the Light Rail in North and Northeast Portland. Their narrative is a call to action for those who would be heavily impacted by the implementation of the light rail, “If all goes as planned by Trimet and METRO, North/Northeast Portland will be forever changed, and the people whose lives will be changed are conspicuously absent from the discussions” (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [b]). With passion and acrimony, these women discuss the controversy surrounding the light rail: how voters had rejected the funding for the light rail, that there is no evidence as to how this will be financially supported in Vancouver – which was their primary goal in order to increase ridership by 30%, and the construction of the light rail’s cost proves to be exponentially higher than projected ridership (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [b]). These women continue to expose how this project would destroy neighborhoods from Kerby, Eliot neighborhood, Boise, Humboldt, Overlook, Arbor Lodge, Piedmont, Kenton, Wheeler, Russel, Lloyd, and Overlook – totaling to over one-hundred homes and business being demolished. These black women critically analyze forms of displacement that is often overlooked and forgotten. They created their narrative despite the city of Portland’s constant efforts to eradicate their existence in the public sphere. In lieu of city officials praise of the positive impact urban renewal would create for the citizens of Portland, Bradford and Galbraith expose the forms of structural violence and racism attached to city plans of modernization.

Enhancing the common political narrative of “Real Renewal” are documents such as “Displacement for Emanuel Hospital Expansion,” and “Displacement for Memorial Coliseum.” This collection of narratives was contributed anonymously but still serves as a critical insight on the lives of black long-term residents in Portland during constant demolition and construction. Emanuel Hospital’s expansion, spanning a decade beginning in 1960, as well as the creation of

the Memorial Coliseum, completed in 1960, were two products of urban renewal. In order to construct the hospital, 188 homes were demolished. Soon after the demolition occurred, federal budget cuts halted the project, leading to undeveloped vacant property. The anonymous citizen continues to list the businesses and homes that were torn down: The Blessed Martin Day Nursery, The Chat and Chew Restaurant, Ray's Barbershop, and Dr. Webster Brown's Medical office, just to name a few (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [c]). This text rhetorically invokes the reality of urban renewal's mass displacement of black residents that is often hidden or forgotten for the sake of revitalization. Urban renewal not only displaced homes and businesses, it destroyed communities. "Displacement for Memorial Coliseum" is yet another lost narrative of black individuals residing in Portland. The author combines alarming facts that forces one to reflect on the devastating effects caused by displacement. The 1955 Coliseum Area Report noted the story of impact on black individuals: 476 dwelling units lay in the path of construction (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [d]). Similar to other narratives, the author continues to list Black homes and businesses that were heavily impacted by the clearance for the Memorial Coliseum, ranging from cafés to medical offices. Both creators contribute to the rhetoric posed by the colloquial narrative of "Real Renewal" by further elaborating on displacement due to the construction of infrastructures and establishments for the betterment of Portland's white citizens and modernization, which was done under the ruse of urban renewal. Most importantly, the narratives found within these documents created by long-term black residents draws attention to the everlasting negative impact urban renewal had on their community by specifically naming both their demolished homes and businesses as well as the cause of their removal: the expansion of Emanuel hospital and construction of the memorial coliseum.

"Vanport Flood" proves to be essential to the rhetoric prosed in "Real Renewal" despite its impact not being mentioned directly. The reporting of Vanport Flood was documented within *The History of Portland's African American Community 1805-1992*. The author takes a historical route with an implementation of descriptive unfortunate events, causing the reader a sensation of great empathy (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [g]). This empathy is derived from the authors approach of recounting this historical event through alarming facts that can't be ignored by readers. Vanport was known for housing the majority of poor black families who had come to Portland in hopes of working in the war industries. On May 30, 1948 Vanport city experienced a flood that wiped out not only housing but also community facilities, ultimately turning the city into a lake. Vanport's housing was meant to be a temporary ailment enforced by HAP for approximately 5,000 black individuals due to inadequate housing in Portland as well as the subliminal attempt to keep Portland segregated. City officials lack of care towards the black community amplified the severity of the effect the flood had on those residing in Vanport. The floods impact could've been lessened if city officials had attempted provide the influx of blacks adequate and proper housing. Ultimately, the faults were a combination of simple-to-fix errors overlooked due to the community who would be deeply impacted – poor blacks. Through a pictorial depiction of the event, the author illuminated the lost narrative of the drowned voices of black citizens in Vanport.

