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Local Approaches to Regional Problems: Suburban Government Responses to Portland's Regional Housing Crisis

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Local Approaches to Regional Problems:
Suburban Government Responses to Portland's Regional Housing Crisis

by
Emma Deppa

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Sociology

Thesis Committee:
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Amy Lubitow
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Portland State University
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ABSTRACT

The Portland metropolitan region has seen unprecedented growth in the last three decades, resulting in both economic expansion and considerable gentrification. While lauded for its commitment to sustainability and a ‘smart development’ ethos, many questions remain for the city with respect to the needs of displaced residents and a burgeoning population of young professionals. This study examines how various levels of government implement growth management policies to accommodate these demographic changes, and aims to assess whether and how the consequences of growth, especially gentrification and displacement, are meaningfully addressed. Qualitative interviews were conducted with staff members and elected officials from city, county, and regional government structures across the Portland metropolitan area to investigate the “regional housing crisis”. Inductive analysis of these data considers the implications of Portland’s layered government structure for making equitable growth-related decisions.

Participants expressed a mismatch in what was expected of them—both from higher levels of government and their constituents—and their perceived capacity to do so. While government officials advocate the need for new development of affordable housing units, they see themselves as limited by a series of technical barriers in the stratified planning process, as well as an unequal distribution of influential power in public involvement processes. Findings are synthesized to offer policy recommendations and consider alternative government responses to public housing issues.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, for neither it, nor I, would be what we are today without them. I am eternally grateful for the important ways each of them have molded me as a person and as a researcher. My father, Dr. Brant Deppa, instilled in me an insatiable thirst for learning at a very young age; and has continued to set an outstanding example through more than twenty years in academia, and his persistent, inquisitive mind that inspires me to never stop learning. Kristi Deppa, my mother, my rock, and my solace, demonstrates both unwavering strength and unconditional love. Consistently one of the hardest working, kindest, and most generous people (which she gets from her mother, Eloise), she has taught me compassion as well as how to stand up for what is right. Last, but certainly not least, my brother Bjorn—unquestionably the more talented sibling—always reminds me of the importance creativity has in all aspects of research and life. His provocative writing style and unique perspectives challenge my interpretations and open my mind to new ways of thinking, making him the perfect companion to grow up with. My fondest memories, and best qualities, I accredit to this family unit.

Deppa's—I dedicate this work to you for cultivating an endless sense of wonder and curiosity towards the world around me. Thank you for the many ways you have supported my graduate school endeavors, and all those that came before.

I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would also like to acknowledge the academic sources of support that were vital to the research and writing processes that went into this thesis. A wise man once said:

“Everybody has different skill sets and experiences that push them in different directions. So I think...people, at least in the short run and frequently in the long run, do research like their mentors do research.”
—Dr. Alex Stepick

I can only hope that what he says is true, as my mentors for this project, Dr. Alex Stepick, Dr. Amy Lubitow, and Dr. Daniel Jaffee, are all exemplary academics whose research is both of theoretical and pragmatic importance; contributing to the respective discourse of their sociological studies, as well as giving back to the communities they work with.

First, I have had the unbelievable honor of working with Dr. Alex Stepick as my Chair; a man who has dedicated his life to engaged research that is both intellectually stimulating for its readers as well as beneficial to its community. It was also his foresight to bring together the research team that began this investigation and collected these data; leading me to thank the other team members Shahriyar Smith and Nathan Rochester, for their contributions to the interviews.

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Finally, Dr. Jaffee was my initial advisor upon arriving at Portland State University and has consistently provided me with sound guidance throughout my

graduate studies. As a committee member, he served as a methodological resource, as well as contributed a wealth of knowledge on land use and housing issues in Portland.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research Setting

Portland, Oregon is known as a “U.S. success story...for social well-being and sustainability indices, access to amenities and services, progressive policy, engaged citizenry, and responsive local governance” (Butz and Zuberi 2012:359). Noted for its liberal ideologies and environmental friendliness, in 2013 Portland was listed as the #1 “best city to live in” by the online real estate resource, Movoto (Nelson 2014). These triumphs are often accredited to the formation and role of the nation’s first regionally elected government planning body, the Metropolitan Service District, more commonly known as “Metro”. Encompassing three counties, Metro unifies the twenty-five individual cities into one region by creating land-use and transportation development plans for the entire metropolitan area within one urban growth boundary.

However, despite Metro’s “smart-growth” efforts and commitment to “making our region a great place” (Hughes 2012), Portland’s reputation for progressive ideologies and exemplary planning is becoming stained, as the region experiences more, and faster, urban growth than anticipated or planned for. With the a cost of living at 6.6 percent higher than the national average (Forbes 2015), Portland faces many of the same issues with urban poverty as other metropolitan areas in the United States, and the once relatively affordable city and its unique culture now face the same urban problems that plague other metropolitan areas: a rising population, rising buildings, rising prices, and rising inequality. With rental prices skyrocketing in growing metropolitan areas, and an extremely limited number of affordable housing units, many people of lower income are forced into unsafe, inconvenient, or undesirable locations, and these marginalized

populations are often rendered as “collateral damage” (Kear 2007:327). As the number one most gentrified city in America (Maciag 2015) resulting in astounding rates of displacement and up to 2,000 individuals houseless¹ on any given night (Portland Housing Bureau 2015), many of the region’s residents are looking to their governments for solutions.

As a metropolitan region unified under one planning entity, Portland and its surrounding suburbs face many difficult decisions about how to accommodate a burgeoning population: what housing and transportation infrastructure must be developed, where should it be developed, and how can the natural areas that are so cherished be protected from urbanization? Local governments, Metro, and stakeholders region-wide are asking Should we densify and build up? Should we extend the Urban Growth Boundary and build out? Will the renewal of already existing, but less desirable, spaces suffice? These are some of the urgent questions government elected officials and staff members must consider on a regular basis to ensure the highest quality of living for its citizens. These questions, however, do not always have easy answers, and are often made more complex by the multiple levels of government involved in urban planning. Responding to this ongoing problem, Mayor Charlie Hales declared a State of Emergency on housing in the City of Portland in Fall 2015. Because of its pervasive reach in the suburbs and neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area, this phenomena has been termed the *regional housing crisis* and has become one of the most pressing public issues

¹ *Houseless* has become the preferred term over *homeless*, as some of these individuals feel they have somewhere or something to call home, just not traditional housing unit.

² Butz and Zuberi (2012) examined urban poverty in Portland, OR; Gibson (2007) outlined a “history

in Oregon: “Working class priced out, kicked out in new Portland housing boom” (Manning 2015) and “Construction boom transforms Portland, pushes rents to new heights” (Killen 2015) are just some of the headlines.

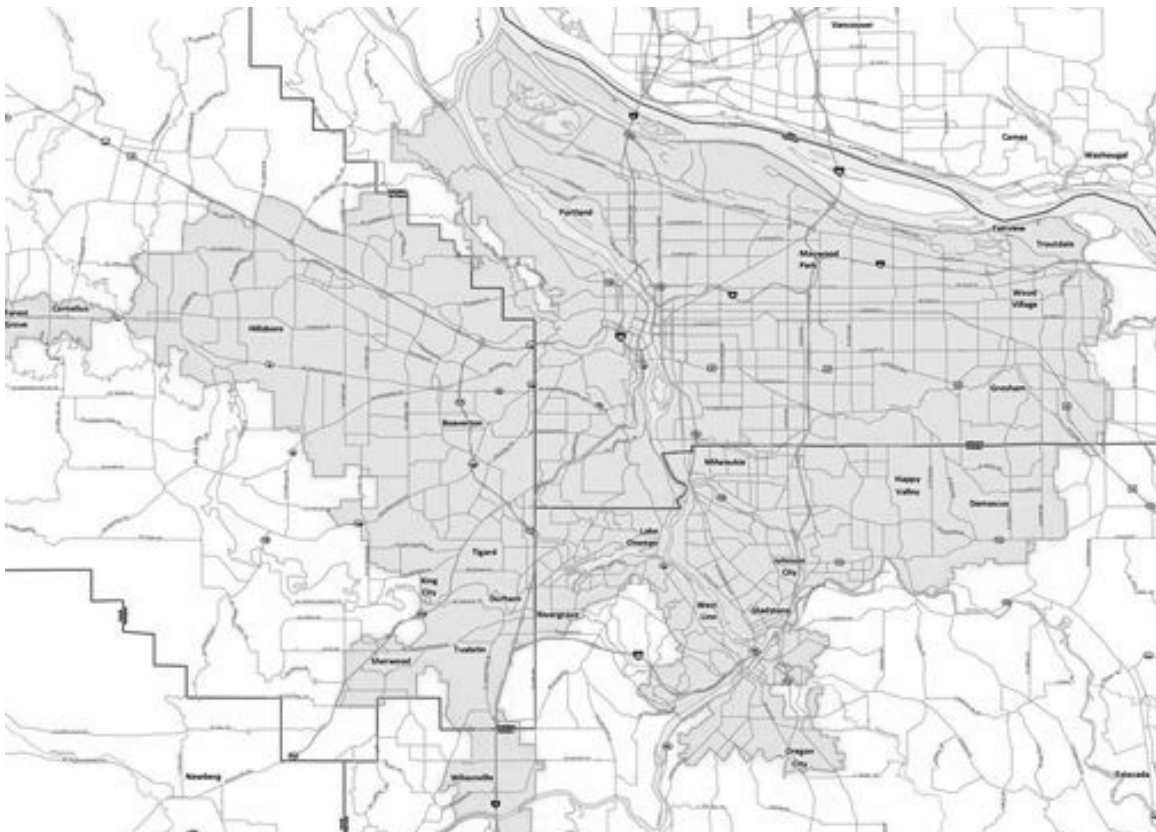
What causes such crises? From an economic point of view, supply and demand suggest that limitations on the housing supply—both from the limited number of available units and the restricted supply of land for new development—and the increased demand for units would cause the prices to go up. This perspective is augmented by the facts that (1) the demand for housing is *inelastic*, meaning that people will pay higher prices for place, and (2) that place is *indispensible*, especially when it comes to residential place, as “all human activity must occur somewhere,” and though people “can, of course, do with less place and less desirable place...they cannot do without place altogether” (Logan and Molotch 1987:18).

To gain a more comprehensive view that includes the larger forces at work, Logan and Molotch (1987) concluded it is necessary to deviate from the neoclassical economic assumptions about the real estate market. They believe this is made possible only through identifying the specific “*sociological* processes, through which the pursuit of use and exchange values fixes property prices, responds to property prices, and in doing so determines land uses and the distribution of fortunes” (17). They assert the competition over the use value, or how residents use place to meet their daily needs, and exchange value, or how place entrepreneurs use land as a means of accumulating wealth, is the most significant factor in determining of the spatial organization of cities by social and economic importance (Logan and Molotch 1987). They posit that in order to augment their wealth and power, the public and private sectors join forces to create what Molotch

(1976) calls the “City as a Growth Machine”, which is strengthened by power at the local level through America’s home-rule system of land use planning. How construction of cities, as outlined in Logan and Molotch’s (1987) *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*, by social, economic, and political factors create and distribute power provides theoretical lens through which I examine Portland’s regional housing crisis.

One significant way Portland diverges from this framework is the lack of local autonomy allotted to city governments. Since 1979, the City of Portland and 24 other

Figure 1: Map of Cities within the Metropolitan Service District



Source: Map of “Settlement Areas” (Metro 2015)

Oregon cities in the metropolitan area have voted to unify themselves into the Metropolitan Service District. Metro’s main purpose is to prepare the region to accommodate incoming growth through the creation and implementation of long-term

growth reports, which lay out land use and transit development plans for the entire metropolitan area. When Molotch (1993) revisited the “Political Economy of Growth Machines”, he reflected on areas of the original theory that that he conceded were oversimplified, and asserted that “local and national politics matter in determining strength and mode of growth machine dynamics”; however, he still stressed “how growth machines are anchored in local systems of elite sociability, ideological conceptions, and local problem solving” (1). Building upon Logan and Molotch’s analytical constructs, I will consider the contradiction between the theoretical importance of local autonomy, and Portland’s stratified system of planning through a regional government, to explore how it challenges or contributes to growth machine theory.

While other studies² have examined various social phenomena that contribute to Portland’s regional housing crisis, most are restricted to the City of Portland, and often neglect both the influence *of*, and *on*, the surrounding suburbs. It is particularly important to include the surrounding suburbs when studying the regional housing crisis because land use and transit development decisions are made for localities by Metro at a regional level. With that, the problem is not limited to the City of Portland’s State of Emergency on Housing, but is extrapolated throughout the metropolitan area with rising property values and rental prices, and resultant displacement occurring in the Central City and growing suburbs alike. Thus, the second significant contribution this thesis makes to the literature is the emphasis given to the surrounding suburbs.

² Butz and Zuberi (2012) examined urban poverty in Portland, OR; Gibson (2007) outlined a “history of community disinvestment” in African-American neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland; McKenzie (2013) examined access to public transit in relation to a race and socioeconomic status in Portland

This study qualitatively analyzes data gathered from interviews with ten government officials from the city, county, and regional levels of government and explores their understanding of the regional housing crisis, what obstacles they face in expanding the housing supply and increasing affordability, and what strategies are being implemented in attempts to mitigate this problem. This leads to the third contribution this thesis makes to the literature, the use of excerpts directly from government officials involved in the planning process.

Due to the multiple planning entities involved in the decision-making process of urban planning, often with overlapping jurisdictions and varying local interests, I pose the overarching research question, “*How do government officials in the Portland metropolitan area—with their differing jurisdictional capacities and stakes in the outcomes of growth—approach the regional housing crisis?*” This question breaks down into the more specific research questions:

- (1) How do government officials perceive their capacity to meaningfully address the housing crisis within their respective jurisdiction?
- (2) What are the perceived limitations to that capacity?
- (3) How does this vary by locality?

The following section will operationalize key terms necessary to understanding this topic and research questions that guide this investigation.

Key Terms

The regional housing crisis is a multi-faceted issue, and when examining it from the standpoint of government officials, it often uses a more technical and policy-oriented vocabulary. For this reason, I will define the key terms related to housing, government jurisdiction, and related policies that are mentioned throughout this analysis.

Defining the Regional Housing Crisis

A *government official* refers to someone who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of a wider populace. For the purpose of this analysis *government official* refers to both elected officials and staff members. *Staff members* are often professional employees with degrees in urban planning, public policy, sociology, political science, and economics, and elected officials are chosen at large by their *constituency*, or the population living in within their respective jurisdictions. Jurisdiction refers to the extent of a government's authority; and in Portland includes the city, county, and regional levels. For the purpose of this study, jurisdiction typically refers to either regional or local. The *regional* jurisdiction, represented by Metro, encompasses the entire *Portland metropolitan area* and holds the most decision-making power. In the region, there are 25 city governments with their own *local or municipal*, jurisdictions, and three counties: Washington County, encompassing Hillsboro, Beaverton, and more rural farming communities to the northwest; Multnomah County, which includes Portland and Gresham; and Clackamas County which includes Milwaukie and other smaller communities to the east.

As housing prices have skyrocketed at a rate significantly higher than wages, few residents are able to keep up, and thousands have been displaced and forced to relocate farther from the prosperous City Center. This describes *housing affordability*, which refers to the “general level of affordability of all housing in a particular city or... market” (O’Toole 2007:117). Evidenced by the 41 percent increase in the average rental price

since 2000 to \$1,242/month, (Sorter 2015), Portland's *housing affordability* problem comes from cost of living exponentially rising with little economic stimulus to incomes to aid residents in rising with it.

Second, *affordable housing* specifically refers to government-subsidized housing intended for low-income individuals and families. Research performed by housing advocates at Northwest Pilot Project (1994) shows that between 1978 and 1994 Portland lost 26 percent of its affordable housing units, and Welcome Home (2016) reports that there is currently a region-wide shortage of 47,434 units at or below 30% of median family income (MFI)³. These startling statistics indicate that, though decreases in affordable housing units have been of concern for several decades, poor processes in addressing them have created a problem that is too large, too costly, too worrisome, and involves and impacts many people, which by definition makes it a *public issue* (Diamond 2012). This is exacerbated by the fact that although efforts have been made in attempts to combat these trends, no changes have kept pace with the growing housing needs in the region.

Several different policies have been put into legislation to address such large public housing issues. One, is *inclusionary zoning*, which is a planning ordinance typically established by a municipal or county government which requires that a certain percent of new housing developments are made affordable to households of low to moderate income. Another is *urban renewal*, a program where government bodies purchase and redevelop property to “rejuvenate” declining areas and make new use of

³ Median family income (MFI) is the mid-point in within a given population's income, with half of households earning above the MFI and half earning below.

blighted space through infill projects. Though it can reduce urban sprawl and is promoted as a means of economic growth, it is often criticized for resultant *gentrification*. *Gentrification* is a term that is typically applied to the neighborhood-transforming phenomena that exhibits the inflow of residents of a higher socioeconomic status to traditionally lower income neighborhoods (Smith 1998; Eckerd 2011); the subsequent reinvestment of the infrastructure in those neighborhoods from both public—such as urban renewal—and private sources (Smith 1998); which leads to the eventual *displacement* of original residents when they are priced out and forced to relocate to more affordable housing units, typically in less desirable, less convenient locations (Kennedy and Leonard 2001; Lees et. al. 2008).

People exhibit a great deal of sentimental attachment to residential place—their home and neighborhood—therefore public housing issues are quite contentious in social and political contexts due to the emotionally charged nature of the issue. This often inspires various forms of collective action to protect residential interests, which break down into two main categories: advocacy groups for housing and tenants’ rights, and NIMBYs. *Housing and tenants’ rights advocacy groups* are typically non-profit organizations that approach housing issues from an equity standpoint, serving as spokespersons to support low-income and underrepresented groups who are socially, politically, and geographically marginalized. They are typically underfunded, and rely upon donations and volunteers in order to effectively champion for their cause. The term *NIMBY*, an acronym for “not in my backyard”, emerged in the 1980’s and describes a “social response to unwanted facilities, sometimes called *locally unwanted land uses* (LULUs)” (Schively 2007:255). NIMBYs promote anti-development efforts and are

characterized by “(1) an attitude having a ‘personal basis’ and (2) an institutionalized action” (Sally 2012:719; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1991). The NIMBY and LULU phenomena are complex due to the wide variety of facilities that are contested, and heterogeneity among motivations and preoccupations that inspire their organized movements against these land uses (Schively 2007).

While housing advocacy groups and NIMBYs both pose threats to profit-hungry development endeavors, this is not indicative of any form of alliance, in fact, typically the opposite. NIMBY groups often see affordable housing developments as a locally unwanted land use (LULU), arguing that low-income housing “jeopardizes existing community *amenities*...[and] creates new, or exacerbates existing *disamenities*” such as crime, poverty, and increased burden to public services (Sally 2012:721). This puts government officials and planners in a precarious situation in regards to the construction and public financing of affordable housing projects; torn between accommodating the demands of their politically active citizens, and the needs of the marginalized communities who desperately need these developments.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter I presented an introductory explanation of the housing crisis that has swept the Portland metropolitan region, as well as defined the important vocabulary words used throughout this analysis.

Urban sociologists describe these phenomena using the “political economy of place” as a theoretical framework. However, because this theory posits local autonomy of city governments, it leads me to question how regional governance, such as Metro, alters

the political economy in Portland. Chapter II reviews previous literature to explore these themes and situate the regional housing crisis within the theoretical framework.

In Chapter III I describe the research design for this investigation. I begin by discussing the interviews I conducted with government officials, and the methodological nuances of studying up. I also describe three housing-related events I attended in Portland that served as an arena for participant observation.

Chapter IV thematically reviews macro-level findings including government officials' understandings of the regional housing crisis, both the causes and effects, as well as what participants' perceive as the greatest limitations to their jurisdictional capacity. Chapter V takes a more focused approach, and describes how findings varied by locality in the suburbs. I find that government officials across the board have similar perceptions of the regional housing crisis and advocate the need for new development of affordable housing units, however see their ability to meaningfully address the needs of their constituency as limited by a series of technical barriers including a disconnect between multiple levels of government in the stratified planning process, and a lack of tools and resources to execute those plans, leaving them dependent on developers; as well as an unequal distribution of influential power in the planning process, in which more affluent community members organize to protect their interests, while low-income and marginalized communities—those most significantly affected by the housing crisis—who are either unable, or too afraid, to participate in local land use politics go unheard. I find that the relative affluence of a suburb corresponds with the local manifestations of the regional housing crisis within a given jurisdiction, as well as both the problems and solutions identified by government officials. Finally, Chapter VI ties the thesis together

by discussing how the emergent themes from data findings fit within the theoretical framework, and concludes with policy recommendations and ideas for future research.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS & LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

What creates the conditions for a problem such as Portland's regional housing crisis, and what makes growth such a problem, and for whom? In this chapter I review the major theories that have emerged from the sociological study of urban growth and government planning. Using Logan and Molotch's (1987) *Urban Fortunes* as a theoretical foundation, I discuss how the political economy of place produces and distributes power at the local level, creating coalitions between the public and private sectors in pursuit of growth. I then consider Portland's alternative structure of governance through Metropolitan Service District by reviewing literature about regional planning. These leads me to question how the extent of Metro's jurisdiction may either challenge local growth machines, or amplify the coalition's power to the regional level. Throughout this analysis I contextualize the problem by presenting important pieces of Portland's history in relation to the regional housing crisis, both highlighting ways it exemplifies as well as deviates from the framework.

Theoretical Framework

The commodification of place is a permeating trend worldwide; but for the United States, the capitalist pursuit of land is a part of national history, and is politically engrained in our culture by the home-rule mechanism. Thus while how land is parceled out has changed federally many times over, this mechanism promotes local autonomy and is unique in the high level of independence it awards to local government agencies, and the extent to which private developers are able to influence decisions about land use. As a result, one unchanging theme throughout the years remains that those who hold the

most economic power are those who have the highest quantity, and quality, of space. Even with the many layers of government attempting—or claiming to—regulate land use, they do little to disrupt the “commercial manipulation of land and buildings” (Logan and Molotch 1987, 2). These themes provide the theoretical framework for this study.

