The Structures of Trauma and Inequality:

A Case Study of Durham North Carolina’s Housing Market

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Abstract

In this interdisciplinary paper, I explore the structures of trauma and inequality as well as the mechanisms that provide the framework for power accumulation and preservation. I apply this understanding of how this framework functions to the local housing market in Durham, North Carolina. Through a critical examination of historic patterns of housing inequalities, an analysis of contemporary policy and primary documents, interviews with key stakeholders, and the use of demographic data, I pose the question of whether or not the parallels between structures of trauma and structures of inequality are currently reproduced in Durham’s housing market.
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People are starving, and this is their solution... They turn victims into criminals.
They aim guns at people who can’t shoot back.

The Lowland, a novel by Jhumpa Lihiri
Introduction: Setting the Stage; an Invisible Abuser

It is such a strange thing, a painful thing, to have another person declare some trait or behavior or way of being, as definitive, unequivocal, and true with a capitol “T” about oneself when it is resoundingly incorrect. It is a distortion of the deepest, and cruelest kind. As is the case with suffocating or desperately seeking an exit in a room made of bricks, there’s no way out of the dilemma. There is no protest viable enough, no truth strong enough to counter, no rejoinder powerful enough to create a pause in which some kind of personal truth can emerge, assert itself and be heard. It is the hearing that will never arrive. Amidst the panic and the confusion and the bewilderment, that hearing will remain at bay, serving the function of creating power, denial, and a coup de grace that’s all murder and no grace.

It seems so obvious, even easy, to raise one’s voice, to remind the other – the friend, partner, relative, power-that-be – that this Truth they so willy-nilly assert is everything Wrong; that it is made of lies, that it is made of distortions that served someone else but never served oneself. But it is a protest that’s a lost voice and breath of air carried away on thermals, a companion to ospreys, barn swallows, and finches more than a player in what would be, could be a conversation. It is a breath that can never be caught. It is a swallowing whole and a complete destruction that masquerades as civility. A person, a community, a life left without words to vocalize, since they no longer work, without a voice to speak, since it won’t be heard, and all the blame pouring
down – hail in a hailstorm that will never end.

How can a person fight that? What could possibly be done in a situation like that? Any resistance can be labeled as difficult, aggressive, or violent. Any emotional expression is a moral failing – too sensitive, too angry, too weak, too dumb. Too wrong. There’s no way out. There’s no way forward. And that’s the point. That’s when power-over has succeeded, and the more it succeeds the stronger it gets. Like a tiny snowball that, rolled over and over again in the snow, becomes not a charming snowman, but an abominable snowman. That is how trauma behaves. It is silencing, warps reality, distorts what’s real, blames the victim, and employs fear. It uses these mechanisms to bring power to life in a violent and destructive way.

That is also how structural inequality behaves. It silences, warps reality, distorts what’s real, blames the victim, and employs fear. It uses these mechanisms to bring power to life in a violent and destructive way. It is the same tools used in a different place, but to the same end. The way an abuser blames his victim and abdicates all responsibility; systems of inequality produce almost endless consequences and blames those who are suffering most. The parallel is unmistakable. And the parallel is tragic. But it is not an inevitable parallel. There are possibilities to interrupt that parallel to be, despite an unwillingness to hear, brought into the conversation, and heard. A discussion is possible and imperative for the road to justice and reparations.

This parallel is clear when we look through the lens of history. Our forefather’s sins are easier to condemn than our own – though they weren’t in the moment of
present that has now become past. They are also easier to see, to identify, quantify, and rebuke. To see the mechanisms of slavery, for instance, as a mechanism of trauma is simple. There is no other way to see it. Our mainstream society teaches us that in the youngest of years. But our own sins are much harder to see, and so much harder to condemn. We understand ourselves to be, after all, such very good people\(^1\). Our intentions are true and pure, we insist, and therefore, the consequences must be the same. It is here, in the present, that the parallel between trauma and structural inequality becomes so much harder to see. We are, after all, trying so hard, and studying so astutely. We have learned so much and while the scholars, policymakers, and lawmakers of the past have been flawed, we most certainly are not. We, thank heaven, have figured it out and discarded the yokes of past bigotry, racism, and hate. Thank heaven.