The demolishing of homes and businesses of blacks had forced them to relocate to unwanted areas such as the Albina neighborhood. Urban renewal continued to displace black citizens of Portland despite their relocations. Additionally, black individuals encountered both emotional and physical displacement in the Albina neighborhood. *Planning in Albina* is a short essay featured in *The History of Portland's African American Community 1805-1992*, that

critically analyzes planned urban renewal in Albina. The supposed benefits to come from urban renewal seemed implausible to those residing in Albina, which had contained 80% of Portland's black population, since this neighborhood was often ignored and deemed unsalvageable by community and city planners. City officials view of Albina's standing was extremely poor, stating "clearly, urban renewal, largely clearance, appears to be the only solution to not only blight that presently exists in central Albina, but also to avoid the spread of that blight to other surrounding areas" (102). This common perspective took a shift when urban renewal went underway, which benefitted large scale developers while displacing the black community and destroying their viable neighborhoods. Planners now saw the Albina district as an area that would "better serve institutional and fringe commercial uses" as the city grew. To those within the Albina district this wasn't seen as a renewal, but instead as a "Negro removal project" (105, 109) due to the fact that almost half of the black population, over 3,000 people, were displaced between the 1960s and 1970s (Burdine & Rutherford Family Collection [e]). Together, the rhetoric found within these narratives create political awareness of urban renewal's devastating impact on Portland's black community by showcasing their reality. By uncovering these hidden narratives, the rest of Portland's citizens are able to understand the severity of urban renewal and how it didn't benefit the group they claimed they were helping. Instead, black long-term residents were first displaced by the Vanport flood, then by the Emanuel hospital and memorial coliseum under the funding's of Housing and Highway acts, followed by the clearance in the Albina district. It is evident that Portland's blacks were forced, uprooted, and displaced for Portland's plan of revitalization, but, as Gibson (2007) questions, revitalization for whom?

### **Urban Renewal in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century: Gentrification**

The lost narratives of Portland's black citizens were concealed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the marginalization continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Portland is the whitest city in America and continues to oppress black residents, with an alarming population composed of 72.2% white and 6.3% are black. A 2011 audit found that landlords and leasing agents in Portland discriminated against black and Latino renters 64% of the time and cited higher rents, deposits and additional fees for these populations (Semuels, 2016). The legal practice and support by city officials continue to enforce structural racism on black citizens of Portland just as it did for blacks who experienced urban renewal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This concern of structural racism and gentrification was also prominent in "Real Renewal," wherein the authors state "the people who already [*sic*] living in North/Northeast must be protected from gentrification and rising property values" and "The City must take immediate steps to put Land Trust and Homestead Tax exemption programs into place, so that long-term residents and property owners are not gentrified or "revitalized" out of the neighborhoods they built" (02). Despite urban renewal being an atrocious plan of the past, it is clear that it is still heavily present in modernity. Its effects are still impacting the very community it once displaced. Instead of urban renewal dictating policies and practices that forbade black individuals from certain housing, gentrification now serves as its replacement through physical and emotional displacement, which interacts with SOC.

Despite extensive scholarly work around gentrification as a phenomenon, few have discussed the negative implications of displacement on long-term residents who are often forgotten and its relation to SOC. Displacement can be defined as a physical phenomenon as well as emotional, but I will extend my attention solely to the latter. While physical displacement focuses on the actual removal of individuals, such as eviction, emotional displacement is a phenomenon centered on the negative emotions and experiences one may face while living in a

gentrifying neighborhood. This type of displacement creates defamiliarization, an unrecognizability of the neighborhood for the individuals that either lived in or continue to live in. It is essential to research gentrification as a multifaceted phenomenon that impacts sense of community. Emotional displacement is a result of a low sense of community within a gentrifying neighborhood that ultimately leads to the alienation and exclusion of long-term residents. Individuals often face feelings of displacement through exclusion and subtle forms of discrimination while existing in these now shared social spaces with new and changing dynamics. Emotional displacement will be analyzed through the exploration of sources and symbols of change in individuals' surrounding environment. This includes symbolic exclusion, the reinforcement of space being created for a specific demographic, and comfortability and welcoming of long-term residents in a gentrifying neighborhood (Anguelovsky, 2015; Atkinson, 2015; Cahill, 2007; Kern, 2016 & Shaw, 2011).

Sources and symbols of change contribute to emotional displacement experienced by long-term residents. There are certain infrastructures, events, and shared spaces that tend to change in association to gentrification. Anguelovski's (2016) case study exposes the risk of displacing long-term residents due to green amenities that revitalize and cause investors to begin to value these neighborhoods. Such amenities are described as "greenlining" a neighborhood and may include new parks, remodeled waterfronts and health food stores such as Whole Foods. These amenities create a sense of emotional displacement amongst long-term residents that contributes to feelings of erasure by subtly reinforcing and catering to their target demographics: white and wealthy residents (Anguelovski, 2016). Along with green amenities are shared public spaces that are in place due to gentrification. Kern's (2016) case study explores shared spaces as a means of excluding, marginalizing, and making certain members of the community invisible.

Some of the shared spaces Kern analyzed include farmers markets, streets, new retail shops, and cafés. Similar to Anguelovski’s (2016) findings, long-term residents within this community faced exclusion due to the materialization in both bodies and practices, as the meaning of the environment is altered from what they know. Long-term residents may see these up-and-coming infrastructures and amenities as the catalyst for displacement as a result of gentrification.