The Political Economy of Place

This research is based on Harvey Molotch and John Logan’s (1987) groundbreaking work, *Urban Fortunes*, which views place as socially constructed by market-driven interests. This perspective has its theoretical roots in human ecology, which implies a social Darwinism of space based on free market competition, and the organizational structure of cities to maximize efficiency; and the Neo-Marxian political economy, which asserts that cities are constructed specifically to create revenue and reinforce capitalist social relations (Logan & Molotch 1987). Though the two theories represent extreme ends of the conversation, they come together to describe “place as a market-driven space, to which human activity responds” (Logan & Molotch 1987:8).

Place is made a commodity by the competition between the use value and exchange value of land. When considering residential place, the competition is between: place entrepreneurs who pursue exchange value, and residents, both homeowners and renters, who struggle for the use value of land. Place entrepreneurs seek the exchange value of land as a means of accumulating wealth, and are in perpetual search of ways to increase the value of their land by augmenting the ways in which their land can be bought and sold. On the other side, residents simply “use place to satisfy essential needs of life” (Logan and Molotch 1987:2). Places often do not have only one use, however and, especially in the case of residential location, they give access to other places of value

such as schools, job opportunities, commercial goods, public services such as police stations and hospitals, and within neighborhoods important connections are made through social networks (Tach 2009). Thus for residents, their desire to maintain the use value of their home is intensified by sentiment and emotional attachment to their place and community (Logan and Molotch 1987). Because this perspective sees cities as spatially organized by social and economic importance, proximity to these amenities not only intensifies the use value of land, but also increases its exchange value and the wealth of its owner.

The constant opposition between those fighting to protect the use value of land and those exploiting the exchange value of land is the “primary battle in cities” (Domhoff 2015). This conflict is often described as a “class phenomena” (Harvey 2008) represented by an asymmetrical power balance rooted in the groups’ unequal abilities to mobilize resources in pursuit of their interests. Whereas the heterogeneity of interests among residents and neighborhoods weakens their ability to organize on behalf of a cause (Offe & Weisenthal 1985), place entrepreneurs seeking to intensify the value of their property share one common, overarching goal: growth. This leads them to see their futures as linked, and join forces to form a growth coalition. Growth coalitions are comprised of parties that profit from intensified land use; primarily the F.I.R.E. industries of finance, insurance, and real estate, but also gas and electric companies, local businesses, and telecommunications companies (Domhoff 2015).

Another increasingly popular form of place entrepreneurship comes from the “house-flipping” trend, where anyone with basic knowledge of construction and home improvement skills can put them to use in pursuit of profit by maximizing on the

exchange value of lower-end homes in the real estate market. This process is characterized by the purchase of a smaller, or less desirable home, investment in renovations and expansions to make the house more attractive and increase its exchange value, and finally the sale of the newly improved—or “flipped”—property for substantial profit. This phenomenon emerged after 1987, but in several ways holds true to Logan and Molotch’s ideas of use and exchange value, and was recently exemplified in Portland. A popular television program, “Flip or Flop”, was scheduled to host a seminar in Portland in December 2015 that would teach attendees how to make money off of the real estate market. In the heat of the regional housing crisis, however, residents responded with ardent opposition to the event—which promoted the quick buying and selling of homes for profit—in lieu of the already problematic real estate market that is marked by rapidly increasing home and rental prices, devastating no-cause evictions, and historically low vacancy rates (Hammill 2015).

While the government is theoretically intended to mediate class conflicts such as these (Block 1987), Offe (1974) acknowledges that the state tends to side with capitalist interests because they also see growth as a shared goal. Within cities, this is often because leaders of growth coalitions also tend to become active participants in local government (Domhoff 2015), and are the “most overrepresented group on local city councils” (Logan and Molotch 1986). When place entrepreneurs combines forces with urban politicians in seeking ways to spur development, they create what Molotch (1976) calls a growth machine.

Molotch first labeled the city a growth machine after asserting that, “the political and economic essence of virtually any given locality, in the present American context, is

growth” (1976:310). This posits that the main goal of urban elites—developers, realtors, and banks— is to ensure that growth persists, and in they in turn continue to profit from the exchange value of land (Jonas and Wilson 1999). Another theoretical interpretation of the coalition formed between landlords, realtors, businesses, and government officials in order to maintain influence over growth and development, is through urban regime theory first propounded by Clarence Stone in his classical study of Atlanta, Georgia, in which he defined it as “the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interest function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing function,” (1989:6). Thus, entrepreneurs and politicians work together to overpower weaker forces that attempt to influence the development process, and have historically been very successful in doing so.

Alas, because “virtually all place entrepreneurs and their growth machine associates, regardless of geographical or social location, easily agree on the issue of growth,” it is often portrayed as a public good (Logan & Molotch 1987:33). Growth machines will often declare that escalated economic activity helps the entire community by attracting employment opportunities, funding public services, and proliferating the tax base (Duany 2001). Thus, government officials identify their main purpose as attracting investment (Logan & Molotch 1987). This ideology of *value-free development*, or underplaying the exchange value gained by a small group while advocating the prospects for community betterment, is used to gain public support for subsequent growth. However Logan and Molotch (1987) find that growth does not aid in mitigating problems such as unemployment, rising housing costs, or scarce city budgets. Thus, this notion of “all ships rising” does not pan out in cities. Rapid growth and development alters spatial

relations within an urban environment, and as a result life chances of residents are distributed differently. Logan and Molotch stress that when capital moves from place to place, it “always has potential for redistributing wealth and changing the allocation of use and exchange values within as well as across places” (1987:34). Harvey (2008) elaborates to describe how cities are formed by the geographic and social concentration of surplus products, which “have been extracted from somewhere and somebody...while the control over the disbursement of the surplus typically lies in a few hands”. These trends intensify inequalities in any given space, threatening urban identity, citizenship, and belonging (Harvey 2008).

The spatial expression of social and economic importance within urban environments has created a multitude of problems, varying in type and intensity in every urban area, even by neighborhood within them (Massey 2005). Concentrating wealth also means concentrating poverty, as a result this disinvestment often leads to decline in poor neighborhoods, ghettoization, and environmental degradation (Massey 2005). This what initiated, and has intensified, residential segregation; vast disparities in economic resources gives the wealthy and powerful the ability to separate themselves both socially and physically from the underclasses and from the consequences of an urban growth machine.

Opposition to the Growth Machine

The growth machine, however, is often met with challenges from the community when the consequences of its urbanization negatively impact the environment, or encroach upon neighborhoods and small communities. Domhoff (2015) highlights several of the biggest points of contest that lead to the “almost unraveling” of growth coalitions

in the 20th century. First, growth coalitions sought to remedy some of the urban problems they caused, such as declining neighborhoods and affordable housing slums, through urban renewal. However, this approach increased tensions rather than solving them, as it treated the consequences of growth by subsidizing more growth. Thus while it did redevelop some poorer communities, urban renewal in many cases intensified spatial inequalities by gentrifying these areas and simply displacing low-income folks even further. These projects were also unpopular when they came too close to neighborhoods, and encroached upon their preferred vision of small communities.

Second, many metropolitan areas passed slow-growth legislation, which placed limits on their ability to grow without regulation. This was largely inspired by the environmental justice and tenants' rights movements. Domhoff (2015) concludes, "an inherent part of growth-coalition theory...predicts that neighborhoods will organize and fight to protect their use values whenever they can", and the policies that resulted from these movements favored growth management and neighborhood coalitions.

While these movements have been effective in protecting the use value of land and limiting its exploitation for exchange value, growth coalitions are still going strong in cities around the United States. Domhoff (2015) asserts that they are still a dominant political force, but are in fact more fragmented and compromised than they were initially. However, the lingering control of growth machines over cities sustains many of the consequences of urbanization into present day, such as concentrated poverty, environmental degradation, gentrification and displacement. Residents who grow too tired to continue the battle against, or are bought out by, developers often choose to leave the growing city and escape to suburbs outside the city.

Suburbanization

Beginning in the 19th century, *suburbanization* was a response by more affluent and middle-class, predominantly white people, to urban decline and change (Baldassare 1992). As industrialization accelerated, it brought with it a huge source of environmental pollution, as well as a growing population of low-income and workers from ethnic minorities attracted to employment opportunities in factories and railroad construction. Residents who could afford to leave sought refuge from the ills of the metropolis by moving to land outside of the city, where they could create for themselves a community that would “become a haven from the excesses of industrialism and unwashed immigrants” (Logan and Molotch 1987:150), and “join with other recent arrivals to...incorporate the new area as a city, a ‘suburb’, which is primarily focused on neighborhood use values” (Domhoff 2015).

In the early 20th century, suburbs were growing significantly as bedroom communities outside the metropolitan area. Railways and public transportation systems were being developed and made it so people could easily commute to the central business district by rail. Thus, by the 1970’s more American’s lived in suburbs than in central cities, including blue-collar workers (Baldassare 1992). This phenomenon dramatically altered the urban scene, and as many inner cities began to crumble even further, suburbanization acted as a stratifying process that not only heightened the socioeconomic disparities between metropolitan places, but also institutionalized them through law.

Power at the Local Level

The U.S. government structure is unique in the high level of independence awarded to local government agencies, the formal and semi-formal systems of planning

that occur at various levels of government, as well as the also extent to which private developers are able to influence decisions about land use. The ability of suburbs to use annexation as a way to harness the resource of government autonomy to work on their behalf is reinforced at the federal level through this *home-rule* mechanism, which grants planning authority to local governments (Logan and Molotch 1987; Domhoff 2015), and “allows the residents and entrepreneurs attached to each suburb wage their own separate battle to maximize use or exchange values”.

Affluent neighborhoods used annexation to “dilute the growing political power... beginning to take hold of the central cities”, in order to create new “outlying urban towns where homogeneous populations could more easily secure ‘businesslike,’ clean governments,” (Logan and Molotch 1987:179). Though social and economic forces are the predominant influence on markets, the government is also in part responsible for the regulation of the use and exchange of most commodities. In this analysis regulation refers to methods for managing land use and development, such as zoning and planning, to exercise local government authority in the control of urban development.

Similar to suburbanization, planning was initiated in the 1920’s after mass industrialization and rapid urban development “threatened congestion, confusion, and mayhem” within cities, which inspired a call for a “technocratic meritocracy on all levels of urban government” that would place educated and experienced individuals in control of local growth decisions (Logan and Molotch 1987:152). *Planning* in this study specifically refers “practices that seek to control either the rate of growth or where that growth will take place” (O’Toole 2007:112).

Planning is not without its flaws. While technocratic governments are intended to be “neutral forces leading to public betterment”, land-use is almost entirely political because “any land-use designation distributes use and exchange values” (Logan and Molotch 1987:152). Thus, the power that planning confers upon local governments by means of their political autonomy “exaggerates inequalities between places rather than leveling them” as governments tend to favor the market order to promote growth within their city. This exemplifies how government planning is used to service the growth machine, and provides context for how differences between cities and suburbs came to rise.

Suburban Growth Machines

Baldassare (1992) identifies modern suburbs as different from previous eras because of “obvious differences” that include “suburban dominance, rapid growth, and suburban industrialization” (476). Many are attracting industry and becoming their own town centers, while others try to preserve the small town, use value focus of a residential suburb. However, in a metropolis with several of these different forms of suburbs, the growth of one tends to indicate a slump in another. Logan and Molotch (1987) identify these “typologies of suburbs” as (1) affluent employing suburbs, typically home to high-tech industries and resultant commercial development to accommodate incoming wealth from their employees, and the ability to use tax revenues to provide additional amenities and better services for their constituents; (2) working-class residential suburbs, characterized by a low-income constituency and an increased need for government spending on social welfare services; and (3) exclusive residential towns, which seek to

maintain a neighborhood, use-value focused community, with affluent community members who use their resources to achieve their shared goal.

Though these differences between suburbs are local, they have a significant regional impact in several ways. First, the annexation of suburbs and the formation of their own local government lead to the political fragmentation of metropolitan areas. Instead of the metropolis operating as one unit to manage the needs of its residents, suburbs dilute the political power of central cities, and take with them the tax resources of the residents that they encompass under their new local government. Second, this format gives rise to new competition between cities to attract investment and industry. Both of these intensify fiscal disparities between suburbs, and subsequently the geographic and socioeconomic inequalities within the region. Thus while some suburbs flourish with new employment opportunities, incoming wealth, and a resultant economic stimulus, other suburbs begin to decay and face many of the same urban problems as the declining inner city. These diverging outcomes are largely dependent upon the presence of a pro-growth coalition in local government, which determines if it will remain a residential town or if the city will become a growth machine. Finally, when there are multiple cities within one concentrated geographical region they become increasingly interdependent upon each other. For these three reasons, some metropolitan areas have created regional systems of governance and planning as a means to unify the metropolis and mitigate the consequences that come from political fragmentation and suburban inequality.

Regional Planning and Governance

Regional planning is promoted as a solution to the problems caused by suburbanization and value-free development; these problems being (1) the “fiscal

disparities between metropolitan centers and their outlying settlement clusters”; (2) the competition that exists between center cities and suburbs to attract new investment and industry, especially as of these new developments are occurring in outer-ring suburbs; and (3) urban sprawl (Mitchell-Weaver et. al. 2000:851). Advocates for regional governance see political fragmentation within metropolitan areas from the “decentralized or fractionated nature of local government” (Stephens and Wikstrom 2000:35). While initially a mechanism to guide new growth and even resources between localities, in the 1990’s the regionalist mentality shifted in response to a wave of rapid industrial growth in the U.S. towards a *growth management* perspective “limiting the geographical expansion of the metropolis” (Mitchell-Weaver et. al. 2000:853). For the remainder of this chapter I will discuss Portland’s history and the formation of Metro, exploring how

this unique region exemplifies the political economy of urban growth, as well as how its regional governance alters this framework.

Portland’s “Metro”

Of course, a regional government cannot be formed without the consent of the local

Figure 2: Types and Difficulty of Inter-Governmental Coordination

<p><i>Relatively easy</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Informal co-operation 2 Interlocal service agreements 3 Joint powers agreements 4 Extraterritorial powers 5 Regional councils of government (COGs) 6 Federally encouraged single-purpose districts 7 State planning and development districts (SPDDs) 8 Contracting from private vendors <p><i>Moderately difficult</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Local special districts 10 Transfer of functions 11 Annexation 12 Regional special districts and authorities 13 Metropolitan multipurpose districts 14 Reformed urban county <p><i>Very difficult</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15 One-tier consolidation: city-county and area-wide consolidation 16 Two-tier restructuring: federal structures 17 Three-tier reform: metropolitan-wide structures

Source: Mitchell-Weaver et. al. (2000:264)

government it encompasses, thus in recognition of the difficult task it is, David B. Walker

(1987) categorized different types of metropolitan governance based on the difficulty level of intergovernmental coordination, ranging from “*Relatively Easy*” to “*Very Difficult*” with several tiers within each level, as indicated in Table 2. Portland's Metro is one of only two reformed, metropolitan-wide government structures—the other, Minnesota’s Metropolitan Council encompassing the Minneapolis-St. Paul area—which are ranked in Tier Three, considered “*Very Difficult*” due to the challenge in persuading municipal governments to relinquish direct control over planning processes for their locality (Mitchell-Weaver 2000:865).

How was it, then, that Portland and twenty-four other cities agreed to relinquish their local autonomy and award Metro the power to make all land use plans? Three important studies recount Metro's formation and history: Bragdon (2003), a former Metro Commissioner, takes an empirical approach using Metro as a case study to evaluate the pros, cons, and effects of their regional planning; while Leo (1998) takes a more theoretical approach, applying Stone's (1989) urban regime theory to assess how Metro fits the framework. I primarily draw upon these two pieces, supplemented by a few others, to chronicle how and why Portland's Metro was formed, their purpose and jurisdiction, and what some of the results have been so far.

Third, Randall O'Toole, a Portland native and researcher at the CATO Institute, takes a more neoliberal approach in Portland's bureaucratic structure and political economy of land use has given rise to many problems, including those related to the regional housing crisis, titled *The Best Laid Plans: How Government Planning Harms Your Quality of Life, Your Pocketbook, and Your Future* (2007). While this thesis has no intentions of supporting or denying any of the accusations from that title, O'Toole's

thorough documentation of Portland's land-use and planning over the last few transformative decades chronicles Portland's history and contextualizes some excerpts in my findings chapters. Our studies are distinct in that he uses secondary-data analysis to develop a narrative arguing against government planning, using Portland and Metro as poor examples; and I collected qualitative data through interviews with government officials to try and understand their perceptions of the problems O'Toole highlights, and what they can do about it.

Oregon's Political History: Rooted in Land Use

As late as 1970, Portland was “nothing to write home about” with “inert leadership, a status quo mindset, and few attractions except its surrounding landscape” (Gibson and Abbott 2002). The lackluster culture of the area quickly changed with unprecedented in-migration, which spurred several policy developments as the State of Oregon attempted to protect its pristine environment from development pressures. Newcomers flocking to Portland and the new government focus on growth management and sustainability set the stage for what would be decades of population growth, public and private investment, and (re)development.

The first of these was in 1973 when the Senate passed Bill 100, a legislation that called for cities and counties in Oregon to prepare comprehensive plans for development that met state requirements, and created the Land Conservation and Development Commission. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) was given the task of revising previously established, but unenforceable, state planning goals, and between 1974 and 1976 adopted 19 diverse goals including “citizen involvement; agricultural, forest, and coastal lands; housing; transportation; and urbanization” (Leo

1998). Goal 14, dealing with urbanization, was perhaps the most influential as it required all incorporated cities to draw Urban Growth Boundaries (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development 1994). Finally, LCDC's statewide planning Goal Ten addresses housing. The resolution calls upon its governances to "provide for the housing needs of citizens of the state" by implementing plans that "shall encourage the availability of adequate numbers of needed housing units at price ranges and rent levels which are commensurate with the financial capabilities of Oregon households and allow for flexibility of housing location, type and density" (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development 1994). The policy's definition of "needed housing units" includes, but is not limited to, "government-assisted housing...attached and detached single-family housing, multiple-family housing, and manufactured homes, whether occupied by owners or renters" (Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development 1994).

This legislation was particularly concerning for governing bodies in the Portland area, as many questioned which body was to draw the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Initially, this task was undertaken by the Oregonian members of the Columbia Regional Association of Governments, but in 1978 was reassigned to the newly created regional governance, the Metropolitan Service District—more commonly known as Metro—drew a tight line (Leo 1998). While some advocate for regional policy in metropolitan areas to provide "a new balance between town and countryside" (Weaver 1984), while others identify the challenge in "balancing regionalism and localism" in metropolitan planning organizations (Gerber and Gibson 2009).

Portland serves as an example of the importance of the interplay of various levels of government in local affairs (Leo 1998). While some bring into question the “degrees of local autonomy or dependence—that is, the degree to which local regimes are autonomous of or dependent upon other levels of government”, these arguments rest upon the assumption that the local government is the “most natural or appropriate vehicle for local decision-making” (Stoker and Mossberger 1994; Gurr and King 1987). However, Leo (1998) asserts that regional and national governments should not be seen just as “potential constraints on local autonomy”, but ought to be viewed as potential “sources of power that must be tapped by participants in local politics if they are to accept such difficult challenges as the establishment of regional growth management, [or] the provision of affordable housing” (388). He further argues that the case of regional growth management in Portland makes it clear that “local interests may be represented at any level of government and that, therefore, regimes may as readily be assembled from regionally or nationally based interests as local ones” (Leo 1998:389); a statement I will now investigate to identify the interests that supported the formation of Metro. .

Unifying the Metropolitan Service District

Metro was formed in the 1970’s, a time of policy innovation and openness to new ideas. This period was also marked with a high level of environmental concern. This was no different in Portland, and in fact was heightened as “people saw Portland dying” when urban problems like smog and suburban encroachment on nearby rural lands. A new sense of crisis inspired the popular perception that changes were needed at a regional level. Bragdon (2003) identifies several ways in which Portland was more inclined to form a regional government. First of all, the region was widely homogeneous in terms of

socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. Primarily a white, middle class area, these cultural similarities made it easier for the population to see itself as one. Second, he identifies the relative youth of political institutions in the region, as compared to what he calls the “entrenched political machines” of the east (Bragdon 2003). At the time, and still today, most people in Portland were fairly new to the region, thus held an important “flexibility or willingness to change” necessary in for implementing a new form of governance. Third, the formation of Metro had bipartisan support: Republicans wanted to protect the agricultural and timber industries, which relied upon their land being protected from urbanization; and Democrats wanted to preserve the beautiful landscapes and natural environment Oregon is known for (Bragdon 2003). Leo (1998) identifies how Portland’s Metro is special in the way that it united environmentalists, farmers, and developers alike in the pursuit of a new Regional government; though their interests were different, each saw that they would benefit in their own way from regional governance. Entrepreneurs were also in support, particularly those with locally dependent business interests (Abbott 1991). However, this powerful coalition caused advocates for low-income housing and property rights, who feared the financial consequences of a limited land supply, to be sidelined (Leo 1998).

As well as elite support, local governments also supported the formation of Metro for various reasons. Bragdon (2003) identifies one reason local governments were willing to give up some of their power is because they were already used to the State of Oregon having so much control over land use planning; thus part of the reason they were so willing to give up local autonomy is because they already had less than cities in other states. Leo (1998) supports this by emphasizing how “the state, Metro, and the city

become players in each others' decision making". Local governments also already had experience working together on transportation infrastructure, hence they understood their dependence on joint regional solutions to transit issues, and as a result Metro in some ways was an extension of what they already were doing (Bragdon 2003).

Another interesting reason stemmed from the dynamic between City of Portland and the suburbs. Many of the suburban jurisdictions joined because they feared that if they didn't, Metro would cater solely towards the City of Portland's interests. Bragdon (2003) notes that "the other 23 did not want to be dictated to", thus Metro was intended to be a neutral body that would help balance the Central City's dominance, and incorporate suburban interests. However, the City of Portland was also an advocate for metropolitan governance, as they saw much of the new growth going to outlying areas and recognized its own dependence on the other towns (Bragdon 2003). With that, Metro was formed in 1979, and since then to balance these varying interests, local governments have been involved with planning processes through bi-weekly policy advisory committees, that consists of city mayors, fire and transit districts, and the port authority. Leo (1998) considers this necessary by describing how a "complex wide-ranging program such as regional growth management requires wide-ranging coalitions" (389-390).