Or not, as structural inequality persists so belligerently. The education and wealth gaps yawn at us stubbornly. The rates of incarceration for black men rise exponentially. If we are such good people, how do we account for these facts? The lens of history might be clearer, but we are no less culpable. And if one of the undergirders of inequality has always been trauma, then it begs the question of whether or not it continues to be so today. If so, it must be exposed, fleshed out, and acknowledged.

\(^1\) It’s important to note that the “we” in this sentence refers to individuals whose perspective categorizes themselves as “good people” who are free of the “sins” we condemn from the past – the racism and inequality mainstream society teaches even the youngest children is wrong. Many individuals, for reasons of analysis, race and/or ethnicity and sometimes class do not fall into this grouping and understand the contemporary realities of racism, structural inequality and its vast and pernicious effect and implications.
Healing never arrives in silence.

The question, of course, is enormous. Too big for any one paper, and too big, even to grasp all at once. However, taking a smaller bite is useful. I do just this as I apply this framework of trauma and structural inequality to the current 2016 Durham, North Carolina housing market by exploring some contemporary policies, codes, and plans for the communities and neighborhoods here. Does this pattern, so pervasive in American history, persist today? I write about the history of housing and policy nationally as well as locally to first make the connection between systems of trauma and the system of inequality active in the American housing market. I then focus on the present, and explore through research, data, and interviews with housing stakeholders this very question in order to determine how reparations can be a critical way to approach and think about a different policy future and, in fact, a different future in general for Durham itself.

Methods

My research methods for this paper span multiple disciplines including history, psychology, social sciences and theory in order to fully capture the scope of the argument presented in this paper. Leveraging multiple disciplinary methods also allowed me to come to a unique understanding of complicated and oft-discussed topics and proceed to a full defense of my thesis. In the scope of my research I accessed and
found a wide variety of historic, psychological, theoretical, and sociological sources to be useful in defending my argument. These sources were both secondary and primary. Many of the primary sources were specific to Durham and its planning history and included historic documents, plans, maps, photographs, and historic audio recordings.

In addition to my multi-disciplinary research I created my own data set by conducting interviews. The process included securing Duke Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and interviewing eleven key stakeholders in the housing market in the Durham, NC area including a city council member, previous resident of Hayti, and contemporary housing planning consultant to the city of Durham.

Through my research I found that not only has trauma been produced in the past via structural inequality, specifically in the era of urban renewal in the 60s, but that it is indeed occurring again in the present moment. Interestingly, both the past trauma and current trauma can be tied to the federal government but for different reasons: in the 1960s, due to the federal government’s direct intervention into affordable housing, and currently in 2016 due to the federal government’s intentional inaction and decreased funding which has forced Durham, like other governments, to seek other methods of securing affordable housing, specifically public-private partnerships. It is an action through inaction.
Chapter One
An Analytical Framework: The Parallel Structures of Abuse and Racism²

The structures of abuse and institutional racism parallel each other in the mechanisms used to perpetuate, maintain, victimize, assert, coalesce, and maintain power. Not often discussed in this manner, the majority of academic literature or popular media focuses, typically, on one or the other. Or, if there is an intersection, it addresses the traumatic nature of institutional racism. In this paper I will refer to trauma as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “A psychic injury, esp. one caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed; an internal injury, esp. to the brain, which may result in a behavioural [sic] disorder of organic origin. Also, the state or condition so caused” (“trauma, n.,” n.d.). I will refer to trauma and racism as systems, here defined as “A set or assemblage of things connected, associated, or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity; a whole composed of parts in orderly arrangement according to some scheme or plan; rarely applied to a simple or small assemblage of things” (“system, n.,” n.d.). Comparing the two systems as such, and seeing them as interlocking, is critical in order to fully understand the ways in which smaller parts come together to function as a larger whole.

² Note that the analytical framework was written as a part of a final paper for an independent study with Dr. Wahneema Lubiano in the Spring semester of 2015.
Understanding these separate systems as parallel is fundamental to the process both of undoing the system of institutional racism as well as doing the work of seeking reparations. Both, I argue, are necessary in order to heal as individuals and as a country from a system that has denied power to a specific group (and groups) of people via systematic exploitation that parallels abuse.