Atkinson’s (2015) study revealed that the harshest and most significant form of displacement is not physical. Rather, participants experienced displacement and isolation due to physical and social changes that occurred while they were still residing in these changing neighborhoods. The idea of displacement occurring while these individuals still dwelled within a neighborhood undergoing gentrification contradicts findings that argue that displacement is only physical. Those who continue to reside in changing neighborhoods express feelings of loss and exclusion from up-and-coming infrastructures that were not catered, curated, and created for them. This experience is detailed explicitly and to a great degree in Shaw & Sullivan’s (2011) study, revealing that Alberta’s Last Thursday (LT), an art event in Portland, Oregon creates a sense of racial emotional exclusion experienced by Portland’s long-term black residents. Less than 50% of black individuals attended LT at least once while white individuals attended 80% of the time and twice as often on average – Shaw & Sullivan (2011) note that this may be the case due to lack of incorporation of black artists that creates further exclusion of the black community. The exclusion of black long-term residents contributes to the notion that gentrification creates an environment that is catered to specific individuals, causing them to feel emotionally displaced. Although long-term residents are not physically displaced from their neighborhood, they still experience exclusion and emotional displacement.



Within emotional displacement are feelings of comfortability, the welcoming of long-term residents, and the concept of alienation. Additionally, long-term residents' also confronted issues of comfortability and perceived their presence in these shared spaces as unwelcome. Black residents often felt uncomfortable or unwelcome at LT for numerous reasons, but the most prominent concern is the belief of this event being for whites only (Shaw & Sullivan, 2011). This sensation can be explored through subtle discrimination black individuals face, lack of representation, and an overall different cultural experience. The idea of alienation due to gentrification is not a new phenomenon as was discussed in Cahill's (2007) ethnography which focuses on the narratives of young working-class women of color and how they both perceive and experience perceptions towards themselves in light of gentrification in the 1980s and 90s. These young women of color not only expand on the idea of the threat to social and spatial exclusions "the more of them who come in, the more of us are forced to leave," but also express feeling of not being welcome in their own neighborhood "I don't belong here anymore" (Cahill, 2007, p. 208).

The negative effects of emotional displacement must be explored and expanded upon to better understand how it impacts sense of community. Displacement occurs as an emotional phenomenon as a result of gentrification that ultimately derives from alienation and exclusion faced by long-term residents. These were apparent through scholarly work that exposed sources and symbols of change; symbolic exclusion; and comfortability and welcoming of long-term residents in a gentrifying neighborhood. These residents face severe complex feelings of not belonging, being excluded, and being unwelcomed in newly gentrified shared spaces. It is imperative to continue to extract these narratives in order to understand the social implications of gentrification as an issue of emotional displacement, especially in regards to Portland's RTR

policy and its connection to a low sense of community. Creating policies without fully understanding the historical trauma of black long-term residents can create more harm and waste funding as well as resources.

### **Community Psychology & Sense of Community**

#### **An Ecological Perspective and Model**

Given the critical narratives of the displaced black community due to mass urban renewal, it is now appropriate to discuss the importance and deep significance of recognizing and addressing historical traumas that RTR fails to do. An Ecological Perspective centers on the idea that future and potential intervention and prevention models must first take into account of local history. Specifically, it is drawn to the social and cultural contexts of not only the community as an entity itself, but also of the life of each individual inhabiting the community (Kelly, 1968). An emphasis on history and culture would allow RTR to have a better chance in creating actual change and enhancement of a community. By integrating historical context, those who propose an intervention/prevention will have a richer and complex understanding of how the community has previously worked as well as what is needed in order to help it fulfill its fullest potential. In addition, before any action is made, it is necessary to locate existing resources, community goals, and individuals with diverse skills (Trickett, 2009). This is to emphasize that those within the community aren't passive and helpless individuals who must rely on outside intervention. Rather, an Ecological Perspective and future intervention/prevention models are simply an act of guidance and a form of social justice.