Purpose and Jurisdiction

Metro Council is the "first popularly elected regional government in an interjurisdictional metropolitan area in the United States" (Leonard 1983), composed of one Executive Officer, elected region wide, and six Councilors, elected by district. Elections are held every four years in nonpartisan races. Metro represents the entire metropolitan area consisting of three counties, Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas;

these trends. Through the Urban Growth Report (UGR), Metro makes land use and development decisions for the metropolitan area, and creates a regional framework plan that local governments must create their own comprehensive plans to implement. If city plans do not meet their requirements, Metro has the authority to force local governments to change their plans in a way that is consistent with the regional framework. Ancillary responsibilities of Metro, typically managed by the Council-appointed Chief Operating Officer, include transportation options like the Streetcar; 17,000 acres of parks trails and natural areas; management of all solid waste and recycling programs; and visitor venues such as the Oregon Zoo and Convention Center.

Regional Effect

Bragdon (2003) concludes his case study by considering the effects that Metro and the urban growth boundary (UGB) have had in the Portland region. He describes how attitudes towards the UGB and development patterns shifted over time, beginning in the early stages when people saw the UGB as “simply a way to contain the geographic extent of urban settlement” (Bragdon 2003). Thus for the first few decades of its existence, development trends did not change much, and urban sprawl continued to consume a great deal of land within the UGB. However, in the 1990’s a renewed sense of crisis emerged in response to population growth in the metropolitan region reaching over 1 million people, and Metro projection that within twenty years there would be an additional 500,000 newcomers, warning “if the per capita consumption of land continued to follow the patterns of the 1970’s and 80’s, the UGB itself would have to be extended by about 50%” infringing on the forests and farms that people were trying to protect (Bragdon 2003). This indicated that the UGB alone was not a sufficient tool, and that the region

needed to change the way it used land within it. Regional planning subsequently gained more support, as all jurisdictions recognized their responsibility to accommodate some of that growth, realizing that things happening in one jurisdiction affected all of the others, and if one jurisdiction refused to accommodate its share of the growth it would lead to the UGB having to expand for everyone (Bragdon 2003).

As a result, other measures and regulations that were developed to strengthen the UGB. The most impactful were those related to housing density, transit-oriented development, and Downtown Development (Leo 1998), which were created to promote compact development at all income levels in order to meet Oregon's Planning Goals. Portland's focus thus shifted towards one of growth management; while *growth controls* seek to limit growth, *growth management* seeks to “promote economic development by maximizing the attractiveness of the environment,” or managing growth in order to promote it (Leo 1998). This aptly describes Portland with its access to, and preservation of, the natural environment being one of its most attractive qualities. On the other hand, O'Toole (2007) cites growth management techniques as the primary source of escalated home prices, including the enforcement of UGB (also called a “greenbelts”) that restrict land supply; design codes that increase the cost of construction; lengthy and bureaucratic permitting processes; and inclusionary zoning requirements.

Multiple sources describe Portland's various growth management regulations, but have conflicting descriptions of the results. While O'Toole's (2007) chapter titled “Portland Planning Implodes” describes how neighborhoods and suburbs alike fought and lost the battle against zoning ordinances that required higher density development; Leo (1998) and Bragdon (2003) highlight the successes such as limiting land consumption

and increasing compact city livability. They all, however, note the subsequent increase in housing prices and property values. Bragdon (2003) describes this as neutral result: with higher density comes less land consumption, but with less land supply comes higher prices. All three (Bragdon 2003; Leo 1998; O'Toole 2007) also emphasize the difficulty posed by the State of Oregon policies. Bragdon (2003) describes this as, “the Oregon system is very legalistic and regulatory; focused on what we do not want to have happen,” which limits their ability to invest in what they *do* want to happen. One of these regulations has been an explicit ban on inclusionary zoning, which limited the ability of government to adequately incentivize the development of affordable housing units.

Lessons Learned

Bragdon (2003) concludes that, “you have to provide real incentives for local jurisdictions to be at the table...some reasons that citizens will benefit from a stronger regional government”. Leo (1998) echoes, “a coalition that gains a position of pre-eminence, by whatever means, also gains the means to compel others to go along...they must develop the capacity to place limits on the behavior of many people, finding ways of legitimizing governance...something visible that can only be done regionally and that can help you develop a sense of regional stewardship and regional citizenship.” Metro does this through their claims of “making a great place” and “charting a wise course for the future while protecting the things that we love about this place” (Metro 2015). Leo (1998) also recognizes, however, that Metro must “bridge larger ideological gaps” when implementing regional plans, which Bragdon (2003) also notes as a modern difficulty in maintaining support of regional governance due to a lack of partisan cooperation, and a decline in industrial employment. While there is certainly room to criticize aspects of

Portland's regional growth management system, Leo (1998) concludes, "even the severest critic could hardly deny that something noteworthy has been built" (391).

Conclusion

Synthesizing the literature presented, Portland's regional housing crisis brings into question the *growth machine* concept in relation to *regional governance and planning*. The growth machine approach provides a theoretical explanation for housing affordability crises, rooted in the pursuit and exchange of land by place entrepreneurs. However, growth coalition theories are largely based on the assumption that local governments retain control of their land-use and development, thus it is both theoretically and empirically important to examine how regional governance alters their form. Molotch (1993) discusses how growth machines vary in their form depending on local, state, and national political contexts; thus I keep in mind how the presence of Metro and the extent of its jurisdiction, coupled with a region-wide focus on sustainability and land conservation, which are typically threats to a growth coalition, alter the format of Portland's political economy of urban growth.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Overview

This investigation will qualitatively analyze data collected through 10 in-depth interviews with political members of Portland’s “growth coalition” (Molotch 1976) including elected officials and staff members from city, county, and regional government structures. Applying frameworks from *Urban Fortunes*, including city as a growth machine (Logan and Molotch 1987) as well as urban regime theory (Stone 1989), participants were identified as individuals who would theoretically be considered members of these groups. They were then formally interviewed using an interview guide (Appendix A) to assess their understanding of the problems arising from the region’s growth, and consider their approaches in responding to them. Finally, these data will be reviewed to the overarching research question: “*How do government officials in the Portland metropolitan area—with their differing jurisdictional capacities and stakes in the outcomes of growth—approach the regional housing crisis?*” and the more specific questions of:

- (1) How do government officials perceive their capacity to meaningfully address the housing crisis within their respective jurisdiction?
- (2) What are the perceived limitations to that capacity?
- (3) How does this vary by locality?

Data for this study were gathered to examine how issues surrounding growth management strategies and equity interact at the local government level. The primary source of data came from transcripts of in-depth interviews with elected officials and staff members from city, county, and regional governing bodies. Supplementary information was also collected through the analysis of newspapers and public documents

on this subject, including urban growth reports, strategic plans, and government websites to provide context for some of the issues discussed. Finally, participant observation methods were implemented by attending both academic and public events concerning population growth and housing in the Portland metropolitan area during the fall of 2015.

Interviews

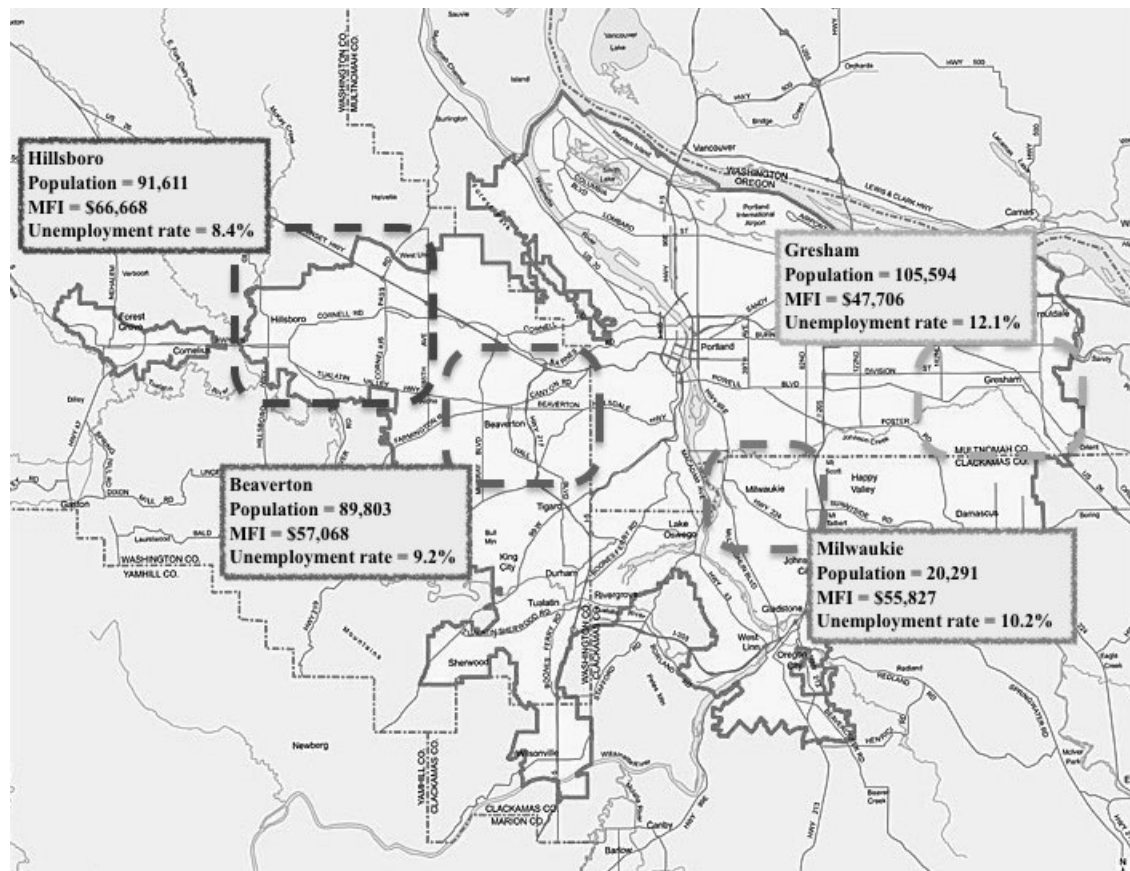
Primary data for this study comes from in-depth, qualitative interviews with local government officials and staff members in the Portland metropolitan area. These data were collected by a research team (Stepick, Deppa, Smith, and Rochester 2016 *forthcoming*) exploring the broad issue of spatial mismatch and transit development in the Portland metropolitan region. My participation in this collaborative research project allowed me the ability to use the transcripts acquired from the interviews as my thesis data.

The majority of participants were recruited by Shahriyar Smith, a member of the research team and a Portland native. Mr. Smith has spent much of his professional career working in state and local politics in Oregon and Portland, and had a previously established rapport with some members of local government in the region. He provided the necessary entree into this rather elite group, drawing upon his professional connections as well as acting as a liaison between the political and academic communities. Additional interviews were acquired through snowball sampling. Many of the participants enjoyed their interviews and felt that the research was significant, referring us to their colleagues and encouraging them to participate.

The final sample for this study consisted of ten interviews with elected officials and staff members from city and county government entities as well as the Metropolitan

Service District. Because this research is exploring the approaches taken by the local and regional governing bodies in regards to urban growth and the development of affordable housing, individuals who are—or in some cases are not—a part of that process serve as the most valid source of information on that topic. We sought to have interviews with officials from as many communities that have light-rail as possible to achieve a thorough sample of the histories in the Portland metropolitan area, and to gather the most representative data possible. The following map of the Metropolitan Service District depicts the urban growth boundary with a bold line around the region, and the suburbs from which I gathered interview data are highlighted, and include the cities' population, median family income, and unemployment rate:

Figure 4: Map of Suburbs Sampled from Portland Metropolitan Area



Source: Metro Data Resource Center (2006)

The final sample is described in the table below, and includes whether they are an elected official or staff member; their jurisdiction, which indicates their locality as well as their level of government; their educational attainment; and their relation to Logan and Molotch’s (1987) traditional growth machine. To determine this, I used publically available information from government webpages or from Google searching their name to find information about their professional background including area of study and present or former employment outside of their current government position. Considering the implications of these findings, and in greatest attempt to maintain participants’ confidentiality, labeled them either “Yes” and categorized their background in relation to a growth coalition; “Public” if they have primarily public sector or government experience; and “No” if they are completely unrelated, or if they are typically oppositions to the growth machine.

Table 1: Interview Sample and Participant Information

I #	Position	Jurisdiction	Education	Growth Machine?
1	Staff Member	Washington County	Graduate Degree	Public
2	Elected Official	City of Beaverton	Graduate Degree	Yes, Business
3	Elected Official	City of Hillsboro	Bachelor’s Degree	Yes, Finance
4	Elected Official	City of Hillsboro	Bachelor’s Degree	Yes, Business
5	Elected Official	City of Milwaukie	Graduate Degree	No, Environmental
6	Elected Official	Metropolitan Service District	Bachelor’s Degree	Public
7	Elected Official	Metropolitan Service District	Bachelor’s Degree	Public
8	Elected Official	City of Milwaukie	Associate's Degree	No, Unrelated
9	Staff Member	Multnomah County	Bachelor’s Degree	Yes, Legal Finance
10	Staff Member	City of Gresham	Bachelor’s Degree	Yes, Development

Role of Researcher

Shahriyar Smith conducted the first three interviews, and I administered those remaining. Mr. Smith served as the intermediary in acquiring these appointments, and possesses both the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) necessary to execute the highest quality interview. Warren and Karner (2015) emphasize the importance of “matching interviewers to respondents based on social characteristics” (149), and with his experience working with these types of individuals, Shahriyar was most apt to conduct the initial interviews. Once I had confirmed my use of these data for my thesis, I began performing interviews, but only after having observed and transcribed the first three to learn the most effective techniques for these particular meetings. Self-preparation was specifically important for the purpose of this study because of the elite nature of the interview participants.

Studying Up

Interviewing members of elite institutions can be referred to as “studying up”. Whereas many sociological inquiries focus on disadvantaged groups, studying up investigates matters within an elite community. The distinction of “elite” is attributed to individuals who are “so placed within the structure that by their decisions they modify the milieu of many other men” (Mill 1953:112). Thus, the sample of elected officials and staff members from local governing bodies in this study indicates studying up.

Studying up brings new methodological challenges with it. Desmond (2004) asserts that the asymmetrical power balance between the interviewer and interviewee is root of the majority of those challenges, including access to the elite, cooperation in the interview, and quality of information provided. These challenges are exacerbated at

times, becoming “more acute when the elite actors are struggling to build a particular discursive and material reality for their sector in the midst of social and political contestation” (Desmond 2004:262). In these times of political sensitivity, it is both more difficult to access interview participants, as well as obtain high quality and honest information.

Unequal power dynamics can impact an interview with an elite in several ways. How you present yourself helps the participant shape their impression of both you and the experience overall, thus both how you dress and what you say are critically important in shaping their perception (Warren and Karner 2015), and ultimately the trajectory of the interview. Unfortunately, this perception can also be shaped by things the researcher cannot change including embodied attributes such as gender, race, sexuality, and age (Warren and Karner 2015). Two women (Desmond 2004; McDowell 1998) have studied up on business elites—primarily white, middle-aged, senior ranking men—and found that acting as a “supplicant”, or in a subordinate role, yielded much more favorable results for them, perhaps because of their unthreatening demeanor.

Time and location are also critical elements to consider when performing interviews. The effects of time are important in not only scheduling interviews, but also temporal positioning in relation to major events or “politically sensitive contexts” (Desmond 2004:265). For example, proximity to an election might limit an incumbent’s time; or if the interview focuses on a hot-button current issue, it could be avoided for political reasons. Finally, the location of the interview is often reflective of “attitudes, tactics, and negotiations of the interviewees within the parallel power structures of research” (Herzog 2005:28-29). This means that where the interviewee chooses for the

location can be an attempt to “reinforce or attempt to equalize power relationships” (Warren and Karner 2015:138). All of these challenges were prepared for and experienced in one way or another in these data collection process.

In order to be respected and taken seriously in these interviews, I outfitted in formal attire and maintained a calm, professional demeanor. Though I attempted to present myself somewhat similarly to the participants, when interviewing elites the relationship is “inevitably asymmetrical regardless of the research strategies deployed” (Desmond 2004:265). On the whole I seemed to be received well by most participants, though there were a few instances in which I felt slightly belittled by my age and/or gender. In those instances, Shahriyar appeared to be taken more seriously, though there is no way to distinguish if that is due to age, gender, or personality traits.

Time also proved to be of particular significance in this study. As a consequence of the raging publicity surrounding population growth, displacement and gentrification, and the lack of affordable housing units, the temporal positioning of this study has made it both easier and more difficult to access members of Portland’s growth coalition, varying by municipality and local contexts. That has also contributed to the content of the interviews. The topic is at the forefront of local issues, and has received attention from both the media and community activists, thus government officials are expected to be knowledgeable about the decisions they’re charged with making.

Finally, the interviews all took place in either an office or coffee stop. Those that took place in the office of the interviewee tended to be more formal, and reinforced the power relationship. The formality and privacy of the environment also fostered more in-depth, and focused conversations, with more specific names, places, and issues

mentioned. Three interviews took place in a coffee shop, and had a very different feel. The setting was more informal, as was their attire, thus the interview felt a little more relaxed. These three were also the youngest participants. Despite the ease of the interviews, they were much more general than those that took place in the office. Perhaps it was the noise level, the distracting environment, or lack of privacy, but conversations were much shorter and contained much less depth. I conclude that interviews that took place in the office were more effective due to their concentrated nature.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was implemented on a few occasions when I attended events related to urban growth and the housing crisis. These were all large events with representatives from the private and public sectors, academia, and the community at large.

Table 2: Participant Observation Events

Event & Date	Host	Purpose
Regional Housing Forum <i>October, 2015</i>	Portland State University; Planning Oregon	Open dialogue for intersector collaboration to address regional housing crisis
The Big Idea: Rent Crisis in Portland <i>December, 2015</i>	The Oregonian	Panel of housing-related professionals to answer community questions about housing crisis
Legislative Housing Emergency Forum <i>January, 2015</i>	Central Alliance of Tenants	Bringing in State Legislators to listen to panels of community members to share experiences of regional housing crisis

At the events I took detailed field notes to include main talking points, descriptive quotes, and other general observations. Attending and participating in these events helped me to both learn more about the issues on the ground level, as well as the opportunity to

network and hear more about how other stakeholders interpret these issues. I used these events as a supplementary data source, drawing upon field notes and audio recordings to support or contextualize interview data.

Regional Housing Forum

The first event was October 2nd, 2015. Portland State University hosted a Regional Housing Forum in which “brought together a diverse coalition of stakeholders from government, the business and development sectors, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and neighborhood groups from across the Portland region...to collaboratively and collectively discuss their disparate perspectives on the current state of housing and development in the Portland region” (Planning Oregon 2015:1). This was an exclusive, invitation-only event that Mr. Smith connected me to. Running from 7:00am-2:00pm, the forum was filled with fruitful conversation, engaging speakers, and collaborative brainstorming activities.

This event brought together government officials, private sector developers, neighborhood associations, tenant advocacy groups, affordable housing advocates, and researchers to have meaningful discussions about the housing crisis. The goal of the event was to foster an environment that would bring together individuals who have different abilities to address this problem to meet each other, learn together, and have meaningful discussions about their relation to housing development.

In breakout sessions that were specifically organized to bring together members of all different sectors, individuals identified what resources they had access to, what they felt like they needed more information on, and where they felt their ability to address the housing crisis was limited. Of course, where one person felt their influence was limited,

another filled that perceived gap. At the end of this exercise we were all able to see where we had the power to impact the process, and which parties ought to combine resources to augment that power. I learned that while developers don't feel like building affordable housing units is sufficiently profitable for them, government officials felt they lacked the resources necessary to adequately incentivize such development. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that there's not just insufficient affordable housing, there's not enough market rate housing either.

The Regional Housing Forum is exemplary of the types of educational and collaborative events that confronting such large, multi-faceted issues requires. Open lines of communication cultivate an environment of cooperation, and give stakeholders across diverse sectors the ability to share their perceptions, resources, and tools in a way that allows for the creation of an all-encompassing solution to large problems such as Portland's regional housing crisis. By holding collaborative meetings, the different stakeholders can work together to combine tools and resources to meaningfully address these issues.

The Big Idea: Rent Crisis in Portland

Second was an event hosted by The Oregonian called "Big Idea: Rent Crisis in Portland". This event was a panel of professionals from the Portland area who were experts on the topic of housing development. The panel consisted of two government officials, two developers, and one member of 1,000 Friends of Oregon, and tackles questions of why are rent and home ownership costs are rising, and what policy solutions and their drawbacks are. This event also encouraged attendees to participate in the conversation by tweeting questions beforehand, as well as providing question cards for

the audience to pass forward to the moderator. While the crowd became heated at times, the expert panel provided thoughtful insight and approached the topic from any important angles. I audio recorded and transcribed this event, as well as took some ethnographic notes to provide context for myself while transcribing.

Legislative Housing Emergency Forum

The third and final event I attended for participant observation was the “Legislative Housing Emergency Forum”. This event was co-hosted by two Oregon State Representatives, Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyner and Rep/ Rob Nosse, and Portland’s Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), a statewide housing advocacy group that “educates, organizes and develops the leadership of low-income tenants” (CAT 2016). This event had several panels of community members who shared their stories and experiences confronting the regional housing crisis with Portland metropolitan area legislators. Three senators and nine representatives from the State of Oregon listened to tragic stories that residents suffered through as a result of rent increases, homelessness, and displacement; and heard from local champions of the cause who proposed policy solutions such as inclusionary zoning, rent control, and restrictions on no-cause evictions. At this event, I sat near the back, took ethnographic field notes, and recorded audio of Speaker Tina Kotek’s address at the end.

Table 3: Participant Observation Sample

Name	Profession	Growth Machine?
<i>Big Idea: Rent Crisis in Portland</i>		
Sam Chase	Elected Official, Metropolitan Service District	Public
Dike Dame	President, Williams & Dame Development	Yes, Development
Mary Kyle	Policy Director & Staff Attorney, 1000 Friends of Oregon	Anti, Environmental

McCurdy		
Dan Saltzman	Elected Official, City of Portland Commissioner	Public
Justin Wood	VP of Fish Construction, Home Builders Association	Yes, Real Estate/Development
<i>Legislative Housing Emergency Forum</i>		
Tina Kotek	Speaker, Oregon House of Representatives	Public
<i>Regional Housing Forum</i>		
Don Mazziotti	Principal, Development Equities & Advisories LLC. <i>(Formerly Portland's Chief Planner)</i>	Yes, Real Estate/Development
Kate Allen	Kate Allen Community Development Services	No, Non-profit
Anyeley Hallova	Development Consultant, project^	Yes, Development
Luke Hammill	Journalist, The Oregonian	Yes, Newspaper

Data Analysis

The data for this investigation were analyzed qualitatively to identify emerging themes, and further broken down to distinguish the pertinence of those themes by location and by position of the participants in the government hierarchy.