In this paper I explore the parallel structures and mechanisms of the systems in order to demonstrate their graphic similarities. Doing so allows a foundation for digging more deeply into the ways in which the United States avoids reparations, why reparations are critical and possible, and how this process would mimic the process of healing and survival just as contemporary institutional racism emulates abuse. Most importantly, pointing out these similarities isn’t for the purpose of noting the obvious, but rather a critical step to undoing structural inequality and racism. Scholarship exploring trauma and abuse abounds whether in article or book. The same can be said for scholarship on institutional racism, structural inequality, and the criminal justice system. This paper attempts to bring disparate disciplines together to order and map shared knowledges and, so doing, build the case for reparations.

The structures of abuse and institutionalized racism follow predictable and consistent patterns that I discuss in two sections. The first section includes those patterns that originate outside of the victim, i.e. the abuser or perpetrator inflicts harm by the use of the mechanisms delineated in this section. These mechanisms include: 1) warping and denying logic, 2) blaming the victim, 3) silence, and 4) the use of fear as a regulator. The focus throughout remains on the perpetrator as the nexus of abusive
action with the agency to both inflict harm as well as create a positive and healthy environment. If the institutions of our country are, metaphorically speaking, a primary care giver to a child, they are perpetrator and abuser. As I point out, however, they also have the agency to empower and to create an integrated sense of self at the individual and collective levels.

Institution as Abuser: Inflicting Harm

1. Warping/ denying reality

Warping and/ or denying reality is one of the ways an abuser inflicts harm on their victim. It is also one of the ways that institutional racism behaves, making this form of harm the first example demonstrating the parallels and similarities between the two systems. In distinct ways, the parallels of a disaggregated system of attachment stemming from an abusive primary caregiver mirror a larger social and economic structure of institutional racism. Lisa Marie Cacho says, “As ways of knowing and methods of meaning-making, race, gender, and sexuality simultaneously erase and make sense of what should have been a contradiction by making racial contradictions common sense” (Cacho, 2012, p. 2). This erasure of logic and simultaneous sense-making from contradiction in the system of inequality resonates with similarity in regards to the parallel system of abuse. Patricia Evans refers to this erasure of common sense, something that could be considered a warping of reality, as a hallmark of verbal abuse. Evans explains that, in the course of her work, the most significant discovery she found was that “the verbal abuser and the partner seemed to be living in two different
realities [italics original]. The abuser’s orientation was toward control and dominance. The partner’s orientation was toward mutuality and co-creation. In many respects they were two different realities” (Evans, 2010, p. 29). Evans names these realities Reality I and Reality II and explains that they “correspond to Power Over and Personal Power models. In other words, those who feel power over through dominance and control (Power Over) are living in Reality I. Those who feel power through mutuality and creativity (Personal Power) are living in Reality II [italics original]” (Evans, 2010, p. 30).

Evans argues that “Verbal abuse used to control the partner without the partner’s knowledge is called ‘crazymaking.’ ‘The sustaining of power seems to be one key factor in CM [crazymaking] behavior. It appears to be a way of asserting dominance while denying its existence or the wish for it’” (Evans, 2010, p. 45). Critically here, Evans points out that the exertion of power over exists at the same time that it is being denied. In this way power perpetuates itself, as Cacho described earlier, by inverting logic, making sense from contradiction, and erasing another’s experience of reality. This warping of logic we can, therefore, see as intrinsic to the system of institutional racism as well as the system of abuse. Denial of reality is a related dynamic, and one Molefi Kete Asante cites when he describes an incident in 2001 whereby the Bush administration refused to send Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa. He notes, “The United States, the nation that had gained the most from the enslavement of Africans and the one that had done the most to obliterate the disadvantages of that condition, refused to take leadership or even to meet in the same room as other world nations” (Asante, 2009, p. 31).
2. Blaming the Victim & Scapegoating