#### **Succession**

Kelly's (1968) Ecological Model consists of four major principles: interdependence, cycling of resources, adaptation, and succession. While each principle is important to the model, what is of relevance to RTR and urban renewal's displacement of the black community is the principle of Succession. Similar to the overall Ecological Perspective, history is highlighted as its major objective: historical changes in the community context over time shapes both the current context of the community and its future as well (Kelly, 1968). Adopting succession from Kelly's Ecological model must be integrated into RTR's policy. This integration could impact the overall support of its retention (Trickett, 2009) and potential positive outcomes (Sarason, 1972). RTR as a policy completely omits both the history and narrative of displaced long-term black residents. Its omission perpetuates the idea that the policy is in full accordance of reparations, when in fact it is a neoliberal policy that creates limited and false hope for the community it has exploited more than once. Instead of using partial of the \$96 million towards specifically tailored resources for displaced black residents that could potentially support not only themselves, but their community, RTR is strictly allocating all the funds into only constructing affordable housing. Second, this policy completely disregards the role of race in urban renewal's plan for revitalization. The vast majority of displaced and exploited residents were black (Hyra, 2012; Fullilove, 2004; Fullilove & Wallace, 2011; Satter, 2009; Pancoast, 1978; Hirsch, 1983). In fact, urban renewal was often referred to as extending "the color line" (Massey & Denton, 1993) and was thought of as a "a welfare program for the wealthy" (Teaford, 2000: 445). While RTR does have a point-based system that favors families and individuals historically tied to neighborhoods that were demolished due to urban renewal, race is not a factor nor determiner of accepted applications for affordable housing. If RTR is the city's response to wrongful doing for its black residents, why is race not part of the decision making? This is not to imply that whites and non-

blacks were not displaced and exploited through urban renewal and thus not deserve affordable housing. Rather, the issue at hand is that city officials refuse to acknowledge how it terrorized an entire community through structural racism that continues to disenfranchise current and future generations. Similarly, RTR hauntingly echoes the same justifications and motivations as those who were pro-urban renewal. Both argue that it will benefit poor blacks.

### **Sense of Community (SOC)**

Neighboring, citizen participation, social support, and mediating structures (Kloos & Grover, 2012) are concepts that contribute to SOC. Rather than viewing each principle and concept as separate ideologies, it is imperative to see them as a collective unit that has the potential to both create and enhance communities if it is integrated into RTR's policy.

Neighboring is an act of assistance and informal contact amongst neighbors; place attachment, most significantly, occurs when members create an emotional bond to a particular physical environment with attached social ties; citizen participation refers to members having a voice and influence in community decision making; social support is present when members help one another and in turn promotes healthy coping skills for stress; and, mediating structures allows a connection between individuals and small groups with larger organizations (Kloos & Grover, 2012). The integration of these concepts can prove to be fully beneficial for RTR's attempt on addressing and amending previously displaced black long-term residents through urban renewal. Urban renewal, as displayed by earlier analysis, not only demolished businesses and homes, it severed many communities and relationships that were rooted with intricate social ties that can't simply be solved through affordable housing. Before displacement took place, these historically black communities had an immense sense of community through their thriving businesses and social networks. Although the City of Portland saw these communities as blight and a barrier to

modernity, that was not the case for its actual residents. This was seen through the pleas and cries of many black residents when the city was uprooting their community.

### **Significance of Sense of Community**

Levy & Friedman (2012) argue that when a population is evicted from their environment to a new physical location, this in fact is migration and should be addressed as such along with its implications. Many black individuals had no choice other than to forcibly relocate for city plans of urbanism through urban renewal, which was already a traumatic event for them. When their displacement and forced eviction is viewed as migration, one can then understand the true form of trauma these individuals faced. RTR's policy also fails to acknowledge that the historical trauma of being displaced not only once (the Vanport flood), but twice (urban renewal), can't be ignored. Ignoring this fact furthers the black community's trauma and thus prevents healing. Additionally, the new physical location black individuals now have to navigate has powerful effects on their future social interactions as well as the development and maintenance of their new community (Kloos & Grover, 2012). Furthermore, it is apparent that the community now faces issues of individual and collective wellness due to their forced relocation. In essence, their forced displacement is a modern and state-supported form of forced migration that occurs in one's own city. RTR dismisses the importance of sense of community and its related concepts by only using their funds on affordable housing. Creating affordable housing alone doesn't necessarily create a space where SOC is both encouraged or fostered, nor does it address the issue of emotional displacement experienced by black residents. By allocating their funds to construction, RTR fails to invest in programs or resources that would create a longer and more significant impact for long-term black residents.

### **Individual and Collective Wellness**

SOC is a vital component of an individual’s wellness despite its appearance of impracticality and insignificance. SOC has been shown to have positive outcomes for individuals and their communities, such as showing the presence of high levels of social capital (Kloos & Grover, 2012); and it promotes a “social cure” that assists in coping for challenges and traumatic events (Jetten, et al. 2014). When sense of community isn’t the direct cause of positive influences, its main principles and related concepts are. Community resilience allows for the mobilization of local resources (Norris et al., 2005); and perceptions of hope for the future, collective efficacy, social ties, and neighborhood leadership is strongly associated to member involvement (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007). The positive promotion of individual and collective wellness, a core belief for community psychologists, is evident through academic research. SOC isn’t an intangible abstract concept that only applies within community psychologists. It is a practice that influences and benefits communities around and within them. It can positively impact the wellness, and perhaps, be the first step in healing from historical traumas for the black community. Integrating SOC’s concepts into RTR can provide this community with the resources to cope as well as create active citizens who partake in their own representation. These positive outcomes, I argue, are worth more than affordable housing. Yes, affordable housing is crucial, but it isn’t enough alone. Providing affordable housing is a simple solution to the complex issue of years of structural and systematic racism that continues to disenfranchise Portland’s black residents that is a factor into the inability for any minority to prosper, and thus leads to the need of affordable housing.