Coding Scheme

Qualitative data analysis is often a lengthy process that begins with reading and rereading data many times over. During the first few times reviewing the collected data, the researcher begins to notice similarities between the transcripts and identify emerging themes. These insights are what initiate the process of coding, or the “transformation of observations into categories and classifications” (Scott and Marshall 2009). Qualitative coding both categorizes information by linking it to a short name, or its “code”, and summarizes the topic of these data segment (Charmaz 2006). By coding qualitative data,

the researcher is able to organize data in a way that makes analysis much easier. It also enables the researcher to connect themes within these data to each other and to previous research, as well as make broader theoretical assertions.

As interviews were conducted and transcribed I began a process of open coding. Interview transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, a web-based qualitative data analysis software that allowed me to create codes and add notes, or “memos”. Because this project began as an investigation of where several broad subjects intersect with no previously established direction in mind, I chose to begin with open coding. Open coding refers to “the initial steps in identifying analytic patterns and themes” (Warren and Karner 2015:212) when the researcher adds a code to all data segments that are relevant to one of those themes. This was the most appropriate starting point to highlight emerging themes and decide the most logical path for the research to continue upon.

When I began the process of coding on Dedoose I used a series of “parent” codes and “child” codes. Parent codes reflect more broad themes, and child codes represent more specific topics within the broader themes. During the initial coding process, I was coding for any and all themes related to the collaborative project “Spatial Mismatch and Transit Development in the Portland Metropolitan Area” (Stepick, Deppa, Smith, Rochester 2016 forthcoming), and from that came 7 parent codes and 27 child codes. This is far too many, but allowed me to notice and give attention to the depth and richness of these data. Warren and Karner (2015) emphasize, “It is important to be ‘open’ so that you do not miss something important by precluding it from your attention too early in the process” (212).

After deciding to use these data for my thesis, I created a new project on Dedoose to create a more focused coding scheme and hone in on what I really wanted to get at. The parent codes I chose were targeted at answering the questions posed by the title, as well as relevant and related topics, and came up with 6 parent codes and X child codes. First, to understand how the cities accommodate urban growth, I coded for every time a participant mentioned “Growth Management Strategies”. Second, I coded for the most prominent consequence and pressing issue, “Displacement/Gentrification”. Third, I coded for “Transit” which is seen as both a way to accommodate urban growth, as well as a partial source of gentrification (McKenzie 2013). Fourth, I coded for “Affordable Housing”, which is seen as a potential solution to the displacement problem, yet its supply is dwindling in Portland. Fifth, I coded for what many of the participants indicated as a barrier to finding real solutions, the disconnect between the “Levels of Government”. Finally, the sixth parent code was “Actors” that impact the decision-making process, and its 5 child codes— Elected Officials, Staff Members, Community Members, NIMBYs, and the Private Sector. These refined codes highlight the main themes reflected in both the previous literature as well as the interview transcript data, and were used to organize Chapter IV in a way that describes the broader findings such as government understandings of the causes and effects of the regional housing crisis.

As research evolved, and more nuanced themes emerged from qualitative data analysis, I updated my coding scheme to reflect them. The results from this even narrower focus gave way to the latter half of Chapter IV, describing the perceived limitations on government officials’ capacity to meaningfully address the housing crisis and develop affordable housing units, as well as Chapter V, which identifies the

variations in government experiences and perceptions of the problem within their jurisdiction.

Advantages and Limitations

I contend that the advantages and limitations of this study are not mutually exclusive. For example, one of the most significant factors is that the regional housing crisis is a hot-button issue in the metropolitan area. Because of this, all participants were very aware of and informed on the topic, which was an advantage, however one limitation is that participants may have been saying “the right things” to appease our concern. Another double edged sword created by the heightened political and media attention awarded to the housing crisis, is both the potential increase, and equally possible decrease, in elected officials’ willingness to meet with us because of the spotlight that has been focused on them; it is often a toss up in heated political situations such as this if they will make themselves more visible to thwart accusations, or if they will hide from the public eye. Finally one advantage, despite the potential disingenuousness, many candidates were very candid and provided complex, in-depth responses to our interview questions. A final limitation exists in my limited sample size of ten interviews, thus making my analysis non-generalizable and unrepresentative of a wider population.

Conclusion

This thesis implements qualitative research and data analysis methods. Drawing upon data from ten in-depth, confidential interviews with elected officials and staff members from the city, county, and regional levels of government, I investigate their perceptions of the regional housing crisis and what they see as limits to their

jurisdictional capacity. I also attended three events specifically related to the Portland area's housing emergency, at which I was able to observe government officials' responses to housing concerns in a public environment. Through a series of open coding, and refined coding schemes, I synthesized emerging themes to analyze participants' understandings of the regional housing crisis, and grapple with the complications they face in developing affordable housing units and accommodating urban growth in general.

CHAPTER IV: PERCEPTIONS OF REGIONAL HOUSING CRISIS AND CAPACITY TO ADDRESS IT

Overview

This chapter will address my two of my research questions: (1) *How do government officials understand the regional housing crisis?* (2) *How do government officials perceive their jurisdictional capacity to meaningfully address the regional housing crisis?* In the following pages I will demonstrate how government officials understand the regional housing crisis by referencing excerpts from transcript data to describe the early causes of the regional housing crisis, and what factors continue to contribute to this intensifying problem.

I will then illustrate how suburban government officials expressed a mismatch between what they are expected to accomplish—both from higher levels of government and their constituents—and their perceived capacity to do so. This mismatch stems from several technical barriers, and as well as inequality in public involvement processes. The technical barriers including a disconnect between the multiple levels of government involved in the planning process, with overlapping jurisdictions and varying stakes and interests in the outcomes of growth; a lack of tools, typically referring to policies or a means to enforce them; and insufficient resources—most notably land and money—to develop affordable housing units. This often leads government officials to be dependent on private sector developers' cooperation to negotiate the inclusion of subsidized housing units in real estate development projects, which can be particularly difficult for suburban governments.

Finally, participants lamented the unequal distribution of power in land use and development politics amongst varying constituent interests. Representation of community interests is largely dependent on the ability of their proponents to organize and mobilize on behalf of them. Consequently while affluent neighborhoods and environmental groups have the time for—and knowledge of—public involvement processes necessary to make their voices heard, low-income and communities of color—who are most significantly impacted by the regional housing crisis—go unheard and are marginalized both politically and geographically. Thus for suburban government officials, the choice to either stand up in defense of their plans against LULU backlash and provide public support to housing initiatives, or bend to the widely vocalized demands of the wealthy who oppose low-income housing developments near their neighborhood. I find that many of the themes highlighted in this chapter hold theoretical importance in assessing Portland’s political economy of urban growth.

Understandings of Regional Housing Crisis: Cause & Effect

Across the board, government officials understand the regional housing crisis is a very real and very pressing problem. They have seen the Portland metropolitan area undergo many changes in the last five, ten, and for some participants, almost thirty years; first in infrastructure and later in demographics. At every level of government, representing every city and suburb sampled, participants lament the rate at which property values are skyrocketing, and at which their original residents are being displaced from their homes and pushed towards the marginalized outer limits of the region. This section illustrates how government officials define the regional housing crisis (RHC), including the early stages of planning that created the conditions for the RHC to erupt,

and the factors that sustain the RHC into present day. Participants overwhelmingly indicate a lack government of foresight in transportation, housing, and land-use planning coupled by a surge of population growth too large and too rapid to adequately accommodate, as the primary sources of decreasing housing affordability in the region.

Early Stages

Taking into account that the regional housing crisis (RHC) has developed over a period of almost thirty years, can be rendered as a problem created by forces of supply and demand within the free-market economy, and exacerbated by the failure of multiple levels of government in the Portland area to anticipate the consequences of resultant gentrification and displacement befalling its original residents. To appraise whether or not government officials share this understanding, in-depth interviews began by introducing our research interest in “how issues of sustainability and development interact at the local government level,” and asking participants to consider this question: “Recent research has also focused...on how light rail and other transit-oriented developments can affect property values and potentially displace low-income residents to locations that are farther away. When decisions get made about transit or housing development, do they take these effects into account?”

The most all-encompassing answer to this introductory question came from a Metro Councilor whose honest response was, “I think the right answer is increasingly so; not so much in the past, but more so today” (Interview 6). This indicates a growing awareness among government officials of the degree to which problems created by the housing deficit and bull market are evolving, especially as it is related to ‘smart-growth’ efforts, which was rearticulated by another Metro Councilor:

So it's always an issue: equity, affordable housing, making transit work for the people who can't afford to live in high end housing, or can't afford to drive a long distance to and from work is always one of the issues, it's become more of an issue in recent years as we've learned more about it. I think, you know, one of the things about having a history of [transit-oriented development] is that we're learning. We're learning just a ton, and one of the things that the communities are learning is 'Oh, the property values go up!' (Interview 7)

However, these responses also confirm the previous lack of foresight by government officials to adequately consider the impact that public investment in urban renewal processes and transportation infrastructure would have on housing affordability trends. Some attribute this to the turnover of government planning officials that occurs before long-term plans are carried out, as indicated by an elected official from Milwaukie:

It's really hard to say because those processes take so long and the people who are involved at the beginning, when they should be thinking about those questions, are no longer there by the time the development occurs. (Interview 8)

Participants now see transit development and housing affordability trends as inextricably linked, and often use heavily gentrified neighborhoods in the City of Portland as an example of the kind of poor planning practices that created these problems:

When N. Williams [Street development] started in North Interstate [urban renewal area], the developers were not interested unless there was light-rail, because all that was up there was affordable stuff, Section 8. It was really a challenge to try and envision a community up there that would be market rate, that would be more upscale—and we may have gone too far; we know we've sure gentrified some of those areas where we really just wanted to bring a balance. But these are long term plans, these are not five-year plans, or even ten-year plans. (Interview 7)

The above excerpt importantly illustrates a summary of the aforementioned factors that government officials identified as the early stages of the RHC, as well as alludes to several themes I will address in subsequent analyses. First, the participant addresses the

lack of foresight in government planning by acknowledging that their efforts to revive North Williams Street and bring balance to the area—previously a predominantly low-income community of color—“went too far” as ensuing gentrification displaced almost the entire population of original residents, and transformed the once culturally unique neighborhood into an upscale district. Second, it connects the link between transit development and housing affordability by indicating that developers only wanted to put money into the community if there was access to light-rail; as proximity to transportation infrastructure increases property values and in turn the profitability of their real estate investment. It also makes a third point, which I will address later in this section: that developers operate on the exchange value of land, and have little interest in supporting the use values of affordable housing projects that yield low financial returns on their investment. Thus, they often require—or demand—publicly funded incentives, such as the light-rail development in this excerpt, to negotiate the construction of affordable housing units. Lastly, it indicates how long-term plans such as these often are accompanied by consequences unforeseen by the government agencies that initially drew them up.

Finally, government officials frequently identified the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) as an early cause of the regional housing crisis; especially the small amount it has been expanded since it was first drawn in 1979 in relation to the amount of population growth the region in the last four decades. When concluding the interview, participants were asked if they had anything else to add, and an elected official from Hillsboro adamantly urged us:

What I would encourage you to do is get engaged in the Urban Growth Management Report process...and if you're going to be interviewing anyone from Metro soon, that will be the focus...of all of this conversation about what drives affordable housing, because it is their decision making that drives whether or not affordable housing is affordable. (Interview 3)

This excerpt reinforces Bradgon's (2003) point that the UGB decreases the supply of land, thus with the increased demand for residential units from people moving in, property values skyrocket and land becomes increasingly more expensive to develop. This dynamic is one of the simplest explanations for what initiated the early stages of the housing crisis; highlighting its regional nature by calling out the UGB that dictates land-use within 25 individual cities, and also attesting to its impact on both market-rate housing affordability and that of affordable housing.

Continuing Causes and Effects of the Regional Housing Crisis

These themes have not only continued into the present day, but in many cases have gotten much worse as the population has continued to grow at a remarkable pace. One elected official lamented, "when you look at where we're at right now, and extrapolate that out towards the future, it's not a pretty picture" (Interview 4). Gentrification and displacement continue at an astounding rate, and homelessness is visible region-wide. However, there are also many thriving neighborhoods that—either due to publically funded urban renewal projects, or proximity to transit and employment opportunities—are rapidly developing new housing units and cultural and commercial amenities. A Metro Councilor reflects on these contrasting results:

Yeah, it's tough. We're building great neighborhoods and people want to live in them and they're moving here from all over... When you're trying

to build the “greatest place” you’re doing to have the “greatest displacement.” (Interview 7)

This statement highlights how government efforts to revitalize the city and accommodate the burgeoning population, referencing Metro’s commitment to “making our region a great place,” have created the conditions for the significant changes in the Portland region’s urban environment.

However, these changes are not immediate, usually happening over time for a variety of reasons. In Portland, many of the areas that have been most gentrified were traditionally home to African-American neighborhoods; but through decades of urban renewal and transit-oriented development, they went from places suffering from “a history of community disinvestment” (Gibson 2007) and economic stagnancy, to newly redeveloped areas with improved streets, parks, infrastructure, and amenities that attracted many of the region’s newcomers. A Metro Councilor in the following explanation aptly describes this process:

So there’s a combination of factors...increasing prosperity that draws young people who are not blinded by a set of prejudices and fears that some of their elders were, to reintegrate a neighborhood with all the right motivations: “I want to raise my family in a convenient location. You know I don’t have a problem living in this community with other folks that don’t look like me.” And this had the inadvertent effect of pushing low-income households out of a neighborhood, and we haven’t had tools to deal with that, right? So we still haven’t developed the tools, but there is an increasing awareness that you can’t go into a neighborhood and talk about how prosperity raises all boats. It actually sinks some people and forces them out of a convenient location into an inconvenient location. (Interview 6)

This excerpt highlights how many of the newcomers and their accompanying wealth have continued to change the demographics in many areas of Portland by displacing original residents farther from the socioeconomic hubs of the region. This process pushes them

away from the places that used to provide their social networks and livelihoods, and limits their access to the new opportunities, services, and amenities that take their place. This is transforming the nature of neighborhoods, and destroying the culture that once made them what they were.

These changes are not only troubling to affected community members and government officials anymore; even the private sector is becoming increasingly worried about the implications these trends may have on their profitability. Portland's distinct culture is much of what makes their developments attractive to people moving into the region. As described by a member of the Multnomah County Commission staff:

Some people in the business community are sort of leading with their heart and they're saying, "I can't believe what's happening, I've got to do everything I can to raise minimum wage and make sure that affordability is possible and blah blah blah," and as you move to the other side of the spectrum, you're seeing people who are really, very critically looking at the long term...prospects of...becoming less affordable and more unequal; and the potential for undermining Portland's sort of, postcard mystique."
(Interview 9)

Here, several important points are made. First, the respondent discusses how the business community sees the regional housing crisis as a stain on Portland's reputation, something that for many of them—particularly those in real estate and development—could hurt their business, which maximizes on its "postcard mystique." This sees Portland's unique culture and its national image as a hip and progressive city as a marketable good, which is being threatened by the pervasive commercialization of previously quaint neighborhoods. Second, it highlights their proposed action to "make sure that affordability is possible" is raising the minimum wage. While an important part of a partial solution, this holds true to growth machine ideologies in that increasing incomes

also increases spending power, and the potential for money to reenter the market. Finally, it presents a “spectrum” as far as people who are looking for short-term solutions to affordability (such as raising the minimum wage), and those who are more concerned about the “long term” as Portland becomes “less affordable and more unequal.”

This inequality is represented by Portland’s residential stock. One Metro Councilor comprehensively describes the variations of housing in terms affordability:

People in the housing community talk about intentional and purposeful affordability: it’s owned by a land trust, a community development corporation; or is it a minimum subject to a 10-year agreement to fix the cost of those units because of a property tax break? That’s intentional affordability, you’re getting [the housing units], you’re getting an income test for residents so that to qualify for that unit you have to be below 80%, 60%, or whatever the other target is of median income. And then accidental affordability...[with] mold and mildew that you smell when you go into an apartment, and you know you shouldn’t be housing your family in here... The less well-maintained and less convenient locations, that are poorly constructed or poorly ventilated or poorly heated, that have a very low rent because that’s all [the landlord] can get for that apartment. And so people are forced to take those apartments if they’re priced out of the rest of the housing stock. That distinction between affordability by design and with public policy backing it, and affordable only because that’s all you can get. (Interview 6)

This importantly exemplifies how Portland’s Regional Housing Crisis is an issue of both housing affordability and affordable housing. There is not only a deficit of affordable housing units, but the units on the market that are “affordable” to low-income families often have poor infrastructure and are unsafe to the health of their occupants. However, landlords will avoid the cost of maintenance as long as they can still make a profit, and desperate renters will accept these conditions to avoid having rent raised or being evicted for renovations. This demonstrates the power of the growth coalition in their pursuit of exchange values of place, over the renters who struggle to use their residential place to

satisfy their needs and gain access to other places of value. In Portland, housing prices and rents (exchange values) are often based on the quality of the unit and its proximity to transit, good schools, jobs, and other services and opportunities (use value).

The best example of a successful project that included both affordable housing units and transit-oriented development was in the City of Portland's "Pearl District," a project that used tax-incremented financing (TIF) to subsidize construction.

Portland was able to leverage the phenomenal growth of the Pearl, and the phenomenal uptick in taxes in the Pearl, into building some significant low-income housing. Because they could take that tax increment and put it into low-income housing. Which was really pretty successful, but still, there are people moving out of Portland in droves because they can't afford to live there. So they are—even with that they can't build it fast enough, because the prices everywhere are rising so fast. (Interview 8)

This brings up an important theme that was present in many interviews, which is the concept of "quote unquote affordable housing." A common phrase among housing advocates in the area is that "affordable housing isn't that affordable," which was also articulated in the excerpt from Interview 3 above attributing this to the UGB. Though the thriving Pearl District was initially redeveloped to provide a large supply of affordable housing units, it is now one of the most expensive hotspots in downtown Portland with luxury apartments, fancy restaurants and wine bars drawing the region's elites to its trendiness and upscale cultural and commercial attractions.

To conclude, the final—and to some most obvious—ongoing catalysts to the regional housing crisis are the simple forces of supply and demand. This was heavily discussed at *The Oregonian's* "Big Idea: Rent Crisis" event. City of Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman answered the first question posed to the panel, and when prompted, summarized the multi-faceted causes of the regional housing crisis:

First and foremost is Portland has become a charmed city. It's a place where people want to be now, and that's resulting in a lot of upward pressures on rents or homeownership prices. The statistics are pretty daunting as far as rent increases and things like that and truly it's a couple things: we have a very high proportion of renters in our populations, upwards of 48-50 percent of people in Portland do rent. And people are moving here, and they're highly educated or they're coming from cities where they were able to sell their home...and be relatively cash-rich.

As for the daunting statistics, one participant, the Associate Director of Government and Builder relations for the Home Builders' Association, Justin Wood, provided them shortly after:

In 2011 there were 518 rental units built in the City of Portland, in 2014 there were 4,413, yet in 2014 there were 30,000 jobs added to the city of Portland. Commissioner Saltzman briefly touched on it, we're just not building enough to keep up with the amount of demand that's building across all incomes—from affordable to all levels—we're just not building enough housing units to keep up with the demand of people moving here.

Metro Councilor Sam Chase chimed in to add a regional point of view:

People are moving here because of this incredible quality of life that we have, and I know you're going to get at the Urban Growth Boundary, here's what I would say about that is: we have created, in part with UGB and a lot of the work we're doing with compact cities, this incredible environment to live in, this great quality of life that we have...People want that, and that is creating a lot of interest for people wanting to live in this city.

These three quotes expertly summarize and provide a broader understanding of some of the most significant forces influencing Portland's supply of, and demand for, housing. First, it identifies the sources of the increased demand as both the influx of people moving here for employment opportunities, as well as its reputation as "charmed" with an "incredible quality of life." Second, statistics were presented to contextualize the extent of the problem; both its geographical reach impacting housing affordability region-wide, as well as the deficit of not only affordable housing units, but units "across all incomes."

Finally, it addresses the contested question of how the urban growth boundary—by limiting the supply of land available to be developed for housing and encouraging compact cities—might subsequently raise densities, property values, and as panelist Kate Allen added “cost of infrastructure development” such as sewage and water pipes. All of these factors have interact and reinforce one another to create a housing crisis in the Portland metropolitan area that has government officials scrambling to find solutions, and communities scrambling to make ends meet.

Perceived Limitations in Government Capacity to Address RHC

While articulating an adamant desire to accommodate the housing needs of their constituency and support public efforts to develop affordable units, local government officials see their ability to do so as “very limited,” expressing a mismatch in what they are expected to accomplish—by both the State and their constituents—and their perceived capacity to do so. Many participants indicated a multi-level disconnect between the state, regional, and local government agencies, resulting in a lack of tools and resources to effectively implement policies and meet planning goals. Suburban participants in particular expressed frustration toward the Portland area’s regional approach to land-use planning—in which Metro wields the most power and limits autonomous decision-making of local governments—bringing to life former Council President Bragdon’s (2003) reservation that political fragmentation within the region would weaken support of Metro’s jurisdictional purpose. Furthermore, all participants identified an additional challenge arising from the distribution of influential power the decision-making processes surrounding the provision of public investments to incentivize the development of affordable and transportation infrastructure. These findings were

particularly strong among elected officials who are held publicly accountable for their choices. The following sections will address these perceived limits to government officials' varying jurisdictional capacities to meaningfully address the Regional Housing Crisis.

Technical Barriers

Government officials indicated several technical barriers that limit their perceived capacity to take action in addressing the RHC, and fulfilling planning goals placed upon them from higher levels of government. First, participants asserted that the multiple levels of government that dictate land-use plans minimize the jurisdictional autonomy of suburbs to make development decisions that fit their local needs. Second, Oregon's systematic, top-down approach to governing creates policies that are intended to conserve natural lands and encourage smart-growth in urbanization; however, participants noted that the State of Oregon and Metro often do not provide the tools that are necessary for local governments to enforce them. Finally, without these tools, local governments officials are dependent upon the limited resources— both land and money—available to them through the public tax base and occasional grant money, often leaving them dependent on developers and private sector investment.