We can see this systemic parallel again in the ways institutional racism blames the victim and scapegoats. Judith Herman discusses this trait in systems of abuse when she references “The propensity to fault the character of the victim” (Herman, 1997, p. 115). This “blaming the victim” pattern that can accompany trauma victims connects to the ways in which institutional racism blames those who are, for example, living in poverty and seemingly unable to extricate themselves from it. “Get a job”, “the welfare queen”, and “pull yourselves up by your bootstraps” or Horatio Alger myth are common American beliefs but they are divorced from not only the realities of poverty (in this example) but also the realities of trauma whether it is the trauma of poverty, violence, racism, or other forms of oppressions. Cacho reveals the entitlement that undergirds the assumption that some mistake inalienable human rights as privileges that can be given (or taken away) when she says, “By definition an inalienable right cannot be taken or given away, and, therefore, it cannot really be conferred. Regardless of citizenship status, whether people of color deserve rights and resources is often questioned because those with social privilege often still interpret economic, social, political, and/or legal integration as a (conditional) ‘gift’” (Cacho, 2012, p. 7). This analysis underscores the aforementioned contemporary myths like “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” which hold those who have “made it” as deserving and their accomplishments as totally originating in themselves, as opposed to arising from received privilege, wealth and
status versus those who have not as undeserving and at fault as opposed to looking at systemic issues like racism and classism.

Molefi Kete Asante expresses his feelings on this topic saying, “I have been particularly offended by the sociological explanations of racism and the “do nothing” or “blame the victims” attitude that many of those analyses imply” (Asante, 2009, p. 32). Loïc Wacquant similarly spells this out, noting that “…programs aimed at vulnerable populations have at all times been limited, fragmentary, and isolated from other state activities, informed as they are by a moralistic and moralizing conception of poverty as a product of the individual failings of the poor” (Wacquant, 2009, p. 42). He makes it clear that a larger system (in this case state programs) find fault with the individuals as opposed to the programs and system of programs themselves.

In the most straightforward way, Herman and her co-authors remind us that,

The [Trauma Recovery Group] recognizes that impact of early experiences and relationships with caregivers in shaping individuals’ development and expectations of self and others. It assumes that ‘individuals repeat emotional and behavioral patterns that were of value to them when they attempted to solve difficulties in the past’...(Herman et al., 2011, p. 21).

The clarity with which these authors approach the topic is helpful, especially when applying it to the topic of institutional racism and systems of power over like white supremacy and genocide since they note that it is the “early experiences and relationships” the shape the individual and that these early patterns will be repeated later in life. This analysis stands in stark contrast to blame being placed on the shoulder of the individual and victim since it refocuses the locus of blame from the victim onto the perpetrator. It also illustrates the powerful impact of trauma insofar as its impact
occurs not only at the moment (or time period) of the trauma itself, but is most often ongoing for the lifetime of the victim given the patterns set into motion by the trauma itself and as epigenetics now demonstrates, potentially continuing into the lifetimes of further generations also. Entrenching maladaptive behavioral patterns is one of the powerful mechanisms by which abuse continues to inflict harm on the victim. We can see this parallel whether the victim is an individual survivor of, for instance, child abuse, or an individual or group who is/are collective survivor(s) of institutional racism. Sweezy describes this phenomenon in relation to shame, explaining that, “Shaming is an extraordinarily dynamic phenomenon that loops from external to internal relationships and back, gathering strength like a hurricane that can blow the message I am flawed and alone through generations” (Sweezy, 2013, p. 33). To be sure, experiences of abuse, whether in the form of child abuse or racism, can last not only for the lifetime of an individual, but can reverberate through generations.

Jonathan Metzl navigates the same linguistic and intellectual landscape to demonstrate the ways in which an oppressive system creates trauma and highlights how the victim (individual) becomes the lightning rod for blame not only for purposes of scapegoating but for the purposes of preserving and perpetuating white privilege and power. Metzl builds a meticulous case tracing the shift in medical records from primarily diagnosing white women with schizophrenia, and attributing more “feminine” characteristics to the disease, to primarily diagnosing black men with the disease. He outlines this process in the preface stating that,

*In 1968, in the midst of a political climate marked by profound protest and social unrest, psychiatry published the second edition of the [DSM]. That text recast the*
paranoid subtype of schizophrenia as a disorder of masculinized belligerence. ‘The patient’s attitude is frequently hostile and aggressive…and his behavior tends to be consistent with his delusions.’ Growing numbers of research articles from the 1960s and 1970s used this language to assert that schizophrenia was a condition that also afflicted ‘Negro men’, and that black forms of the illness were more hostile and aggressive than were white ones (Metzl, 2009, p. xv).