### **Gentrification for the Sake of Social-Mix**

Although Portland’s RTR policy isn’t overtly a case of social-mix, its enforcers naturally will create a community that includes lower and middle-class due to its establishment of

affordable housing in gentrifying neighborhoods. A prominent advocate for social-mix communities, Tom Slater (2006) argues that the attitudes and lifestyles of the gentrifiers bring in benefits to formerly disinvested neighborhoods. There are many scholars that echo this idea of the stream of benefits low-income residents now have access to, as well as other glorifying claims. Social-mix is fixated on the false idea that middle-class residents do not displace their low-income counterpart. Scholars (Vigdor, 2002; Freeman, 2005; Freeman & Braconi, 2002; & Hamnet, 2003) also argue this, that displacement isn't a common issue, and if it is, it is not seen as a negative consequence. Andres Duany, an urban planner that advocates for gentrification, states that social-mix "provides the tax base, rub-off work ethic and political effectiveness of a middle class, and in the process improves the quality of life for all of a community's residents" (2001).

It would be inaccurate to conclude that RTR is a policy solely motivated on making amends for the harm city officials have created under the ruse of urban renewal on the black community. Instead, it is critical to analyze and critique this policy, especially since one of its main efforts concerns affordable housing. By creating affordable housing, city officials can disregard and justify current policies that support gentrification, such as RTR. This policy serves as a façade of prosperity for black long-term residents all while striving to limit and relocate urban decay. RTR is just an extension and updated policy related to urban renewal because it both supports and funds displacement, only this time the process is called gentrification. Just as urban renewal caused poor black residents to relocate and form "second ghettos" (Hyra, 2012) and furthered "ghetto-building" (McElderry, 2001), gentrification displaces (Atkinson, 2000; Chronopoulos, 2016; Fullilove & Wallace, 2011) unwanted residents to create the very same process of ghettoization and on extreme cases, homelessness (Blomley, 2009; Murphy, 2009;

Weller & Van Hulten, 2012). Gentrification has taken place for urban renewal in terms of mass displacement of long-term black residents and RTR serves as its vehicle.

### **Negative Repercussions of Gentrification: Displacement & Emotional distress**

Scholars in favor of social-mix also ignore the idea of displacement being more than a physical manifestation. Displacement is a twofold phenomenon in terms of gentrification: it is evidence of the deepening class polarization of urban housing markets (Newman & Wyly, 2006), and it does not require a physical aspect as it occurs when individuals within the environment experience its transformation (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). The integration of affordable housing in Portland's now gentrifying King neighborhood, for example is bound to create emotional displacement for its black residents that are now residing in newly created affordable housing. To solidify this statement, scholar Davidson (2009) argues that the absence of relocation is not sufficient evidence for the absence of physical displacement. In fact, he differentiates displacement into four categories: direct, eviction; indirect, exclusionary displacement; neighborhood resource displacement, that is, when changing neighborhoods and its services creates an 'out-of-placeness' for existing long-term residents; and community displacement, which occurs through changes in both neighborhood governance and place identity (2008). What potential black residents who inhabit the newly constructed affordable homes may encounter includes indirect, neighborhood resource, and community displacement, similar to what previous long-term black residents experienced because of urban renewal.

Emotional distress is a common sensation one may experience due to indirect displacement in relation to gentrification. There is a sense of loss of control that leads to uncertainty in regards to the future (Evans & Oehler-Stinnet, 2006; Shamai & Lev, 1999); it impedes on sense of belonging that in turn provides emotional involvement and a sense of



security and meaning (Levy & Friedman, 2019); and it contributes to a dissociation from the now transformed neighborhood (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). Indirect displacement is as harmful, and perhaps is even more harmful than direct displacement. It creates a sense of alienation and exclusion created by new environments that are now in place for its new dwellers. This idea is expanded upon by Shaw & Hageman's (2015) study, wherein they base their framework on Davidson's (2008) argument that as shops, services, and meeting places disappear in a neighborhood, its long-term residents no longer associate with what these spaces have become. They found that long-term residents of a gentrifying neighborhood have less access to affordable products, experience a loss of social contact, feel out of place and actively excluded, are highly underrepresented in meeting places, and that middle-class residents are unwilling to exchange communication. This research suggests that secure housing, as promised and advertised by RTR's policy, is not ample enough to lessen the harmful pressures of indirect displacement faced by low-income residents in a gentrifying neighborhood. While the transformation of place tends to occur whether gentrification is happening or not, it is essential to recognize that a change on place within a once disinvested neighborhood is a completely different form of change. Change that occurs as a result of gentrification requires power. The interactions made within environments and places creates place attachment (Milligan, 1998) and the presence of middle-class residents is enough to create direct exclusion (Marcuse, 1985). If the emotional distress caused by indirect displacement isn't sufficient enough to strongly suggest that RTR's hidden agenda of social mix isn't an actual solution, consider some of the scholars (Arthurson, 2004; 2012; Randolph & Wood, 2004; Uitermark et al., 2007; Lees, 2008; Musterd & Andersson, 2011; & Manley et al., 2012) that argue that evidence of the potential benefits of this mix is thin.