Disconnect Between Levels of Government

From the beginning of this investigation, a prominent, recurring theme among suburban participants was a feeling of disconnectedness between the multiple levels of government that are involved in land-use planning and making development decisions. In response, we asked a Metro Councilor about the “capacity of municipalities in the metro

area to deal with things” and how “this complicates solutions at the statewide level to deal with the issues we face,” to which they responded, “Yeah, well I think in this region because we have Metro—Metro really does fill in a lot for the local government capacity” (Interview 7). This calls attention to the limitations placed on local autonomy, and the implications they have for suburban government officials’ ability to influence local development in a way that meets the needs and values of their constituents. One participant provided a telling example of this dynamic:

We’re dealing with this right now...with the jobs question because there are those that will happen without the government doing anything, but quite frankly, that’s not happening. The situation we’re in is that Metro and the state government said, “On this plot of land...you have to put a company that is going to consume 100 acres. You’re not allowed to divide it or subdivide it.” And to attract a company that large means that you’re really reaching across the entire world to make that happen. So again if you decide first that growth, and having an economy and jobs where people want to live here, is a good thing, then you have to decide what are you willing to invest in to make that happen. (Interview 4)

This excerpt brings to question how top-down development decisions impose a great deal of pressure upon suburban government officials to implement plans that may or may not align with the vision that city has for itself, and require them to allocate more time and resources into some projects that they would otherwise choose to invest. In this case, plans were dictated from both the state and regional levels instructing local government officials to find a single company to invest in the development of a 100-acre plot of land for industrial use, and prohibited the City of Hillsboro to divide the lot in order to attract more than one company, or rezone it for other land uses, such as housing.

For an elected official from Hillsboro, this regional vs. local decision-making dynamic was the first thing addressed in the interview. Beginning our conversation with a

comprehensive narrative about how the region's growth management approach to land-use planning and development exacerbates many of the consequences of urbanization processes, this chronicle explores several important themes among local government officials in their frustrations this system and its implications for cities:

Well...we can talk about the local decisions and local policy as it pertains to transit-oriented development, affordable housing, all of those kinds of things, but really that is driven much more at a regional level... Because you know Metro obviously establishes the...Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), and that's what we're arguing with at this point in time with them. They developed this Urban Growth Report (UGR), and supposedly in it they define population increase projections and where all that's going to go based on housing and those kinds of things. And that decision will drive local policy more than anything. (Interview 3)

This echoes a previous point that the UGB is both what makes the housing crisis regional, and is a large determining factor in the affordability property values. It also describes how the UGR identifies future housing development sites based on where Metro projects the population will be, and how much of the population increase can be accommodated by each locality. Contextualizing why this is a problem, the respondent continued:

So let me give you an example... I don't know if you know anything about the UGR, but the UGR that they're getting ready to adopt not one mayor in the region agrees with except the City of Portland mayor. And the reason why is because they're saying that the City of Portland is where all of the population is going to go because the City of Portland has the ability to accommodate...several hundred thousand more people by building high-rises. Now in that high rise they can incorporate affordable housing, but it's really not affordable because the prices are going to escalate with demand. (Interview 3)

First, this excerpt alludes to the UGR privileging the City of Portland's vision of a high-rise core, causing a tension between the suburbs and Metro over what development ought to look like. This participant later described how Metro looks for any location within the UGB that can accommodate significant populations, as Portland doesn't want to "give

any more land to the ‘burbs’; but that this regional ideal of high-density development doesn’t align with suburban communities’ values as “not everybody wants an apartment on the 34th floor” (Interview 3). With the city of Portland represented by four of six Metro Councilors, this elected official’s accusation of Central City favoritism is not unfounded. Second, it rearticulates how accommodating incoming populations by increasing density and building high-rises in turn decreases affordability overall as even affordable units become increasingly expensive with elevated demand. They continued by discussing the truly regional nature of this housing crisis and its suburbanizing effects:

So what’s that going to do if the people can’t live there but they work there? It drives them out into the suburbs causing them to have to live on mass transit routes or drive...my argument with them right now is that [by implementing this UGR] they’re violating their own perspective of “creating a great place”... all about reducing green house gases and livable communities and all that stuff... (Interview 3)

People who are “priced out” of downtown are often displaced to the suburbs, but while their residential location might change, many times their place of employment does not. Taking a broader regional look, this participant illustrates the bigger picture painted when these two trends build upon each other by describing how, while Metro seeks to promote sustainability through creating “livable communities” and “reducing greenhouse gases,” displacement creates a spatial mismatch between where people live and where their jobs are, which subsequently increases auto and transit dependency among many residents of the Portland region. Thus, with the majority of residents commuting by private vehicle (O’Toole 2007), the consequences of displacement that stem from strict growth-management policies contradict Metro’s sustainability mission by increasing pollution through fuel emissions. Concluding the opening statement, “So—sorry, I feel like I started at like 200 thousand feet up there,” referencing the multitude of complex issues

brought up within a few short minutes, this elected official from Hillsboro summarizes that, “regional policy drives what it is you are trying to evaluate as much as anything” (Interview 3).

Not only did local governments point to Metro’s jurisdiction as a hindrance to effective decision-making, also the State of Oregon’s restrictive land use and development policies.. One of the most controversial legislative debates regarding the regional housing crisis has been the statewide ban on inclusionary zoning, which made it illegal for cities to mandate the subsidization of affordable units:

I think we’re the only state in the United States that does not allow, that *absolutely prohibits inclusionary zoning*⁴. And that’s just ludicrous, that this state should have that role. Is that something that we’re proud of? No!
(Interview 7)

Many people see inclusionary zoning as an effective method of providing public housing by requiring all new developments to have a certain percent of units be affordable to low to moderate income families based off of their incomes’ percent of MFI⁵. Some critique this method claiming it contradicts its purpose and that requiring builders and landlords to subsidize affordable units in their development raises the costs they incur, ergo raising the prices of all remaining housing units (O’Toole 2007).

Lack of Tools

The multiple levels of government involved in land-use planning in the Portland metropolitan region convolute the process, and force local governments to implement

⁴State of Oregon Senate Bill 1533 passed March 3rd, 2016 allows for inclusionary zoning to be passed at the local level.

⁵ A city’s housing affordability is determined by its value-to-income ratio, which takes the median price of a home divided by the median family income.

plans that are often times incongruent with their communities' visions for growth and development that fits their local needs and values. This challenge is exacerbated when higher levels of government, including the State of Oregon and Metro, fail to provide adequate tools for cities to implement these plans. In this analysis, "tools" refer to legislative policies and the means to enforce them, as well as specific guidelines or information to aid local government agencies to effectively implement plans. An elected official from Beaverton first articulated this lack of tools as such:

Metro has devised this ultra-plan for the region, and the cities are forced to implement said plan, but have no tools to do it. That's what's frustrating, you know, [as] urban growth boundaries shift... Now we're going to build off a mass transit line, but that's not necessarily what the community wants. (Interview 2)

This rearticulates the previous point that top-down planning often disagrees with the type of development communities want to see in their locality, and clarifies the point that these plans often are not accompanied by tools or resources to carry them out. Subsequently, they explain that this is not only a problem in suburbs such as Hillsboro, Beaverton, and Gresham, which among the largest cities in the entire state, but also in small rural communities as well:

I was talking to the Cornelius mayor a couple weeks ago. Cornelius, Oregon, small town. Metro has basically said "You have to build six story buildings in downtown Cornelius because of the light-rail" and he's saying no one will build it because no one wants it; people want single-family dwellings. So like, they have this huge clash of people who want this building, but don't want to go bankrupt over it. So while I think a 50,000-foot view and having multiple-unit housing right next to the MAX line is a really smart idea...if no one wants to live in it it's not really a smart idea. So you have multiple levels of government that are difficult to understand, like "what's Metro saying and what's the State of Oregon saying", but [they're] not helping communities implementing it. (Interview 2)

This excerpt aptly illustrates this problem where Metro attempts to enforce transit-oriented development by dictating development plans to localities, which is theoretically a “good idea” to promote sustainability and spatial equity in more isolated areas; however when these plans either don’t represent the housing demands within certain communities, or require an investment of time and resources that exceeds local capacity, governments are left to struggle in their attempts to implement these plans.

The tension between certain suburbs and Metro is no secret among politicians in the region. Government officials from Multnomah County and Metro added to the discussion by defending the regional approach to land-use and transportation development, and dispelling misconceptions from local officials:

One thing that you might look at is the Chairs and Mayors event that Metro puts on, and some of the conversations that the suburban Mayors have had with Metro regarding the Urban Growth Report and that sort of thing...so in the Portland region, economically speaking, we have *one* labor market, we have *one* housing market; it’s a *regional* market. And so the conversations that the Mayors are having with their constituents are disconnected from that market reality because their constituents are looking at their experience inside their community, which is a political demarcation of the market, right? So the perception of the constituents is that they’re separate from Portland, but the economic reality is that they’re not. (Interview 9)

Here, a staff member from Multnomah County Commission directly responds to the accusation from Hillsboro about the UGR. However, I do have to question this remark in one way: as far as “economically speaking,” I think that without a form of revenue sharing between suburbs—such as redistribution of 40 percent of tax revenues among

cities represented by the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Council⁶—that the markets are separate. Government officials in Portland still have to compete with each other to attract development. The regional excise tax uses shared funds for further planning efforts (Metro), not to redistribute fiscal resources within the region.

Metro’s role as the region’s planning body requires it to confront these conflicts that arise with local governments. One Councilor presents their approach to collaborative governance in helping cities address the regional housing crisis:

It means Metro having a role in trying to figure out the resources for housing affordability, the tools—maybe including regulatory like the inclusionary zoning—that we can put out to our colleagues in local government and say, “We’re not threatening, we’re enabling. We’ve got information, tools, and relationships to share with you. And we’ve got the affordable housing folks working with...the staff here on some strategies.” (Interview 6)

This excerpt reveals that Metro, as a part of a region-wide housing initiative, is taking steps in trying to find ways to develop affordable units in the region, and how it seeks to work local governments by providing them with “information, tools, and relationships” to augment their power and capacity to do the same. It also alludes to a desire for regulatory policies, such as inclusionary zoning or rent cap, which, due to the legislative ban on them can only come from the State. This again exemplifies both the multi-level disconnect between government agencies, and the lack—or in Oregon’s case,

⁶ Twin Cities Fiscal Disparities Program: “Local taxing jurisdictions contribute 40% of growth in commercial, industrial, and public utility property tax base...into an area-wide shared pool of tax base...[distributed] based on population and the market value of all property per person compared to the average market value per person for the metro area...Communities with below-average property tax value per person receive a somewhat larger share of the area-wide tax base”(Metropolitan Council 2016).

prohibition—of political tools from higher levels of government to meaningfully address the public housing issue.

Lack of Resources

The lack of tools provided by higher levels of government to aid in achieving their planning goals makes local governments dependent upon the resources—both land and money—that they have available to them through public funds from constituents' tax-base, or what they are able to get through grants. This is particularly problematic for small towns, but affects all local governments in some ways. When considering how this translates into their ability to address the regional housing environment and develop affordable units, one elected official from Milwaukie concisely summarized the problem all governments face:

There's no silver bullet, there's no easy answer. We don't have a bunch of land that's sitting there vacant that we can all the sudden throw up low-income housing on. Even if we had that land, we wouldn't have the \$4-5 million it would take to build those properties. (Interviews 8)

This notion of there being “no silver bullet” was something rearticulated in several interviews, and at all three events that I attended for participant observation.

In order to develop affordable housing units, governments have to zone the land to be allocated for it, as well as conjure the financial resources necessary to do so, as “government subsidies are the only way that you can develop affordable housing, and certainly we just don't have enough of that” (Interview 3). The difficulty in finding ways to develop affordable housing units was a theme described by all participants, and summarized quite perfectly:

The reason that this isn't happening on its own, organically, is because it costs more. Quite frankly, if you're developing property, you're in it for a profit, and so it is very difficult to spur that kind of development. I would

say that it's because of the public, you know, government entities have to get involved that help make that possible. (Interview 4)

Perfectly concluding this section, while affordable housing is of great use value by providing homes to individuals and families of lower socioeconomic status, the developers who build it operate in pursuit of exchange value. Portland's regional housing crisis is largely because of too many people and too few units, thus one large solution is to increase the housing supply, which depends upon their construction. Because governments are responsible for providing safe dwellings for their constituents, and governments in the State of Oregon have housing goals to meet, they must use financial resources from their tax base to persuade or "incentivize" developers to construct these projects.

Dependence on Developers

Developers are an inextricable component of local growth politics; "omnipresent activists" at the baseline of all urban processes, their work "alters spatial relations and the social conditions the build environment imposes" (Molotch 1993:32). A participant from Milwaukie laments:

"Well, sadly, who's most powerful is the developers, they're landowners, they're the landlords, truthfully. Cities have very little that we can do about it." (Interview 8)

Illuminating the ubiquitous influence private sector developers hold in local land-use politics, this respondent stresses the little power local governments have in guiding growth in their city. They describe how the private sector determines what and where they will develop land and lease property, and how little authority cities have in regulating their decisions.

An elected official from Hillsboro reflects on the differing interests and values held by the public and private sectors in the following two-part excerpt. They expertly address the question of how varying stakes held by government officials in the outcomes of growth influence how they perceive and respond to the regional housing crisis:

So I believe that from the city government standpoint, there's the view that, you know, companies work in quarterly profits, and we work here forever, so we think 50 years—100 years down the road. We need to be accountable to all residents, so I think that it is a very noble viewpoint.

Developers seek short-term gains in the pursuit of profit by maximizing on the exchange value of land. On the other hand, the public sector—elected officials in particular—are held publicly accountable for their decisions. They are expected to promote the highest quality of life for all constituents, keeping in mind the effects and implications their decisions may have in the long-term. The respondent continued to describe the augmented challenges that arise when this “noble viewpoint” conflicts with developer or constituent interests:

I think that where we run into trouble is *how much* does the government play a role in directing that development, and *in what way*?...If it's giving tax breaks to companies, that's not a popular way to go about that development, but in the end it's all about zoning. We're really restricted. Private industry decides what they want to build; we simply set the parameters of where they can build it. (Interview 4)

Brilliantly summarizing the most contested questions that face government officials in land use politics, this participant poses the “philosophical question” of “how much...and in what way” public entities ought to participate in private capital development projects. One of these ways—as exercised by the City of Portland in financing the Pearl District and other urban renewal projects—is through the direct subsidization of affordable housing developments, usually in the form of tax breaks. This, however, is “not a popular

way,” as it requires the provision of public funds to partially aid in financing private sector gains, often inciting community backlash to locally unwanted land use. They conclude with one of the most common phrases I heard at interviews and participant observation events: “We’re really restricted,” which alluded to all three of the aforementioned technical barriers.

Another factor that makes working with developers more difficult in recent years, is the extent to which region’s housing market has been exploited by nationwide and international real estate corporations. A Metro Councilor who has served in public office for many years witnessed this phenomenon first hand, and chronicles this transition with woe:

What’s happening in Portland is that we—almost all of our developers up until about 5 years ago were local, homegrown. They were buying property, developing it themselves, some of them keeping it...The people who are buying the property now, a lot of the developers, are national and international. They don’t have any heart in Portland, they’re all about profits in Portland, and that’s a very different game. That’s the other part of mandating inclusionary zoning is that they don’t—they’re not going to be here, you never see their faces, you don’t know them, they don’t have any compelling need to do affordable housing unless we compel them. (Interview 7)

This excerpt describes the dramatic changes in the region’s real estate industry that have added to the rising housing prices and construction of luxury condos. The development community once primarily consisted of “local, homegrown” builders who had “heart in Portland,” therefore had financial, as well as both geographical and sentimental, stakes in the outcomes of the growth they promoted. The housing market in Portland is being exploited by outside investment purely in the pursuit of profit, and these developers are unlikely to show their faces, let alone agree to sacrifice a portion of their profits by including affordable units. Thus, the push for an inclusionary zoning ordinance that

mandates all new housing projects allocate a portion of units to be made available to households of moderate to low-income is critical to ensure these corporations are providing a social good to the communities they are profiting on.

However, Domhoff (2015) reports that “Huge real estate and development syndicates now move city to city, even country to country”, in pursuit of potential profits from housing markets on the rise. This deviates from the theories presented in *Urban Fortunes* to distinguish that growth machines are no longer controlled by coalitions of elite local growth interests, rather the effects of globalized capitalism have given way to a new rise of transnational real estate conglomerates that can invest in the world’s hottest real estate markets and reap their profits without ever even setting foot in the city. Logan and Molotch (1987) posit power at the local level for both autonomous government functioning as well as place entrepreneurship; however the political and economic contexts established by Metro’s regional jurisdiction and the rise in transnational real estate conglomerates overpower the local level and alter the Portland area’s growth machine form.

However, not all developers are faceless, corporate monsters, and many local governing bodies are able to form lasting and fruitful working relationships with the men and women in the development business. Despite that, even the kindest developers still operate in pursuit of profit, thus any “heart” they have does not necessarily outweigh their primary goal of maximizing on the gains in exchange value provided by development projects. The following excerpt exemplifies this dynamic by contrasting two housing projects built by the same developer, one independently and one through a public-private partnership with the City of Hillsboro:

But you have to have—so REACH is the developer that did the sustainable housing⁷, they're building another development in that area...that is not passive housing, and my understanding from listening to them is that it just wasn't economical for them to do it. Now if the city had stepped in and sat down with them and again maybe found some way to give them taxpayer resources to make that happen, that would be a value statement and we probably could have made that happen. I don't know if the public wants us to use public tax dollars that way. Again, if they were standing up saying, "This is the way that we want it to be used" I think that Staff would...make those kind of decisions. (Interview 4).

This touches on the most important themes presented by participants in regards to their negotiations with developers. First, the excerpt and footnote describe a collaborative project between the City of Hillsboro and REACH to develop the "largest sustained development in North America," though they later comment, "if 57 units is the largest in America, then we're not doing very well" (Interview 4). This leads to the second point that developers require public investment—commonly from taxpayer resources—to subsidize construction costs, or provide tax abatements on the land, to make it "economical" for them to do it. Finally, it rearticulates the political challenges that elected officials face from their constituents in wake of the provision of public tax dollars to finance housing developments.

However, even when affordable units are included in a development project, public-private partnerships often yield conflicting results. Returning to participants' most frequently mentioned bad example, a Metro Councilor brings us back to North Williams, this time describing the "balancing act" that governments confront when considering the

⁷ "We just built the largest sustained passive housing, the largest sustained development in North America, where energy costs for those residents are 90% less than what a normal apartment would be and the rent for those residents is about \$611/month." (Interview 4)

needs of their constituents, negotiations with developers, and the varying outcomes of growth:

That's in some ways a more complex balancing act because you don't want, like in N. Williams is a classic example because you have a the housing that's going in there now is pretty expensive, a lot of it is not affordable anymore. And you don't want to blow it out so no one grew up in that community can afford to live there. On the other hand, you want to bring some of those amenities to that neighborhood so it's a very difficult balancing act, and I think it's important that we reward the developers who are able to help us make that connection, to make it balance. (Interview 7)

Despite the challenges, this also alludes to ways in which developers can be both tools and resources for local governments in realizing their infrastructure goals. In return, this participant suggests positive reinforcement of their cooperation by “rewarding them”, which ultimately translates to providing financial incentives. They continue to describe how government officials they form relationships with developers as they gain experience, typically formed through inter-sector partnerships in which builders help implement government plans:

I mean having been on both the City Council and the Metro Council, and as a neighborhood leader, I've seen this on all levels, and truly I am very, very close to a lot of the folks in the development community who have built some of our better projects, and I have just a ton of respect for them. (Interview 7)

However, depending on the relationships they form, some government officials face new complications with developers who help finance their campaign, sometimes with strings attached:

The way elections work in the state, the people who can put the most money into political campaigns are the development community and developers. So local government folks, either they don't know to get campaign money from developers or they—if they're in a tough race—they might turn to developers for that money, and then it's very hard for them to feel comfortable negotiating. (Interview 7)

Politicians are often expected to vote in a certain way, or promote certain viewpoints to benefit interests of the individuals or companies that financed their election. This limits their perceived autonomy in advocating on behalf of their actual beliefs, and submits them to perform their public duties in accordance with the expectations of their sponsors.

This section demonstrates how government officials are heavily reliant upon the cooperation of private sector developers in negotiating the construction of housing units,

Public Involvement Processes

Community participation is an important part of effecting change and finding collaborative solutions to public problems. However, community members' likelihood and ability to participate in public discourse surrounding the housing crisis is largely dependent on their socioeconomic status. This unfortunate fact establishes an unequal power dynamic between the affluent and the lower-income communities. Participants from every level of government indicated troubles with public involvement processes within their jurisdiction that made it difficult for them to exercise their authority in controlling and promoting urban growth; particularly true when it comes to housing:

It comes with the territory, and anytime you talk about housing, or home people get fired up because it's such a personal topic. (Interview 9)

Thus elected officials must effectively navigate the pressures from the private sector and the community at large, while attempting to provide for the needs of its more vulnerable populations, which is problematic, as worrying about how others might respond detracts from one's ability to adequately analyze and address important issues on a larger scale.

This is particularly important to elected officials in government, because the public is who they are responsible for, as well as who is responsible for keeping them in office:

But yeah it makes a huge difference when you're elected because you don't want to be the person in the paper saying "No" to low-income housing, and the staff doesn't give a rip because their job is safe no matter what. Especially election years, you know, if it's not election year people make decisions differently versus if they're coming up for election this year. (Interview 2)

The biggest problem with public involvement regarding Portland's regional housing crisis is the unequal distribution of influential power among community members rooted in their differential ability to make their voice heard and participate in the planning process. This essentially translates into two groups. *The Heard* are groups with the resources—time, money, and knowledge—to organize and participate in local politics; and *The Unheard* are those who don't, often the marginalized community members who rely upon government outreach or non-profit organizations to advocate on their behalf. These groups, however, have different presence and influence in each suburb, which I delve into in the following chapter.