Metzl concludes,

Thus did African-American men at Ionia [mental hospital] develop schizophrenia, not because of changes in their clinical presentations, but because of changes in the connections between their clinical presentations and larger, national conversations about race, violence, and insanity. And thus did the men develop schizophrenia not just because of symptoms, but because of civil rights (Metzl, 2009, p. 94).

Through his research, Meztl proved that as the civil rights movement gained power and developed concrete results, a larger power structure (in this institutional racism via the system of health care) responded in such a way that it might maintain or regain control over. We should remember here Evan’s definitions of Reality I as “power over” as this, importantly, underscores the parallel between systems of abuse and institutional racism. Metzl puts it this way,

...medical sources from the 1960s and 1970s suggest that the reality of schizophrenia was also, and at times primarily, shaped by a dynamic whereby the project of helping certain groups of people merged all too easily with the project of controlling them (Metzl, 2009, p. 108).

Metzl shows us how individual who are victims are literally blamed and turned into scapegoats. He reminds us that this “project” was not only about control and, as I suggest, power, but also about shifting the source of the blame from the perpetrator to the victim. Poignantly Metzl describes this shift describing how a doctor documented the defiance in his patient, Caesar William, blaming the patient as opposed to the
system to which he was responding. He notes, “Dr. Murrows located this defiance not in society, history, or the insane prison system. Instead he located his illness solely in the black man who stood before him, through logic that connected the color of Caesar William’s skin to the moral workings of his psyche” (Metzl, 2009, p. 89). This is an important piece of the picture in that it highlights how the larger structure of power and privilege acted to preserve itself, but that it also did so by shifting the blame onto the victim – a critical aspect in the way white supremacy and our American power structure parallels systems of abuse and trauma.

3. Use of Fear as Regulator

As we’ve seen in the previous two sections, the system of institutional racism parallels the system of abuse through 1) warping and denying logic and 2) blaming the victim. We’ll now turn to the ways in which these systems parallel each other via the use of fear as a regulator. Herman discusses shame in both its normal, healthy usage in societies to form behavior and expectations as well as its abnormal, unhealthy usage. In reference to attachment theory and shame she says,

*...we also see disorganized attachment where the primary attachment figure is unremitting shame. In this case, the child is torn between need for emotional attunement and fear of rejection or ridicule. She forms an internal working model of relationship in which her basic needs are inherently shameful....disorganized attachment in infancy was strongly correlated with adolescent dissociation* (White & Yellin, 2012, p. 158).
This explanation is of particular interest in regards to the connection Herman makes between the use of shame versus the use of fear as “regulators”. She says,

*Under ordinary conditions of peace, I would suggest that shame is one of the primary regulators of social relations. Fear is the primary regulator only in circumstances where social structures for maintaining peace have broken down and social relations are ruled by violence* (White & Yellin, 2012, p. 157).

The shift from shame to fear and violence as a social regulator describes the shift that takes place within the unit of a family of abusive relationship between a child and primary caregiver. In parallel manner, this description of abusive behavior also describes the use of fear and violence as a regulator in the wider context of government rule and the traumatic, abusive ways in which the American state targets its most vulnerable citizens. We can see this laid out almost too neatly by Wacquant’s analysis of the American system of white supremacy and criminalization. He explains that,

*America has launched into a social and political experiment without precedent or equivalent in the societies of the post war West: the gradual replacement of a (semi) welfare state by a police and penal state for which the criminalization of marginality and the punitive containment of dispossessed categories serve as social policy at the lower end of the class and ethnic order* (Wacquant, 2009, p. 41).

Punishing those who have been “dispossessed” (and disempowered) as opposed to the even only slightly better option of patronizing them turns a broken system into an abusive one, moving from ineffective to traumatic and toxic, and (as Wacquant says) punishing. In short,

*The diffusing social insecurity and escalating life disorders caused by desocialization of wage labor and the correlative curtailment of social protection, in turn, were curbed by the stupendous expansion of the penal apparatus that has propelled the US to the rank of world-leader in incarceration* (Wacquant, 2009, pp. 43–44).
4. Silence and the Failure to Bear Witness in Contrast to Testimony

As Herman states, there are two critical aspects of all healing practices, “The second is the practice of the talking cure: putting feelings into words, and unburdening shameful secrets” (Herman, 2008, p. 294). Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub echo the critical nature of talking and sharing one’s story when they refer to a patient, saying, “...it was her very talk to me, the very process of her bearing witness to the trauma she had lived through, that helped her now to come to know the event” (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 62). Herman, Felman, and Laub all underscore how important it is not only for a survivor to share a story, but also for them to truly be heard by their listener. As Laub puts it, “The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time” (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 57). It becomes clear that it is critical not only for the survivor to tell their story, but in order for them to come to really understand their own trauma and enter recovery, they must be truly heard by an active listener.