Emotional displacement caused by gentrification is an exact replica of urban renewal's effect on long-term black residents. This replica can be seen through the common narratives uncovered from Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford Family Collection archive that often related to emotional displacement. Long-term black residents exposed the inherit structural racism of urban renewal. First, these residents hopelessly witnessed the clearance of their homes and businesses for the sake of modernization. They then, powerlessly, watched the construction of the memorial coliseum and expansion of Emanuel hospital that did nothing for their "blighted" community. Long-term black residents in the 20<sup>th</sup> century experienced all four of Davidson's (2008) categories of displacement due to urban renewal. An impact of that scale does not simply go away or amend itself, and this is evident through the continued displacement of poor blacks. There is no overt or direct federal funding for mass clearance of "blighted" neighborhoods as there was for urban renewal. Instead, city officials continue their hidden agenda by supporting and funding displacement through policies that inconspicuously promote gentrification. Furthermore, the claims brought on by supporters of urban renewal repeats itself in RTR: both stress that affordable housing is not only the solution to urban decay because it creates socially-mixed neighborhoods, but is also the sole purpose of these federal programs. Since urban renewal mostly benefitted whites in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, how, if at all, will RTR differ?

### **Recommendations for RTR Policy**

Drawing from an Ecological Perspective along with its related concepts is imperative for RTR's policy. Further, it is just as important to recognize the role and difference between first- and second-order change in relation to my recommendations. Second-order change refers to change that begins from grassroots organizations and residents, while first-order change is created and executed by city/state officials (Kloos & Grover, 2012). This is not to say that

intervention and prevention models established from higher officials is ineffective. Rather, second-order change is on a level of superiority, especially when one is aware of the flaws in first-order change models like RTR.

While the policy itself focuses on affordable housing and reintegrating the black community into gentrifying neighborhoods, it is simply not sufficient enough. When one examines the trauma urban renewal created for long-term black residents through the support and guidance of city officials, as shown in the oral histories analyzed earlier in this thesis, it is evident how Right To Return as a policy lacks the depth in terms of the actual needs of those who were forcibly displaced. To create a functional and efficient policy, RTR must observe what the black community currently lacks due to years of oppression and marginalization. Instead of only creating affordable homes and expecting new-coming and returning residents to not only recreate, but also restore social ties that were once in place in a thriving community, RTR needs to create an environment wherein residents are able to collectively impact their own wellbeing. This allows residents to partake in their future and actively create change that in return will foster upward mobility.

### **Secured Housing as a First-Order Change**

Affordable housing is a prime example of ineffective first-order changes that perpetuates harmful neoliberal policies that are enacted to justify the high cost of living. The portrayal of affordable housing is highly inaccurate, especially when considering that it contributes to harassment and unsafe living conditions for low-income residents. Some housing units have had landlords who illegally charge excessive rents, send tenants threatening notices to leave its regulated stock, check immigration status, and stop services (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Furthermore, affordable housing does not eradicate the reality of low-income residents living in

or below the poverty line. Many neglect to acknowledge that poverty is a systematic issue that tends to exclude and isolate individuals as well as remove chances for upward momentum (Krivo et al., 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2014); it is one of the causes of scarce resources that in turn places numerous limits on residents (Lardier, 2019); and, it ultimately limits accessibility to social capital and beneficial organizations (Ginwright, 2015). Secure housing is a crucial necessity in highly urbanized settings, but it is not the only component necessary in order for individuals to escape poverty. Programs and collective community action should be executed first in terms of funds and resources instead of allocating it to affordable housing.

### **Core Beliefs**

My recommendations for RTR’s policy strive to implement core beliefs to guide successful integration and adoption. This is influenced by community psychologists seven core beliefs (Kloos & Grover, 2012) that are essential to both their research and execution into the communities of study. I propose three core beliefs – ideological empowerment, the importance of community coalitions, and the adoption/inspiration of indigenous program model. These beliefs were drawn by the hidden narratives of long-term black residents who experienced displacement due to urban renewal, an Ecological Perspective, recognition of the importance of SOC as well as second-order change. Collectively, these three core beliefs serve as the foundation of my recommendations for RTR. Potentially, these recommendations present itself as either additions to already existing policies, or as a completely new intervention implemented to address the harms of gentrification as well as previous displacement.