The Heard: NIMBYs

In order for community voices heard by their government, constituents must have sufficient understanding of the political process, knowledge about their particular cause, and donate either time or money to aid in organizing and mobilizing for their cause. Thus, the people who have the luxuries of time and education are the ones who are most able to have their voices heard, and unfortunately this is commonly limited to affluent community members who work to block the development of affordable housing units. In this study I categorically call these anti-development groups NIMBY's, who see affordable housing units and high-rise developments coming into the suburbs as locally unwanted land uses (LULUs) and respond by saying "not in my backyard." Participants

described these groups as “a dragging force in suburbs because they want things the way they are they don’t want to see change” (Interview 2).

I found that these groups typically either represent environmentalist interests, agriculture, or neighborhood associations. An elected official from Hillsboro aptly describes these two groups and their interests:

What I’ve seen is that everybody does a good job of protecting their turf. Helvetia they have several acres that...they’ve drawn a line of where they do not even want road improvement near their housing/residential areas. So they’ve said, “Not in my backyard, you guys go develop some place else and leave the farmland alone.” ...Thousand Friends, like I said, they are “NO” to virtually everything that has growth or expansion of the UGB. So it’s very difficult to navigate through all of that as cities and the county, and to provide the services that I think everybody would like to provide should we have the ability to do that. (Interview 3)

This highlights how cities and counties, while already faced with the challenges of attracting investment and incentivizing development, they are further challenged by constituents who do not want to see those changes made to their communities.

Environmental interests have a strong presence in the Portland metropolitan area, and groups like 1,000 Friends of Oregon were vital in the formation of Metro and remain staunch advocates on behalf of the urban growth boundary. They are particularly strong forces in suburbs that are on the edge of the UGB, with a network of professional researchers and lobbyists to advocate on their behalf.

Yes so there’s folks—so of course the city isn’t going to build outside the UGB, but there’s folks that have spent their entire lives, and their families have moved here for generations that do not like to see this growth happen, quite frankly. (Interview 4)

Acknowledging that development outside of the UGB is not an option, this elected official indicates that these groups still provide challenges to local governments when development encroaches upon their small town, affluent neighborhoods.

NIMBY's that advocate on behalf of neighborhood interests are some of the best documented over the years (see Schively's 2007 review), largely because they represent socioeconomic distancing of affluent neighborhoods from the underclass (Tighe 2012):

Oh I think they fear that poor people are going to be moving in. They're going to think—affordable housing for some people equals homeless shelter (Interview 5)

However, with neighborhoods, it is not always a discriminatory backlash against low-income individuals moving in, but often a desire to maintain the small town, more residential feel of a suburb, focused on the use value of land. This reflects Domhoff's (2015) description of oppositions to the growth coalition, and why some people move to suburbs in the first place. This goes not only for the development of affordable housing, but also transportation infrastructure such as light-rail, and other large construction projects that can dramatically modify the local character of suburban areas.

I think if you grow up in a small community, light-rail has a lot of rapid changes that come with it...[like] major development downtown. I think it's more the *perception* of everything changing really quickly, than things *actually* changing all that quickly...but transit-oriented development that Portland trumpets is feared by people outside that area because they see it as displacing them and their neighbors, making their community something other than what they moved there for. Big housing developments are a parcel of that, whether they're affordable or just market rent...a large influx of new people is generally disfavored if you live right next to it; it's going to kind of change that conversation whether or not it's affordable. (Interview 5)

NIMBY groups who actively dispute developments proposed by government planning bodies come in many different forms, take issue with a myriad of LULUs, and engage in a variety of organized retaliations. The heterogeneous perceptions of, and concerns regarding the development of LULU facilities among NIMBY groups make crafting an effective response a complex and intricate process for government officials who seek to

involve both the interests of these constituents, as well as low-income and diverse community members who are often silenced.

The Unheard

The community members that most often go unheard are low-income and communities of color, unfortunately they are also the ones who are most significantly impacted by the devastating effects of the regional housing crisis. These folks don't have the time or knowledge to participate in political processes, and face the highest levels of displacement and poverty as a result of the region's decreasing affordability in housing units. One elected official expressed great concern for these groups:

They're just not engaged; they don't have the time, they don't have the bandwidth, they don't think it's going to make any difference in their world. So it's those people that I'm really worried about, that they're just going to get pushed further and further and further out, you know, they're going to end up in Molalla, and there's no bus that runs from Molalla to wherever their...job is. (Interview 8)

Not only do they not have the "bandwidth" to participate in these processes, but often live in fear of the repercussions of speaking up. This is especially true for individuals and families who rely on Section 8 housing to put a roof over their heads, as discussed in this three-part excerpt from an elected official in Beaverton:

It's...really applicable to anyone on a waiting list for a Section 8 low-income housing list because [landlords]...discriminate against Section 8...I know they just passed that law⁸ in the Senate...that supposedly that is not going to allow people to...but how are they going to enforce it?

Before the Oregon State Legislature passed House Bill 2639 and created the Statewide Housing Choice Advisory Committee, many landlords listed available rental units, "with

⁸ State of Oregon House Bill 2639 prohibits landlords from refusing to rent to recipients of tenant-based assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (

the caveat—“No Section 8” (Schmidt 2014). This gave landlords the right to refuse rental applicants who relied upon tenant-based assistance through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Housing Choice Voucher program to pay rent. Despite successfully passing HB 2639 into law in 2014, this respondent questions the effectiveness of its statewide enforcement, and continues by describing how this discrimination has persisted:

People who are receiving help often don't know their rights...they're just trying to get into housing. They don't want to rock the boat; and if they're being mistreated in housing they don't want to complain because they are afraid of getting kicked out. So there's not a lot of oversight getting people into housing stability, which is a lot of what we're talking about here.

This second of three excerpts sheds light onto the desolate reality that befalls low-income citizens who—without protection from no-cause evictions, and many times without knowledge of protective policies or means by which to exercise their civil rights—live afraid and silenced in substandard housing units. This was also a significant concern for a Metro Councilor,

The people who should have the biggest voice have the least voice in the conversation. Everyone should be able to rent a place that is clean and has utilities and is free of pesticides and mold. However, if you talk to people, they live in those conditions all the time because they're too afraid. (Interview 2)

This not only reflects the problems that these groups face by not having their voice heard, but restates the challenges that local governments face in enforcing policies created by State of Oregon that do not come with tools to do so. While it is important to have a policy that prohibits discrimination against low-income folks who rely upon Section 8, local governments often do not have the jurisdictional capacity to ensure that these violations are not happening.

Government Community Outreach

To ensure that The Unheard community members are not neglected and drowned out by the voices of The Heard, governments often practice community outreach efforts to try and engage different groups within their constituencies. This is largely the role of local governments because they are most aware of the varying needs and values within their cities, which is supported by an elected official from Hillsboro:

I think that you guys are doing the right thing by reaching out to local governments because one of the issues that I did run into, especially going out and canvassing, is that people don't necessarily know where City Government starts and where County Government starts and State Government starts...so doing this kind of advocacy and understanding that local governments are extremely important when you look at...members of the community. It's a small enough government where you can go talk to me, I'm not in Washington D.C. and I think—at least the folks on our council—really do appreciate the public coming out and bringing stuff to our attention. We crave it. We want to do a good job. We work really hard to get here. So we want to represent the public better. The challenge is learning how we can. (Interview 4)

Though these public involvement processes are typically delegated to local governments because of their social and geographical proximity to their constituents, Metro has taken an active role in reaching out to communities that are impacted by their development plans. One Councilor describes their success:

It's very cool, in fact we just learned today that the Powell-Division project just won a national public participation award. It is the Project of the Year for 2015 for the National Public Participation. And what happens is you get—and we've done have done this in the past—but again we're getting better at it, you get the SW Corridor is 5 cities involved in the planning, 2 counties, the business community, the schools, Sylvania...it's getting as many people at the table, in the room, before any decisions are made so that by the time you make decisions, the people are brought in...they've made the decisions essentially. (Interview 7)

It is particularly important for Metro to coordinate these kinds of efforts because their plans and decisions, particularly light-rail development and public transportation systems,

have the most significant and longest-standing impact on communities. The same Councilor elaborated on this concept:

Often what we are trying to promote in our communities is not something that the everyday person is going to welcome because often it's something that's a project way down the road...And it's an elected official's role to be looking out there, and yes take care of people now, make sure that you're not destroying peoples' rights or destroying the quality of their lives, but sometimes you have to make really tough decisions. (Interview 7)

With that, government officials face an exceptional challenge in trying to balance the weight of making decisions that both provide for the diverse needs of their constituency, and fit within the framework of the values set forth by their community. This challenge is particularly significant for local governments, who must do so in accordance with Metro's plans and with limited resources.

Despite some participant favor for local autonomy, most of the literature reviewed promotes regional governance and planning as an ideal solution for growing areas in the U.S. in combating consequences of urban development and “increasingly evident social disparities reflected in the geography of the metropolis” (Mitchell-Weaver 2000:854). A Metro Councilor describes this as working for “the greater good”:

Yeah, some people campaigning will say, “I'm going to listen to the people! I'm going to do what you tell me to do!” I can't do that, you know, as a person of conscience I can't go out and say I'm going to listen and do what you tell me to do, because most of the time: A) The people we hear from are the people who don't want anything; B) We're not necessarily building a 20-year project for you, we're building for somewhere else.

Interviewer— Then what is the point of representative government?

Well I mean the idea is that you try to look out for the greater good—the greatest good. And you get as informed as you can, and you listen to everybody and you try to make a balance of meeting people's needs; but in the final draw you have to make decisions that are for the greater good,

and transit light-rail are one of the tougher ones. That's one of the biggest lifts we make as a society and as the Portland region. We have a great success story, I think. (Interview 7)

This excerpt describes how despite any range of public involvement processes, government officials, particularly in Portland's Metro, are going to make the decisions that they consider to be for the public betterment of the entire region, regardless of local or constituent objections. It also brings me to question, however, the way this participant uses a "20-year project" as an example of a project aimed for the greater good, while earlier describing the challenge and often contradictory results of such endeavors.

Conclusion

The regional housing crisis is a far-reaching, multi-faceted problem that extends throughout the entire metropolitan region. Participants described the major causes of the this public issue—many of which are supported by previous studies in Portland—as a lack of government foresight in anticipating the consequences of rapid population growth and transit-oriented development, especially with the limits placed on land supply to accommodate this growth by the UGB; failing to provide regulatory measures to protect residents from these consequences, such as inclusionary zoning and rent caps; as well as the simple forces of supply and demand that took over the housing market developers responded to the influx of new affluence in the city by maximizing on the profitability of real estate.

Suburban government officials faced particular challenges in their attempts to accommodate this rapid growth and address its consequences, which can be summarized as a perceived mismatch in what is expected of them—both by higher levels of government and their constituents—and their capacity to meet these expectations. This

mismatch, however, is manifested in different ways and at different strengths within each locality I sampled. The subsequent chapter explores these variations as they pertain to the political economy of urban growth.

CHAPTER V: LOCAL VARIATIONS IN GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS OF REGIONAL HOUSING CRISIS

Overview

This chapter answers the specificities of my overarching research question “*How do suburban government officials in the Portland metropolitan area—with their differing jurisdictional capacities and stakes in the outcomes of growth— approach the regional housing crisis?*” First, it highlights the *suburban* variations by describing local manifestations of the regional housing crisis that distinguish the suburbs from one another, and several variations that either augment or limit the government officials’ respective *capacities*. Second, it considers participants’ *stakes in the outcomes of growth*, by considering their relationship to the growth machine in how they approach the housing crisis within their respective jurisdiction.

The previous chapter provided an all-encompassing view, organized thematically, to contextualize the regional housing crisis—both its causes and effects—as participants understand it. It continued to describe the perceived limitations placed on their capacity to address the housing crisis, stemming from technical difficulties that arise from top-down government planning, as well as an unequal distribution of influential power in public involvement processes. This chapter provides a narrower view, and is organized geographically from west to east, specifying how the problems created by the regional housing crisis, and solutions proposed by various levels of government, vary between suburbs and by jurisdiction. I conclude that the relative affluence of a suburb can account for some of the variations between them, and the disparities are intensified by the presence of growth coalition members in local government.

Suburban Variation

Synthesizing information from the participant information table with findings from Chapter IV highlights several important variations in how the regional housing crisis is locally manifested in the suburbs. The presence of a local growth machine is highly indicative of the relative affluence of suburbs in the sample, as well as what they identify as the major limitations to their capacity to address the housing crisis by developing affordable units. The chapter concludes with a table to summarize these variations, and consider how they contribute to or challenge the “typology of suburbs” laid out by Logan and Molotch in *Urban Fortunes* (1987:187)..

Hillsboro

On the northwest edge of the Urban Growth Boundary lies the City of Hillsboro. Elected officials describe Hillsboro as the “economic engine of the state” (Interview 3), a sentiment echoed by a staff member from Washington County:

Well...compared to some other some other parts of the region, we're a little bit lucky – I don't know if it's luck or intentional, but because we're a major jobs engine of Oregon we have over 260,000 jobs...and pretty low unemployment, I think we were at 4.9 is the last number I remember. We have our high-tech hub out here with Intel, we have Nike, and we have a number of industries associated with those more in the high-tech; and then some of the service industries that support that. (Interview 1)

With the lowest unemployment rate and the highest median family income of cities in this study, Hillsboro typifies Logan and Molotch's (1987) “Affluent Employing Suburb”.

To support this, one elected official recalled the following projections:

I mean, our city is about 95,000 people, and by 2035 it's supposed to be at 140,000. We are actually creating a lot of the jobs in Oregon in North Hillsboro, there's estimated to be about 16,000 new jobs, or near that amount by 2035-2040. (Interview 4)

They then continued by addressing some of the “philosophical questions” government officials face within their jurisdiction:

Do we want this growth to happen? Why *is* the growth happening? Our community growing, in my opinion, not just because it’s a great place to live, but the fact is that we are the economic engine of the state. We have the jobs. Our unemployment rate is like 4%, and the incomes are 25% higher than Portland’s. *That* is why people want to live here. (Interview 4)

This demonstrates the city’s focus on growth and long-term planning, and reflects ideologies true to the growth coalition theories. With an emphasis on economic and population growth by means attracting industry and subsequent employment opportunities, the City of Hillsboro exemplifies characteristics of the growth machine with its a technocratic and businesslike suburban government body:

Yeah, and we see opportunities sometimes and so when we see an opportunity we may go out and actually solicit some people who have invested in our city and see if they’re interested. So we go both directions we don’t wait for that to come to our table, we go out and solicit when we see a need and an opportunity. (Interview 3)

This elected official illustrates suburban growth machine ideology, which sees growth as a common good, the by describing efforts to “actively seek out investment opportunities”. These negotiations are theoretically (Logan and Molotch 1987) easier for the City of Hillsboro because of the presence of growth elites in their local government.

While comparatively not as severe in Hillsboro due to its more affluent constituency, the suburb is still subject to the pervasive influence of the housing crisis:

Because again, as the people go further out from the employment core...you know, we have Nike and we have Intel out here in our county and so, but still the more housing that we’re restricted because of the UGB not growing...that means we have to densify, that means we’ve got to go up: cost of housing goes up, pushing them to Banks or McMinville, and so that’s the domino effect. (Interview 3)

This “domino effect” describes how the problems that plague in Portland, specifically displacement due to decreasing affordability, are now happening in Hillsboro. This is of particular significance in Hillsboro because their community lies on the edge of the UGB, which this participant sees as a restricting force on their ability to address housing needs by limiting the land available for development, thus requiring them to “densify” which drives up housing prices and displaces people to rural communities even farther away from employment opportunities and access to public transportation. Government officials from Hillsboro thus place a great deal of blame for their local manifestations of the housing crisis on the UGB and the limits that Metro place on their local autonomy.

The strongest voices that challenge government officials in Hillsboro, as identified by participants, are the environmental group 1,000 Friends of Oregon, and “Save Helvetia”, which fights to protect agricultural land. Both participants expressed a great deal of difficulty in working with these groups:

Um, I would think, I mean we’d love to embrace the folks from Helvetia on a conversational discussion, but they’re very, very narrowly focused, and Thousand Friends does the same thing. So it’s very difficult to engage them and say, “Can we find consensus? Can we find some happy spot in there?” because they won’t. (Interview 3)

These groups are uniquely strong however, due to their professional organization and wealthy sponsors. 1,000 Friends consists of professional researchers and lobbyists who are extremely active in the politics of land-use planning, and Save Helvetia fights to protect agricultural land owned by wealthy farmers. These organizations and their supporters have the knowledge, time, and resources to effectively advocate on behalf of their interests, and pose a great threat to this local growth machine government. Both of these groups were also very important key players in the formation of Metro (Leo 2000).

Their political influence extends up through the state level, with and 1,000 Friends of Oregon as one of the most powerful advocacy groups in the state.

Literature suggests that businesses can hold great influential power in local government's decision-making; however large industries, particularly those that are international, tend to not have much effect on politics so much as they do on the economy, they have little interest in land use and housing policy unless it impacts them:

Some of the larger corporations...don't really have much to lose or gain in terms of affordable housing. You know, Nike and Intel...they drive a lot of the housing market in our County, and if anything might be causing our housing inventory to skew more towards higher end. And that's, you know, no fault of their own, that's just developers meeting demand for very well paid engineers and designers. (Interview 1)

Thus while corporations such as Intel and Nike are not active participants in local growth politics, the accompanying demographic growth their employees have brought into Washington County. The in-migration of thousands of highly educated and highly paid professionals has had conflicting impacts on Hillsboro's local housing crisis. While the incoming affluence has driven up demand for luxury housing units and subsequently property values, the more affluent constituency does not struggle as much to keep pace with the changing regional economy as compared to other cities, therefore minimizing the local manifestations of the housing crisis..

One of the elected officials that we spoke with in Hillsboro further demonstrated the technocratic and businesslike character of their local government by coming to the interview prepared with statistics showing the city's number of affordable units and proportion of them within walking distance of public transportation:

Oh, absolutely, I don't know if you saw these numbers, but this is what I was given [by the staff we scheduled the interview with]. So this is our affordable housing within walking distance or ¼-½ mile from these three

stops: the number of and percentage of our total affordable housing. I think as a city we do a pretty good job, and those numbers there made me feel like my assumption is correct. (Interview 3)

The city prides itself on its ability to effectively plan for and attract growth, as well as ensure that affordable housing is included in efforts, as evidenced by both the previous and subsequent excerpts:

So we as a city try and identify what our community's needs are now and what they're going to be out into the future, and where we can incorporate affordable housing and other transit-oriented development out along the light rail, because again our South Hillsboro is our newest development over the next ten years, you know 25,000 people can live there, but it's not on a MAX line, it's on a bus line, but it's not near light rail. It is going to make it available for people to live there and get to Intel and get to Nike easier, but there is a focus of that entire development of, "Can we incorporate affordable housing into that development? How many apartments should we put out there?"...because one of the things we don't have is a housing price mix. We don't have any—we have very, very few \$500,000 and up houses and neighborhoods. In a matter of fact, we have one. So that's the blend we're trying to put into there, but again it's very difficult based on demand and the pricing that goes into that. (Interview 3)

Both elected officials discussed the importance of investment and development for their city, and accredited much of their successes to their ability to do so. One of their latest developments, Orenco Station, "is a great example, there's no affordable housing in Orenco, that's for sure, but it is a real thriving community center and it is on transit" (Interview 3). This transit-oriented development right next to a light-rail stop was also viewed as a great success:

You know, we have a development at the station right now, and with some coaxing we were able to get about \$120 million in investment. And what is interesting about that area is that you have...very different, I would say, economic classes living side by side, both on the MAX line and benefiting from you know the parks and the development that we want in that community. I think that's a good example of what we should have, um, and I'm pretty proud that we have ended up there. (Interview 4)

This excerpt provides a perfect example of Hillsboro’s ideal development project: transit-oriented, with mixed-income housing units, both contributing to the social good of the community and reaping financial benefits of the developments for the City.

Beaverton

Beaverton lies south of Hillsboro in Washington County, and also is seeing the displacing effects that the rising cost of living is having in their community:

“Yeah, people are having to be pushed out to Banks and Cornelius and all these places that are further away from jobs; that’s the only place they can get a house.” (Interview 2)

Thus the regional housing crisis is not only displacing low-income residents to the suburbs, but many cannot even afford to remain within the metropolitan area at all, and are thus “pushed out” to rural communities. This does not go unnoticed by the local government, however:

We’ve had a lot of talk about displacement, especially because we’ve just entered negotiation for building around the Round, and that is going to bring property value up, because low-income housing is market rate housing and above. (Interview 2)

Displacement is not just a problem that the Central City faces then, and Beaverton has placed a great deal of emphasis in recent years on ensuring that affordable housing units are being developed, especially in relative proximity to transit:

We have four low-income housing projects currently in construction in Beaverton, so it’s a huge thought for us, and they’re all located within walking distance of mass transit (Interview 2)

However, Beaverton also faces a unique challenge in developing affordable housing units as one of the more politically and economically mixed suburbs. This is evidenced by the amount of focus the participant placed on the local NIMBY problem that has restricted their ability to provide affordable housing units for low-income

residents, or at least where to do so. The following three-part excerpt chronicles a particularly telling incident that exemplifies the discord in land use politics in Beaverton.

One really great example is, and you can research this in the paper as well, but I don't know if you've ever heard of Bridge Meadows? They're a multigenerational housing project...where they put kids in foster care mixed in with seniors. The kid in foster care is typically with a family, like...You've never been a parent before, you don't know how to raise kids, so they take family dynamics like that and put them in with seniors, and give the seniors discounted rent to basically join a family and act as elders in the community to guide these people. It's a really awesome project! So they wanted to come open in Beaverton, and of course we're like "Dude!...That is awesome! Of course we want it!" so us and THPRD (Tualatin Hills Parks & Recreation Department) came up with this plan to have it on a THPRD property on Murray Road, and the neighborhood freaked out.

As a consequence the exemplary project, Bridge Meadows—cultivated through interagency collaboration with anticipated benefits for a spectrum of community members—caused an affluent community nearby to mobilize in opposition of the new development.

They don't want low-income housing in their really rich neighborhood off of Murray, so they bullied their way into overturning the decision to have them there. It was huge, it was in the press, it was a huge blow back on the Council, and so they came back and said, "Okay well we're not going to build it, we'll build in downtown Beaverton." And I freaked out and everyone is like "What because that's a block from your house?" And I was like "NO! Because it's just across the street from another low-income housing development!" and if you pull up a map of all the housing that require you to submit income are all in one centralized location. So we're allowing wealthy people to dictate where low-income housing is going. And it's really frustrating from my perspective because now we're corralling everyone into the same schools, which doesn't give kids a fighting chance.