Empowerment conveys a psychological sense of personal control and/or influence as well as a concern with actual social influence, legal rights, and political power (Rappaport, 1987). The adoption of empowerment in RTR’s aid is imperative in order for it to succeed and facilitate

growth for black long-term residents. Rappaport (1987) concludes that empowerment serves as a catalyst for genuine change that stems from marginalized individuals in two major ways: it allows us to look for solutions rather than relying on a “helping” structure that considers help a scarce commodity; and it will support and find developing resources. Empowering Portland’s black long-term residents primarily through community coalitions is the first critical step towards creating a successful policy. Through empowerment, high participation rates can be expected since it allows for residents to have political influence in their neighborhood. This in turn will foster high levels of SOC as well as its supplemental concepts. Ultimately, empowerment acts as a stimulus for second-order change.

When residents are empowered, they are compelled to seek resources for themselves and their community in order to uplift their disinvested neighborhood and create upward mobility. Community coalitions are a prime example of the potential benefits that is to be expected when residents are actively pressing for change. Considering that most urban communities are “opportunity deserts” (Glaude, 2016), it is even more crucial for coalitions to have active members, be well-funded, and supported. Coalitions have been proven to cultivate hope (Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017; Wolff et al., 2017) and provide sociocultural resources that are supportive (Lardier, 2018; Lardier et al., 2019); they serve as an environment for collective voice and engagement (Mitra, 2009); and they facilitate in community members engaging in powerful relationships that allows them to respond to systematic issues (Minkler, 2012). It is evident that a community coalition in combination with affordable housing can create both a thriving community and an environment to recreate rich social ties. With the assistance of a community coalition and an empowered ideological standard, black long-term residents are closer to reclaiming and belonging in their stolen neighborhoods.

To successfully integrate my recommendations, it is also essential to first implement Miller & Shinn’s (2005) concept of learning from communities themselves by locating and studying successful indigenous programs. Doing so allows for efficient and long-term persistent action. If a potential intervention or prevention model is created and established without locating and studying already grounded programs, it risks failures and loss of valuable resources. Representation of policies and programs that are meant to uplift disenfranchised communities must also remain positive to continue receiving funds and bureaucratic support. Potential program failure itself is not the only plausible flaw, it also puts the lives of underrepresented individual’s wellbeing at risk.

Scholars have examined common policies (City of Vancouver, 2004; Uitermark et al. 2007; Lees, 2008; Loopmans, 2008; MacLeod & Johnstone, 2012) that are being implemented without studying indigenous programs that are often enacted due to the belief of there being a “positive gentrification” and the possibility of “gentrification without displacement.” These policies attempt to convince others of a “positive” gentrification process wherein middle-class prospective residents are not immediately displacing low-income residents. Instead, they are filling vacancies that causes the expansion of their presence and slowly replaces low-income residents (Shaw & Hagemans, 2015). It could be argued that the slow process of displacement gives low-income residents an opportunity to seek future housing and establish new social ties in their new communities, but this would completely neglect the harsh reality that low-income residents are essentially being told that their existence is irrelevant and continues to ignore the underlying issue: the cost of living is devastatingly high with little to no hope for change. Additionally, these policies attempt to either disperse high concentrations of poverty or

contain them, implying that poor residents are the problem (Bridge et al., 2012) instead of the structural and systematic racism that continues to disenfranchise them.

### **Recommendation(s)**

My recommendation(s) considers the historical trauma faced by black residents of Portland, Oregon due to displacement in part of urban renewal. It adopts an Ecological perspective, sense of community, neighboring, place attachment, citizen participation, social support, and mediating structures. But most importantly, it draws inspiration from a successful indigenous model. RTR’s policy has the potential of alleviating mass displacement and wrongful doing of Portland’s black long-term residents if it prioritizes what should matter the most instead of seeking a workaround for neoliberal agendas that perpetuates a systematic concentration of disenfranchisement: creating and making space for black individuals to not only dwell in but thrive. This can be done through assessing and adopting a local organization’s already established and successful intervention program. One example of this is Hacienda, a Latino Community Development Corporation that aims to strengthen families not only through affordable housing, but also economic advancement and educational opportunities as well as homeownership support (“About Us”). Unlike RTR’s policy, Hacienda acknowledges and tackles the issue of affordable housing through empowering its members to foster upward mobility as well as creating a SOC. Given the exploitation black residents have faced at the hands of city officials, it is integral to develop a similar program of Hacienda’s to establish the first step in reparations. Specifically, it would be ideal to implement affordable housing, retail space for minority owned businesses, a safe and communal play area for children, a community center, and an office made especially for residents to connect with the unit’s officials and

administrators. If RTR’s policy incorporates Hacienda’s mission model, it is possible to create new social ties that contributes to a genuine and successful sense of community.

My proposed recommendations can be better understood with an example neighborhood for implementation. The King neighborhood faced displacement due to urban renewal and is currently undergoing gentrification. Additionally, the Beatrice Morrow Cannady is an affordable housing unit that is part of RTR’s policy initiative and is located within this neighborhood. The King neighborhood is located in NE Portland, Oregon. In 2000, out of the total population in this neighborhood, 34.9% were white and 45.8% were black; in 2010, 60.2% were white and 25.9% were black (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Furthermore, an interactive GIS map developed by Bates (2013) reveals that the neighborhood is in the “dynamic” stage of gentrification, which encompasses prices rising and dramatic demographic changes underway. It is evident that with this alarming demographic change and stage of gentrification that RTR’s policy as it is, is not sufficient enough to support long-term black residents. Because of this, it is critical to provide black residents with the resources they need, such as the resources provided to Hacienda’s residents, to truly implement a successful policy.

### **Conclusion**

Right to Return (2015) as it is now is not ample enough to address the issue of structural and systematic racism that fueled the successful clearance of black long-term residents through the federally funded and supported program of urban renewal. RTR is a point-based preference policy that gives preference of affordable housing amongst those historically tied to areas within N/NE Portland to try and amend the issue of mass displacement caused by urban renewal. Although the policy itself is funded by \$96 million, this money is strictly being allocated to the construction of affordable housing alone instead of using the funds to curate specific resources



that would allow for black residents to prosper in Portland, Oregon. In addition to this flaw are three factors, that I argue makes RTR unsuccessful: it ignores and dismisses the overt historical racism of urban renewal and Portland, it disregards emotional displacement and its relation to sense of community, and it serves as a neoliberal policy, an extension of urban renewal practices itself, that supports and enforces socially-mixed neighborhoods.

It is of importance to mention that I adopt an interdisciplinary lens to address the complexity of urban renewal and RTR. To reinforce my arguments, I first rhetorically analyze primary sources of the oral histories of black long-term residents who were displaced by urban renewal. The primary sources were analyzed from the Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford's Family Collection located in Portland State University Library of Special Collections & University Archives. Next, I integrate a community psychology approach. Specifically, I utilize Kelly's Ecological Perspective concept of succession. This concept centers on the idea that future and potential intervention and prevention models must first take into account of local history. Last, I stress the importance and need for sense of community to be integrated into RTR's policy.

Urban renewal in this thesis and as experienced by long-term black residents of Portland was defined by the over \$11 billion funded Housing Acts of 1949-1961 and the Federal Highway Act of 1956. Both acts were amplified by the historical racism of city officials practice of segregation and discriminatory realty practices. Urban renewal, similar to RTR's policy, was implemented as a panacea of mass poverty and to what was seen as urban decay. As the city rushed for modernity and through their desire of bringing back wealthy whites, they did so at the expense of long-term blacks. This political rhetoric of structural and systematic racism was portrayed through my archival analysis of "Real Renewal: It's About Time!" and its supportive

documents. While the promise of affordable housing was urban renewal's primary focus, it is evident that it was a failure for poor blacks considering that most tenants did not return to the new structures and that clearing slums does not eradicate the severe levels of poverty. Instead, it was a welfare program for whites and only relocated "blight" to other locations within the city.

Although urban renewal and its efforts is no longer implemented, it has since been replaced with the practice of gentrification. The structural and systematic racism faced by black long-term residents in the 20<sup>th</sup> century continues to displace the very same community. Gentrification is an extension of urban renewal practices and RTR serves as its vehicle. While RTR isn't overtly promoting socially-mixed neighborhoods, that is exactly what they are creating when they build affordable homes in gentrifying neighborhoods. In return, long-term black residents may experience emotional displacement due to feelings of alienation and exclusion of existing in a space that is no longer for them. Affordable housing alone is not sufficient enough to support long-term black residents, but this can be addressed if the concept of sense of community, developed by community psychologists, is implemented into RTR's policy. Sense of community is a vital component of individual and collective wellness that can help foster upward mobility. This can be accomplished if we empower long-term black residents through community coalitions and create a program specifically curated for displaced blacks.

Displacement itself is just a factor in a systematically and structurally racist practices that are implemented, supported, and funded by city officials. This is not to say that city officials are not attempting to undo hundreds of years practice of disenfranchisement. Rather, I argue that they are not trying hard enough to create actual change that will help long-term black residents into prosperity. RTR is a neoliberal policy that is not only justifying the practice of gentrification, but it also completely omits the critical role of race. Affordable housing is a

commendable start, but let's not let it stop there. Instead, let's foster economic advancement and provide educational opportunities that allows for black residents to prosper out of poverty and in return, this will make homeownership possible and limit the need for affordable housing. Let's create actual renewal for the community city officials had disenfranchised for years: poor black long-term residents.

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