Thus, the NIMBYs in Beaverton, an affluent community who didn't want poor people encroaching on their neighborhood, used the political force of the press to bully the Mayor into overturning the decision to develop Bridge Meadows on that lot, and

relocating the development downtown. This participant vocalized an objection to this decision, causing some to question if they themselves were expressing the same NIMBY sentiment due to its proximity to their residence, however they rebutted the accusation by expressing their concern over the concentration of low-income housing in one area. They conclude by expressing frustration with the lack of audacity the local government exhibited when bending to the blowback from the Murray neighborhood:

If you look at [Bride Meadows] building, it's beautifully constructed and we actually ended up allowing it to come into central Beaverton because we didn't want to lose it. Property value goes up where they built in North Portland, not down, but we didn't have the wherewithal to fight a community uprising over it, which was like the wrong choice to do and it was really frustrating working in a government where the Mayor can overturn a decision that the Councils made. (Interview 2)

This final excerpt highlights two important aspects of this incident: property values and political fragmentation. First, Bridge Meadows projects in Portland have caused property values near them to increase, which brought the participant to question why the community so heavily rejected it...wouldn't they want to see their property values increase? Second, it highlights the political fragmentation within the City of Beaverton on this topic, where the Mayor overturned a decision the Council had made *and* the plan they had made in partnership with THPRD, in order to satisfy the more affluent members of his constituency.

Examining this in terms of the political economy of place, despite the potential economic gains in the exchange value of their property through the Bridge Meadows development, the neighborhood it "threatened" successfully organized to protect the use value of the undeveloped land, which remains vacant. It also demonstrates the use of jurisdictional authority by the Mayor to overturn the City Council's decision and

succumb to the demands of the affluent neighborhood. The political nature of this incident is reflective of both the existing government in Beaverton, and the diverse constituency it encompasses. It also demonstrates how elected officials feel limited by the power of *The Heard*:

“I think when you’re Elected; you’re Elected because people put you there. Staff members aren’t going to get fired because someone in the community doesn’t like what they’re doing, but essentially as an Elected you potentially could get fired over what community people want or don’t want—the squeaky wheel gets the most attention. And it might not be a good reflection of what the community actually values, but when they’re slamming you in the paper and going to town, people bend to those kind of decisions instead of staying strong and banding together and that’s exactly what happened with Bridge Meadows. Instead of combating the forty angry people, we let the will of 40 people in the community and really one ring leader dictate where we were going to put low income housing instead of like 93,487 other people probably wouldn’t have an issue with it.” (Interview 2)

Though an estimated figure, this aptly demonstrates how just a few strong voices from The Heard can drown out thousands; whether The Unheard are marginalized communities, or simply apathetic to local issues.

To conclude the interview, this participant perfectly summarized how the regional housing crisis is being manifested in Beaverton:

Affordable housing doesn’t affect just poor people. It affects veterans, it affects single moms, it affects working class people. My sister works a fulltime, forty-hours-a-week job and couldn’t afford a two-bedroom apartment here in Beaverton; and she doesn’t make minimum wage, she makes above minimum wage! So it’s getting the NIMBY people to know that it’s not just poor people, it’s not just the vagabonds running around trying to live here. It’s honest, hard-working, middle-class Americans that are getting pushed out of our suburbs because they can’t afford to live here! (Interview 2)

This participant did not have a professional background directly related to a growth coalition. So while some might consider the City of Beaverton overall to

demonstrate some growth machine behaviors, their responses in this interview were not particularly reflective of growth machine ideologies.

Milwaukie

Milwaukie, the smallest of the suburbs sampled, lies to the southeast of Portland in Clackamas County, which brings with it a certain “stigma”, as described by one of its elected officials as:

Oh you know, I think a lot of people that are buying down here are coming from Portland, and there’s a still a bit of an idea that Clackamas County in its entirety is very conservative, and very anti-things rather than being for-things. (Interview 5)

One thing Milwaukie and Clackamas County have historically been particularly against is “becoming Portland”. Milwaukie has a small town feel, with mostly residential land uses mixed in with small local businesses, which its constituency prefers:

Most of our community is off the main drive so a lot of people don’t realize that it’s kind of cute, it’s adorable...But yeah so the folks who own [property] in town I think have been hopeful for a sort of, nicer, better town...Those folks also tend to have money and want to see property values increase. At the same time, a lot of people in town have lived here a really long time; they inherited their parents houses, or their grandparents houses...they’re less excited about us becoming Portland.” (Interview 5)

The urban growth to the west has inspired a great deal of tension amongst the original residents in small towns to the east, and because Milwaukie is the closest to Portland, it has taken the brunt of the political upheaval for towns in Clackamas County who actively fight to “Stop Portland Creep”.

These anti-development voices advocate on behalf of both environmental and neighborhood interests, with the biggest political issue of recent years being the Orange MAX Line that runs from downtown Portland through Milwaukie:

The most consistent people were the haters, you know, the ones that didn't want light rail. They've been pretty consistent, they've been dwindling, but they've been very consistent in their message: they didn't want it, at all, for any reason. (Interview 8)

Some constituents didn't want to undermine the small town feel of the city, while others feared the "congestion, density, and crime" it would bring with it (Interview 5). Despite the community uproar, the Orange Line now connects residents of Milwaukie to the rest of the metropolitan area:

Milwaukie voters voted against light-rail twice. In fact the City Council decided to go ahead with light-rail, which was recalled in large part, then...the last set council 6 to 8 years ago voted it through anyway, or at least committed the city to spending \$5 million to help meet Tri-Met's local obligations. (Interview 5)

Thus not only did the City Council overturn their constituents' vote, they also committed \$5 million of their tax dollars to bring the light-rail they didn't want to town. Of course, a light-rail system is not likely to cause the ugly problems they propose, and is widely accepted as a sustainable form of public transportation; enhancing and connecting communities rather than harming them.

However, in the Portland region, community members and now government officials alike are seeing that light-rail development escalates housing prices and has been a catalyst for gentrification and displacement.

I mean there's been consistently good Council members and mayors who have worked to make the project happen, but because they were so embroiled in just making it happen they really weren't thinking about those ancillary things like "Oh my god, this is going to displace 30% of our population." (Interview 8)

This again reflects a lack of government forethought in anticipating the consequences of light-rail development. This two-part excerpt tells the story of how many of the fears held by the original residents who opposed light-rail development are being realized:

We are seeing double digit increases in house prices since last year...we're supposed to be one of the hottest real estate markets in the Portland metro area right now because everybody is trying to buy in before light-rail comes and property values increase tremendously. Because Milwaukie has been traditionally a very blue collar town, a lot of our housing stock is somewhere between the 60's to the 1990's...not tremendously great, a lot of sort of cookie-cutter construction, and even *those* are seeing significant increases, and rental rates have risen I think about \$300...over the last I think three or four years. I think there's a limit to how much of *those* types of houses are going to appreciate, but people who own and are these little craftsmen here, yeah they're...going to start to see that come back. Metro is working on this new Housing Initiative...they came down to the cities in Clackamas County ...and asked us how we could contribute to their conversation. I don't know what the answer is, but I stood up and said, "Hey! You know, we have traditionally been the affordable community, we are becoming not affordable because Portland's real estate market is ridiculous, and has seen a lot of private investment purchasing houses, flipping them at an entry level house point, and making mega mansions there." If you track what the flipped houses have been it's 1BR, 2BR houses that need a little work and are on bigger lots so you can build two.

Echoing previous participants, light rail is again recognized as the catalyst of increased property values and rental prices. This participant emphasizes the extent to which this is happening by highlighting how Milwaukie, typically a more blue collar, conservative town, is even seeing significant increases in prices with its older housing stock. Part of this stems from people who are "flipping" houses for profit. As a result, neighborhoods are changing with the city:

At the same time I do know folks who have been living here for 20 and 30 years who know all of their neighbors and are just worried that people are going to take advantage of the rising real estate prices, sell off, and go buy property further out... And that sort of neighborhood fabric when...everybody who lives around starts to fray as you see more turnover, and I think they're worried about that too. (Interview 5)

People who can afford to leave, are. Suburban residents in urbanizing Milwaukie who want to maintain their small town feel are moving to rural towns farther into Clackamas

County, while people from Portland are moving into Milwaukie to take advantage of the more affordable real estate before it too becomes too expensive.

Thus the housing crisis is in full effect in Milwaukie, perhaps even more prevalent than in other communities, because it is in the midst of an economic real estate boom from the Orange Line, which opened in September 2015. Elected officials are receiving pleas for help from community members, and are astounded by what is happening:

It's something that I was sort of aware could happen based on Mississippi, but I didn't think it would happen that fast in Milwaukie. I mean it's Milwaukie, it's always been this kind of blue-collar little town, but we're watching the property values go up so incredibly fast. I'm starting to get phone calls from people who are renting apartments saying, "They just raised my rent \$300. There's no way my family can afford that, what can I do? What are my options?" So it's obviously happening here and it's happening in a big way. (Interview 8)

This surprise was echoed by a Metro Councilor:

When I started down on the Milwaukie City Council, you could pick up house...near downtown [that] were some of the cheapest in the region, and now they're as expensive of SE Portland because the Orange Line (MAX) is coming in...I mean if I had to go buy a new house today, I'm not sure how much I could afford...when the average house is \$334,000 in *Milwaukie*? Milwaukie used to be the dump...where houses come on the market [now] and their bid up \$100,000 the day they come on the market...affordable means very different things now. (Interview 7)

Thus Milwaukie is a city in transition. Once a conservative, working class town, it is now bringing in a new population from Portland of younger, more liberal, and more affluent community members.

The local government is also in great transition, as it previously matched its constituency as a primarily conservative council with a conservative mayor (who also

owned a great deal of land in the city⁹). The Mayor and City Council are now majority democratic, and their incoming residents have been a great help in making that happen.

One elected official reflects on this with mixed-feelings:

I mean it's a double edge sword. There's people that I am in more agreement with that are moving in, that's good. The side effect of that, or the unintended consequence of that, is that it's causing poor people, who really aren't engaged politically because they don't have the bandwidth to work two shitty jobs... just to try and make the rent and maybe a little food on the table [to be displaced]. (Interview 8)

Thus, while the more liberal folks who are moving in have helped the new local government politically by electing a majority liberal Council—allowing them to be able to pass developments like light-rail and affordable housing developments—their incoming affluence has also displaced a lot of lower-income residents. The elected official continues by expressing concern for these marginalized households with regards to further displacement and political inactivity:

They aren't engaged, half of them don't even know they live in Milwaukie. You know, when I first ran for Council I went around and knocked on doors, the number one response was, "Oh, we have a City Council?" that was the number one response. They thought that Portland was their City Council, right? (Interview 8)

Thus, in Milwaukie, the effects of the regional housing crisis are causing both The Unheard and The Heard alike to leave the city, however for very different reasons. While low-income residents can't financially keep pace, the more wealthy residents are escaping the Portland creep for smaller rural communities. While this shift in community

⁹ "The mayor at that time is the owner of a significant amount of property down by the stops, so that was an issue as well for a lot of people in town" (Interview 5) Thus, speculators suggest the mayor pushed light-rail through to increase his property values, highly indicative of growth-machine behavior.

demographics and ideologies is good in some ways, it is also what is causing the housing crisis to reach Milwaukie:

I can't sit here and go, "We shouldn't be allowing all this influx of people," as if I could control that anyway, because most of those people that are coming are young, with families, they're smart, they're well-educated, they tend to be progressive. So it's like my people are coming in! They're showing up! It's awesome! But at the same time, because they are willing to spend \$400,000 for a house that used to be listed at \$220,000, now all the apartment owners are going, "Damn, I could get in on this action. I need all these poor people out of my apartment so I can up the rent!" (Interview 8)

Despite the positive changes the incoming liberal folks bring to the traditionally restrictive community's values on development, they also bring with them new affluence. As a result landlords are maximizing on this local shift in demographics, by raising rents with little to stop them. Thus local government officials are conflicted due to both the positive and negative implications these changes hold for the city.

When it comes to affordable housing development, Milwaukie's conservative past has also made it more difficult for them to develop these units as well:

What we are doing is partnering with Northwest Housing Alternatives and that's what they do, that's their role [affordable housing development]. But again, I mean everything takes forever. They are trying to just expand their campus here to go from serving 12 families to serving 45 families, and they've hit bumps. The last Council—and I was on this Council, I was the minority vote—when its planning commission was overturned in their decision to give them their zone change to allow them to go to 45 families. The neighbors pushed back, they appealed to the Council, and we had a conservative Council at the time, so the two of us that were not conservative lost that fight and their project got killed. They're going to bring it back up in a new iteration, and this Council will definitely—my bet would be that this Council will pass it. (Interview 8)

This again reflects the changing nature of Milwaukie's local government, and how they have transitioned from a more conservative Council to a more liberal or progressive

Council. It also highlights the NIMBY activism from neighborhoods near this development site, which when we asked the participant why they rejected it, responded:

It's kind of hilarious because about half the people that were protesting it would qualify to live in those units. They're poor. They just don't see themselves that way, and they see this *other* as bad...you know all that awful stuff they say about poor people. They don't understand *they are the poor people*, and they're [close to] losing their homes too. And it's just like, "We don't want change, we don't want more traffic in our downtown, we don't want poor people in our downtown." (Interview 8)

This conflation of affordable housing units with a "homeless shelter" (Interview 5), in which Milwaukie residents associate these developments with, was a prevalent theme in both interviews. This was particularly confounding for the elected officials we spoke to in the "traditionally blue-collar town", as most of their constituents would qualify to live in an affordable housing development. However, because they view affordable housing as this stain in their community that will bring in poor people and homelessness to their pristine little residential community, these developments have "inspired a lot of neighborhood action" (Interview 5):

Oh it's NIMBYism. Yeah, we don't have a very large downtown core, and so our neighborhood they're small. And a big apartment building like that would've really changed the character of the neighborhood to that area. But, in my view, it's gonna happen.

Milwaukie elected officials are trying to minimize NIMBY behavior by engaging their communities, and are actively seeking to maintain the tight-knit nature that has traditionally been strong in their town

So we're at sort of an inflection point right now where we're trying to be very proactive about using social media to engage our citizens and get people more up to speed about how to get involved in your community neighborhood so we can continue to have that cohesiveness, I think a lot of the suburban communities don't necessarily want that sort of transitory nature, that turnover. Sure renters will be expected, that kind of thing, but when you have so many single-family homes, that kind of safer

communities tend to follow when neighbors know each other and can trust each other. (Interview 5)

Thus, government officials are performing community outreach in hopes to engage both old and new residents and maintain the cohesiveness that the city has long valued.

In conclusion, Milwaukie provides a telling example of the local effects the regional housing crisis has on cities. As a result of the new light-rail development that opened last year connecting Milwaukie to the rest of the region, Portlanders have been taking advantage of their more affordable real estate market—which is becoming decreasingly so—forcing many of their original residents out. They also are challenged by public involvement processes built upon strong NIMBY activism, which stigmatizes affordable housing developments and the people who reside in them. In response, Milwaukie has advocated for repealing the ban on inclusionary zoning, which would ensure that the development they're seeing will include housing units that meet the needs of their lower-income population, and less of their residents will be pushed out of their tight knit community.

Gresham

Gresham is on the northeast edge of the region in Multnomah County, and is experiencing very different local manifestations of the housing crisis for several reasons. First, “I think if you look at...Gresham generally, incomes are lower than the rest of the metro area” (Interview 10), thus a great deal of the displacement from Portland is resulting in “people being dumped into Gresham” (Interview 6). A Metro Councilor explains their unique situation:

On the one side, Gresham representatives from the neighborhood in particular said, “Look, we’ve been hammered before when people were pushed out of Portland neighborhoods, and they landed in Rockwood.”

You've heard the consequences of some of the public investment and...market-readiness in Alberta St. and North Mississippi leading to significant displacement of low-income, African American households, particularly renters, who saw their rents going up as houses became more desirable for sale, who ended up being in what some people call "The Numbers". Rockwood [neighborhood in Gresham] is 181st and Burnside, that's a center of low-income housing, and it's "accidental low-income housing". The mold is too great, and the amenities are too poor for the landlord either to invest further or to attract a higher rent level, and so people end up stuck in those kinds of less-than-desirable apartment situations because they're lower cost than in other parts of East Portland. (Interview 6).

Gresham's housing crisis is not one of decreasing affordability and displacement, but instead it is the community where people are being displaced *to*. Unfortunately, the reason that this area is so affordable is because of the poor housing stock.

This low-income community, marginalized on the outskirts of the urban growth boundary and distanced from Portland's thriving city center, also faces mobility issues:

What I've learned about Rockwood is that...of the entire Portland area...has the lowest car ownership per capita of any of the 38 town centers. And it's not a lifestyle choice like it might be on N. Williams where everybody bikes to downtown, it's an economic necessity, they just simply can't afford to buy a car ...so access to transit is critically important. (Interview 10)

For this reason, Gresham was one of the first suburbs to get a light-rail line developed:

The line going out to Gresham...was really about equity. That is a community that has low-income issues, has real affordability issues. "How do we get a transit system to them so they can make it into work downtown or work in their communities?" (Interview 7)

That line has not caused the same rise in property values as other lines have for that reason. Gresham's version of the regional housing crisis is thus not one of a lack of affordability, but a lack of quality.

The staff member we interviewed from the City of Gresham is a part of the Urban Renewal Agency, and with a graduate degree and professional history in real estate and

development, is closely related to the growth machine. However, also as a native of the Rockwood neighborhood in Gresham, this participant also has a “great deal of heart in the community”. We spent most of the interview discussing the city’s unique approach to confronting the regional housing crisis through the Gresham Redevelopment Commission, which is in the process of creating an exciting new transit-oriented development called the Rockwood Rising Redevelopment Project:

Our biggest project right now is the redevelopment of a six-acre site right on the MAX in Rockwood. It used to be a Fred Meyer site... [and] is really geared toward creating a town center where people don’t have to rely on transit to get to it for the most part. It’s dead center of the Rockwood community. So we’re putting in a grocery marketplace...with vendors that would make up each of the departments of a grocery store so people can come to that place—centrally located, not rely on transit for the most part—and get access to the groceries that left when... literally 6 stores in 20 years left, in an area of growing population, and an area where it’s the most dense neighborhood east of Gateway in the metro area. (Interview 10)

This reflects several important themes from *Urban Fortunes*. Grocery stores were leaving because they weren’t making enough money. The continuous low returns on the exchange value of that land has caused six different private investments to leave, which shows the flexibility of large corporations who are much more able to go through land and property turnover in the pursuit of exchange values. Land parcels that have a low exchange value have much higher turnover rates, but when new investment doesn’t succeed, private capital will pull out, and the repetitive failure repels future investment. Because of the low exchange value of this land through twenty years of failed investment by six different grocers, the City of Gresham was able to buy the land at a very low cost, and maximize on its use value.

However, improving the use value of land can often lead to increased exchange value, which led us to question the potential that this development has to displace residents, raise property values, and “ironically kind of create the conditions where Rockwood begins to mirror the geographic areas that these businesses are trying to move to?” They excitedly responded:

I am so glad you asked that question, that is my favorite question that I get asked about this project, and the reason for that is that one of the very first things we set out to do on this project when we started it was to say “Let’s revitalize Rockwood without pushing people out to the next neighborhood the way it’s been happening a hundred other places.” The way that we have come up with our strategy to prevent that from happening, while still improving the neighborhood, is to create an economic engine in the heart of Rockwood that empowers local people to improve their own economic outlook. What does that mean? Gobbledy gook. What that means is that we’re putting specific uses and tenants in our project that give people opportunities. (Interview 10)

This demonstrates the local government’s foresight in trying to plan a project that would not cause the same regional patterns of skyrocketing property values and resultant displacement. “I would say that one project by itself is not going to raise property values and...we’re not putting in high end condos and wine bars, right? So part of it is what we’re not doing” (Interview 10). They are not including housing as a part of the project, but are instead trying to create an opportunity to help their lower-income residents find ways to keep pace with the changing economy. The “specific uses and tenants” that are being put into this project as a means to “empower” the community include:

The Oregon Employment Department is going to locate a Work Source Oregon field office in our project. 20,000 square feet of career counseling and job search services. So the folks in the community looking a for living wage job have a resource to go to get access to it. We’re putting in a small business development center, SBDC, which Mt. Hood Community College runs, they support local entrepreneurs giving them all the business advisory services that they need to start a business. We’re putting in ADX, which is a tech shop, a makers’ space...So folks who want to start a

business and make thing, have a place to actually go and make that thing and it won't cost them very much at all.

Thus, this project is not attracting the types of investment that are typically catalysts of the regional housing crisis. Instead, it is primarily serving as an employment resource to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for local residents. Not only does it seek out to empower small business owners, but also is including a sort of “employee pipeline” portion that will help connect local residents to jobs available in the area that they might not currently be qualified for or have the skills necessary to obtain:

The tech shop will also have relationships with some of the major manufacturers in Rockwood. So we have Boeing, which has a million square feet of manufacturing space a mile and a half from our site, as does John Deer, and Denton Plastics, and a whole bunch of big manufacturers. So those manufacturers have a bunch of living wage jobs that they can't fill today because they can't find skilled labor. At the same time we have people living in poverty in the community who can't get access to a living-wage job. So the tech shop will have certification programs where they will work with those manufacturers to train people in the community on the high-tech equipment that they need to become eligible to get those jobs, and the tech shop will receive income from the manufacturers to train people and provide a skilled labor force to those companies. (Interview 10)

Thus their solution is to spark a new source of economic stimulus for their community, and this participant sees it as a public good:

So no matter what color your collar whether it's white, blue, plaid, whether you want to start a business or get a living wage job, the resources are all there for you right there. So by doing that we're creating the kinds of amenities that will help people to improve their own financial situation, so that they can see their family economic situation improve, while the community improves. (Interview 10)

While this is reflective of growth machine ideologies, it is important to note that this project was largely inspired by the local governments' response to community members' expressed desires (although perhaps not their initial intention):

In 2006 the city put out an RFP¹⁰ for a developer and didn't know what they wanted to build, basically just saying "Hey developers come tell us what we should do and come build it!" That didn't go so well... So what we did was we had a lot of conversations with the community about what they wanted to see. We had all kinds of preference exercises and what they said was, "We want an opportunity to do our grocery shopping, we want an opportunity to start small businesses, and we want access to living-wage jobs. You go figure out what that looks like"...So we just went and talked to everybody we could think of, and we put together a project with tenants that we thought fit within that box, and held it up as a mirror to the community and said, "Is this what you meant? This is what we heard." And they said, "Yes! This is exactly what we were hoping for!" so we've gotten an overwhelmingly positive response but it's been because we asked the community what they wanted to see and they gave us broad answers to that...and so we went out and tried to find partners that would partner with us to deliver something that fit that description in a really specific way. (Interview 10)

Literature suggests the typical growth machine format includes local governments portraying growth as a public good, saying that it will bring new jobs, but then the reality often includes attracting jobs that don't fit the community's skill level. However, I believe the Rockwood Rising Redevelopment Project truly does deviate from this framework in the way that its providing employment opportunities that fit the local needs, and is including a resource to train residents in a way that will help them develop the skills they need to obtain the more high-skill, high-tech, and eventually high-paying jobs that already exist in their area. Of course, the political economy of place also suggests that growth machines seek to augment employment opportunities not only to benefit their constituents, but in turn benefit themselves and the growth potential for their city by broadening the tax base. It also reduces the amount of money the city needs to spend on

¹⁰ "A request for proposal (**RFP**) is a solicitation, often made through a bidding process, by an agency or company interested in procurement of a commodity, service or valuable asset, to potential suppliers to submit business proposals" (Wikipedia 2016).

social welfare services, thus allowing local governments to use those funds for further development or boosterism.

However, despite this participants' relation to the growth machine, the discourse reflected in this interview was not particularly indicative of the profit-seeking mentality; again, perhaps because of their roots in the community. This development also deviates from the traditional framework, as well as many of the stories from other suburbs in the Portland region, in its lack of NIMBY activism:

So my background is as a private sector developer, been doing it for 12 years, and I've gone into neighborhoods with projects where you have a lot of disagreements about whether a project should happen, how it should be executed, what the values are. The thing that I've been so impressed by on this project is how galvanized the community is in terms of wanting to see something positive happen here; and I don't know if it's a function of the levels of poverty that are here, the lack of development in general, or the fact that we don't have projects going up on every other corner, but for whatever reason, this community is absolutely galvanized around this project and really can't see it happen fast enough. (Interview 10)

The former private sector developer thus alludes to past experiences where NIMBYs have organized against projects they've been involved with, but concludes that this project has received nothing but support from the community. They also bring to question whether this is a function of the poverty in the community, and that people are just so desperate for opportunity and positive change in the community; or whether it is because they haven't had the same experiences with gentrification and displacement that other communities (Portland, Milwaukie, Beaverton, Hillsboro) have.

Overall this development project, while still reflective of themes presented in several growth machine analyses in promoting growth as a public good and solution to community deprivation (Domhoff 2015; Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1973 and

1993), takes a very different approach to promoting growth as a public good, especially as it is largely in response to the demands made by the community:

We've done a—I hope that we have—done a good job of listening to the community and taking their feelings into account in terms of how we've crafted the project. And also making certain that this project has a tremendous community benefit in terms of who builds it. So making sure that we have a certain threshold of Gresham subcontractors that are involved in the construction of the project. Not bringing in any major chains and tenants, but focusing on locally owned, small business, small entrepreneurs. So it's a project that is for the community and by the community, and that's kind of why I think we've got such good community support, because we've listened and we've tried to put something together that reflects community goals. I don't have any big chains or any big developers in my back pocket who are trying to pull strings to lead the project one way or another, the only accountability I have is to the community and to the leadership. (Interview 10)

This almost expressed a sense of relief for this participant, who has a history of working in an environment where profit is the ultimate goal and developers are the dictators of the project, in that they have the freedom to work in a way that they see as a benefit to their community.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted variations in local manifestations of the regional housing crisis between four distinct suburbs in the Portland region, as summarized in Table 4:

Table 4: Local Variations in Regional Housing Crisis

Suburb	Type of Suburb	Limits on Capacity to Address Local Version of Crisis	Proposed Solution
Hillsboro	Affluent Employing Suburb	UGB; Metro's extent of authority	Attract investment; Increase local autonomy
Gresham	Working-Class Residential Suburb	Extent of problem; Economic deprivation in community	Economic stimulus to help community keep pace
Milwaukie	Exclusive Working-Class	Lack of resources; Community	Use authority to make development decisions;

	Town		constituent work to combat NIMBYism
Beaverton	Contested Use Suburb	Political pressure from communities	Need tools from higher levels of government to meet their goals

Hillsboro fits Logan and Molotch’s (1987) textbook definition of an Affluent Employing Suburb with the region’s highest incomes and lowest unemployment rate, as well as a significant representation of local growth elites in the city government. They adamantly purported that the greatest limits to their capacity to provide adequate, and affordable housing units as the UGB and the extent to which Metro dictates their local affairs. Thus while they would ideally have increased local autonomy to accommodate growth on their own agenda, in the meantime they prioritize attracting investment and development, which promotes local growth as a common good.

On the other hand, Gresham fits the description of a Working-Class Suburb. With the lowest incomes in the region and the highest unemployment rate in the sample, it experiences chronic fiscal disparities in comparison to Portland’s other large suburbs. With few resources from the public tax base, and few amenities to attract new investment, property values and quality of living space in the suburb to the east are relatively low. As a result, much of the housing stock typifies "unintentionally" affordable housing, and is a common destination for displaced households.

Neither Beaverton nor Milwaukie fit Logan and Molotch’s (1987) three types of suburbs quite so closely as Hillsboro and Gresham. In some ways, they could each be seen as a hybrid of derived from the original types, and in other ways deviate to proffer alternative labels.

Milwaukie strikes me as a hybrid, and garners the new label of an “Exclusive Working-Class Town,” because of it is traditionally blue-collar constituency, coupled with the constituents’ desire to remain an exclusively residential town. However, this label could soon may not apply in coming years, as Milwaukie is amidst a significant sociopolitical transition in the heat of the regional housing crisis, largely due to the expansion of the Orange MAX Line. This raises the question: will Milwaukie face the same outcomes of growth as North Portland did, drastically gentrifying and displacing residents even further out? Is it past the point of no return? Only time will tell...but Milwaukie is certainly a locality to keep an eye on to witness the changes that will redefine the area over the next few years.

Beaverton in some ways represents all three of the suburban typologies laid out in *Urban Fortunes* thus could be labeled an “All-Encompassing” or “Hybrid Suburb”. In parts of the city, Beaverton exhibits characteristics of an “Affluent Employing Suburb” as it surrounds Nike World Campus; although technically Nike is in unincorporated Washington County, it is largely encompassed by Beaverton. In other areas it fits the bill for an “Exclusive Residential Town” in parts of the locality, such as “the affluent neighborhood off Murray”, who seek to maintain use values of residential land and open spaces, and oppose large development projects. Finally, areas of Beaverton represent a “Working-Class Suburb,” especially in neighborhoods with high immigrant populations.

However, unlike “Hybrid Suburb”—which could mean any combination of characteristics—the three original suburb types and one additional type that I posed for Milwaukie all present one overarching theme in regards to land use politics in that respective locality. In Beaverton and Washington, on the contrary, the most commonly

cited sociopolitical characteristic of the area is its political divisiveness. Therefore I alternatively label Beaverton a “Contested Use Suburb”, marked by the diverse interests represented within the community, and the conflicting viewpoints between members of their local government, leaving the city vulnerable to political fragmentation, and public backlash. This socioeconomic and political mix complicates the decision-making process for local government officials, and as a result they would benefit from having tools from higher levels of government to help reinforce their decisions.

In the subsequent discussion, I explore the implications of these findings, and consider how they either contribute to or challenge growth machine theories.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This thesis uses Logan and Molotch's (1987) theory of the "political economy of place" to analyze the Portland area's regional housing crisis. While there is a broad literature about the City of Portland exploring topics such as the area's regional government, transit development, gentrification, and urban poverty, there is little that explores how these trends impact the suburbs. Reviewing this literature through the theoretical framework, I find that Portland's housing crisis does exemplify several concepts from *Urban Fortunes* and brings up many questions over the use and exchange value of land, particularly in regards to light-rail and affordable housing development, and in many ways the City of Portland's local government has demonstrated growth coalition behavior.

Logan and Molotch (1987) chronicle the process of suburbanization from the beginning and present the differences in suburban form that take shape in modern day. Beginning as affluent neighborhoods that used annexation to remove themselves from problems in the urban core, some suburbs have become growth machines that have evolved into dominant employment centers, while some remain small residential communities and others slowly decay. Suburbs and growth coalitions are dependent on local autonomy, with government's overarching authority as far as land use and development goes, thus the home-rule system in America is one of the reasons that this city as a growth machine exists.

Deviating from the traditional theories of urban growth, Portland's housing crisis is unique due to its regional planning system through the Metropolitan Service District,

which controls all land use and development decisions within their region, most importantly, the urban growth boundary. Because Metro makes zoning, planning, and development decisions for the local governments, in some ways this regional approach places limits on the growth machine by limiting local autonomy and restricting sprawl and development.

Molotch (1993) discusses how growth machines vary in their form depending on local, state, and national political contexts; which leads me to question how the presence of Metro and the extent of its jurisdiction, coupled with Portland's focus on sustainability and land conservation—typically threats to growth coalitions—alter conditions of this theory. The political economy of urban growth in Portland exemplifies Logan and Zhou's (1990) assertion that “developers adapt to growth controls through aggressive public relations campaigns in which planning for *responsible growth*— rather than actual growth limitation— is touted”. Despite Portland's utilization of growth management strategies, developers and real estate conglomerates from all over the world have overlooked any restrictions to invest in, and tremendously profit from, the housing market.

I investigated these concepts by conducting interviews with elected officials and staff members from the city, county, and regional levels of government to investigate how government officials understand the regional housing crisis, its causes and effects, and their role in addressing it. I was particularly interested in participants' perceived jurisdictional capacity, which refers to the extent of a government official's authority, and their ability to act upon that authority within their respective jurisdictions; as well as how their answers varied by geographical location to examine disparities between suburbs.

Although regional governance is often posed as a solution to mitigate geographical inequalities within metropolitan areas, significant fiscal disparities exist between suburbs in the Portland region. This inequality is leveled out in Minnesota's regional governance, the Metropolitan Council, by means of the Fiscal Disparities Program, which redistributes a portion of tax revenues between the localities within the region. However, there is no such system in place in the Portland metro area, which explains how cities like Hillsboro are able to flourish while cities like Gresham struggle to keep pace. The only comparable regional tax gathered by through Metro is "an excise tax on construction permits throughout the Portland region to fund land use planning to make land ready for development throughout the region" (Metro 2015a). Another regional tax funds the operation of several cultural and recreational attractions including the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo. This tax structure leads me to consider the implications for regional equity. First, rather than sharing tax revenues among the suburbs to minimize the drastic fiscal disparities between them, the excise tax funds land use planning. Thus, because all land use planning is done by Metro, this shared regional tax is apparently what funds the agency's operations. Second, the other regional tax funds several major profit-accumulating attractions in the region. Thus regional tax dollars are used to pay for Metro's existence, and pursue profits through the zoo and convention center.

Application of growth coalition theories to Portland's Metropolitan Service District presents mixed results. Metro's control over land use and development through regional planning limits local autonomy, and places restraints on suburban growth machines. One such restraint, mandated by the State of Oregon but managed by Metro, is

the urban growth boundary. While limiting land consumption and suburban sprawl, it has also caused the simple market force of supply and demand to take over the housing market. This is augmented by the lack of regulatory policies such as rent caps or limits on no-cause evictions, as well as the statewide ban on inclusionary zoning. Thus, as articulated by many participants, “we need a statewide solution”; failing to provide cities with the tools and resources to protect them from the economic consequences of the UGB—until recently the only state with a ban on inclusionary zoning—Oregon’s efforts to be environmentally sustainable are limiting urban efforts to be socially sustainable. This reflects neoliberal ideology that “governments cannot create economic growth or provide social welfare; rather, by trying to help, governments make the world worse for everyone, including the poor” (Bockman 2013:14).

Metro still allows local governments to operate on their own terms as far as attracting investment, so long as it is within their zoning codes and plans. However, without a system of regionally shared tax revenues, fiscal disparities exist between the suburbs. This supports Logan and Molotch’s (1987) assertion that planning intensifies inequalities rather than levels them; without any redistributive tax base, Metro’s planning doesn’t make up for the socioeconomic differences between its cities. Thus, Metro and the City of Portland continue to face a lot of political pressure as the core thrives and communities to the North and East are severely neglected.

True to theory, suburban governments with growth machine governments see Metro's restriction on their autonomy as biggest limitation to their jurisdictional capacity, and see further growth and development as the best way to address the regional housing crisis. They are professional, technocratic governments in pursuit of growth, and friends

to developers, but face opposition from environmentalist groups and wealthy neighborhoods, Non-growth machine, "less sophisticated" (Interview 7) governments see their capacity as confined to their few financial resources, which limit their ability to incentivize developers; but also face a unique challenge in balancing the regional need to accommodate growth, with the values expressed by their constituents.

Conclusion

Good intentions need to come equipped with tools necessary to fulfill their purpose and prevent possible consequences, whether that is a policy or a governing body. This requires individual efforts at the state, regional, and local levels, interagency collaboration between governing bodies, as well as open-minded cooperation between the public and private sectors. **Metro Councilor**, Sam Chase, described one such effort that has been coordinated in response to the regional housing crisis:

There is the Housing Alliance...that is bringing together influential groups from around the region to try to help put together legislation that, you know, that address our affordable housing crisis...What I *can* say for the Housing Alliance, and what I think we need to think about as a region, is the sad reality that there is not a silver bullet solution...and *there are a lot of 5 percent solutions that are going to fix 5 percent of the problem*. So to me its an issue of (1) *regulatory work* that needs to be done...We need to look at (2) *resource strategies* around the region...and (3) we have to address the *supply issue*...So to me it's that three-part strategy: we need all of those pieces in place, and we need to push on all of those fronts, and we can't get stuck on just one solution, we have to get stuck on all those solutions, and push for all of those strategies. (The Big Idea: Rent Crisis)

This solution rests upon addressing the three main sources of this problem: a lack of regulatory measures, too few resources to incentivize development, and an insufficient supply of housing at all income levels. This three-prong solution requires all levels of government to do their part in contributing towards 5 percent of the solution. First, regulatory work must begin at the state level by passing meaningful legislation including

an inclusionary zoning bill with fewer limitations on what local governments can mandate, as well as lifting the ban on rent caps. Second, resources could be expanded by means of a regional tax-base; either to be shared and redistributed, or levied and allocated specifically to public housing programs. Finally, the supply issue calls for increased construction of housing units, both affordable and market rate, and in turn requires both the Metro Council and local governments to strengthen negotiations with developers.

Statewide Changes

Though the State of Oregon's Senate and House of Representatives passed a bill since the inception of this study that lifted the ban on inclusionary zoning, its effectiveness is questioned in comparison to its symbolic value. I see the bill as rather toothless, as it limits governments to only be able to require up to 20 percent of units to be reserved as "affordable", and sets the "threshold for affordability at 80 percent of the median family income...higher than the traditional 60 percent threshold" (Theriault 2016). Cities can, however, provide incentives to developers who "voluntarily offer rents at 60 percent or lower" (Ibid). Bill 1533 is the beginning of an uphill political battle in Salem, Oregon's capital, but the two state legislators who attended the Legislative Housing Emergency Forum, expressed both at the event and to reporters from *The Oregonian* a sense of optimism generated by this "very important first step" (Ibid).

A second bill that is widely called for is the repeal of ORS 91.225, which "prohibits cities and counties from enacting rent controls" (Francis 2015). Passed in 1985, and backed by organizations such as the Oregon State Homebuilders Association and Oregon Association of Realtors, the bill holds that "the imposition of general restrictions on housing rents will disrupt an orderly housing market, increase deferred

maintenance of existing housing stock, lead to abandonment of existing rental units and create a property tax shift from rental-owned to owner-occupied housing” (ORS 91.225). However, after thirty years of an unregulated housing market without measures to protect residents and maintain affordability, it is clear that market solutions are not sufficient to mitigate the effects of the regional housing crisis, and that it is now time for state intervention.

Alternative Regional Solutions

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota’s metropolitan area, is the only other comparable regional governing body that provides region-wide services and has policy-review power. The main difference between Portland and Minneapolis, to their advantage, is their “Fiscal Disparities Program” regional revenue sharing system that pools and redistributes 40 percent of total local revenues amongst all city governments in

Figure 5: Twin Cities Fiscal Disparities Tax-Base Sharing Program



Source: Metropolitan Council (2015)

the region; a system aimed at “evening out the fiscal resources of local government units” (Mitchell-Weaver 2000:865). By means of this redistribution of local wealth, the Twin Cities area does not suffer from the place-based inequalities quite so much as Portland; in fact one Metro Councilor listed them as an example of a region that is “ahead on that one”:

We're sort of on record of Portland having some of the greatest displacement. So we're not ahead on that one, we're not the winners, we're not the best at that. Seattle is doing good, Minneapolis is doing good, but we're not at the top of the game quite yet. (Interview 7)

Seattle has approved several levies since 1981 to develop affordable housing, resulting in the construction of over affordable 12,500 units, as well as “homeownership assistance to more than 800 first-time low-income home buyers and emergency rental assistance to more than 6,500 households” (Seattle 2016),

I have no doubt that these strategies could be effectively implemented in Portland, the real question lies in the difficulty the political battle might present. While a system of regionally reallocating of a portion of local tax revenues would benefit communities falling behind like Gresham, cities such as Hillsboro that thrive off of their ability to attract the investment that produces those revenues would likely object. This ties back into what Bragdon (2003) described as Metro's most significant political challenge: fragmented support divided along partisan—or geographical—lines. However, it also supports his assertion that regional governance has to provide real incentives for localities to cooperate and find a concern that crosses jurisdictions; in this case, the regional housing crisis. Many participants identified a lack of financial resources to incentivize the development of affordable housing, as well as a lack of community support for spending their tax money on such developments. Thus, I would suggest a regional tax, similar to Seattle's housing levies, which would specifically be used to for the development of affordable housing units; thus taking construction and negotiation pressures off of local governments, and expanding funding resource options.

Local Approaches

One of the best ways local governments can best represent their constituency and ensure diverse interests are brought to light, is by strengthening public involvement processes. Particularly important in communities experiencing neighborhood opposition to incoming affordable housing projects, Schively (2007) asserts that “understanding the basis for LULU opposition and perceptions of impacts can be very important to the effectiveness of planners in addressing NIMBY concerns” (256). Therefore in order to successfully ease the concerns of these citizens and diffuse public outrage, it is important for government officials first to simply listen and attempt to understand their perspectives to confirm they are heard. With that understanding, governments are better able to answer in a way that directly responds to their questions and calms their fears.

On the other hand, local governments are also responsible for making decisions that represent the needs of the marginalized and less powerful community members. Healey (2012) suggests that planners ought to extend their attention beyond technocratic planning practice in order to recognize the significance of micropolitics through collective action within and around governing bodies. In this approach termed "communicative planning", planners are to act as facilitators of consensus building in acknowledgement of the uneven distribution of power that traditionally exists in the planning process, and respond with a means of broadening diverse public involvement in "deliberations and dialogue that will eventually lead to some convergence of views and social learning" (Bishwapriya 2012:19-20). In this way, governments not only serve as a liaison between different constituent interest groups, but rather brings them together to

find mutually agreeable and beneficial solutions, while building trust within the community.

In sum, I assert that the best way to effectively mitigate the housing crisis is through interagency coordination, collaborative planning, and public involvement processes. The public sector, at every level of government throughout the Portland metropolitan region, should be taking proactive steps to solicit partnerships and cultivate collaborative efforts that will give a variety of stakeholders the opportunity to participate in finding creative, incremental solutions to this problem. By creating coalitions that span across sectors, and providing opportunities for community members to engage in the decision-making processes, government officials can unite their communities to take combined action, and implement negotiated strategies every level of the problem.

Though there are many concerns that also deserve regional attention (i.e., educational inequalities, expanding transportation infrastructure, environmental sustainability), shelter is a basic human need, thus supersedes other urban concerns as a fundamental necessity life. Without a safe, stable housing situation, individuals and their families are not able to address any other economic, social, or emotional problems they might have. When peoples' basic needs are met through securing a home and having the economic means to provide for themselves, only then are they able to be productive members of their community. In a time and place that all members of society have their essential needs met, communities will be able to come together to find solutions that solve their most pressing issues, and create the conditions that will advance their community's prosperity for generations to come.

That time is now, and that place is the Portland metropolitan area. I firmly believe that we have the resources and dedication in this thriving region that are necessary to meaningfully address this housing crisis, as well as the ambitious public servants at every level of government to lead these collaborative efforts.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

We are interested in how issues of sustainability and development interact at the local government level. “Transit-oriented development” can be seen as a compromise that addresses calls for both environmental and economic sustainability. For many, the construction of ‘park and ride’ facilities and environmentally-friendly light rail transit is a welcome convenience linking them with other parts of the Portland Metropolitan area while creating jobs and “upscale” economic development around transit points. People can get to work without the use of a car, for the most part, and generally see transit-oriented development as part of Oregon’s “smart development” ethos.

Recent research has also focused, however, on how light rail and other transit-oriented developments can affect property values and potentially displace low-income residents to locations that are farther away from the jobs they rely on to provide for themselves and their families. Basically, for some, where people live is not where the jobs are. For low-income residents who rely on transit to get to work, proximity is a critical issue. Sometimes the further out you go, the further you have to go.

Questions

1. When decisions get made about transit or development, do they take these effects into account? If so, how? If not, why? Please explain.
2. Are these issues anticipated or not? If so, by whom – which individual and groups?
3. Are these issues meaningfully addressed, whether or not they were initially anticipated? If not, are they viewed as unwarranted or irrelevant? How so?
4. How do you think the perspectives of staff members, elected officials, NIMBYs, and community stakeholders might differ on these issues? Please explain both what you believe, and what you have seen in your professional experience.
5. Who are the major interests you see operating on this issue? Where do they exist, and are they successful? Which groups and interests are more powerful? Are there others you think should have more say or weight in the decision-making process?
6. What do these discussions look like in public sessions of City Council or County Commission meetings? In in closed private sessions?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?