This process of telling and hearing is interesting in the context of American racism, poverty, inequality, and oppression and their presences in abusive systems. This process adds another layer of, at the very least recovery prevention, and at the worst, a deepening of the abusive system. For instance, if the experience of oppression is a traumatic one (and I would contend that it is) then it is critical, as Laub and Herman say, for the survivor to be able to tell their story and then, importantly, for them to be heard. However, with American politics, media, and an unfortunately high number of citizens
believing that, for example, poor people are poor because they don’t work hard or someone who sells drugs deserves to be incarcerated because they’re a criminal, then what we’re looking at is a repeating pattern of silencing of stories and blaming the victim. The critical process so emphatically supported by Herman and Laub, then, is entirely circumvented. This circumvention, in the context of the critical role telling/listening plays in trauma recovery, consequently entirely undermines entirely recovery. Looking at this on the scale not only of the individual trapped in the systems of oppression (and perhaps abuse) but also entire communities and subsequent generations, the resistance on the part of American citizens and systems to hear the trauma they perpetuate prevents recovery. If, in order to end the trauma (and re-traumatizing), one must re-externalize the event, which can only occur when one can tell the story (and by so doing “hear” it again) and transmit it to another in order to take it back again inside (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 69), then America’s institutions, in this paper understood to be specifically institutional racism, is retraumatizing its citizens. Laub says, “As such the testimonial enterprise is yet another mode of struggle against the victims’ entrapment in trauma repetition, against their enslavement to the fate of their victimization” (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 70). To prevent this testimony, then, is to prevent this avenue for struggle. It is, additionally, a silencing of truth, which further allows (as discussed earlier) for the warping of reality. Laub puts it this way: “The absence of an empathetic listener, or more radically, the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story”(Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 68).
If annihilation follows silencing, then truth and testimony can promote healing, survival, and change. Remember, Herman underscores the point that storytelling is critical to healing. She says, “In the telling, the trauma story becomes a testimony...Testimony has both a private dimension, which is confessional and spiritual, and a public aspect, which is political and judicial” (Herman, 1997, p. 181). It is here that she connects for us the personal and individual healing to the healing of community at the collective political and judicial level and it is here that we intersect with the collective processes of healing and reparations in places like South Africa. South Africa’s truth and reconciliation process emphasizes testimony and truth telling, forgiveness, and healing in order to move forward. Herman elaborates on testimony and telling a story of trauma, “Richard Mollica describes the transformed trauma story as simply a ‘new story’, which is ‘no longer about shame and humiliation’ but rather ‘about dignity and virtue.’ Through their storytelling, his refugee patients ‘regain the world they have lost’” (Herman, 1997, p. 181). This regaining of a world lost connects to Wacquant’s work as discussed earlier, except it is not a world that has been lost on the part of the poor in the US, it is a world stolen, thieved through a toxic and traumatic penal system and institutionalized racism.
Chapter Two:  
History of National and Regional Housing and Policy

With the analytical framework and definitions in place, it is important to now turn to history to understand the patterns of trauma and structural inequality within the context of the past and how they have emerged institutionally and structurally via policy and government intervention within the housing market. Taking first a big picture view, we look at the patterns with a national lens, focusing on federal policy and resulting national effects and implications. Immediately following, I explain the historic consequences in Durham, NC of these federal policies including the devastation of Hayti.

History of National Housing Policy

The American Dream is built on an image of a new home with the perfect picket fence, the 2.5 kids, and the shiny Ford in the driveway\(^3\). Throw in a dog and you have yourself a winner. The relevance and validity of such a dream aside, the path to this dream, for which the housing market is inextricable, has been considered something of a rite of passage for Americans, the thing that sets us apart from other nations -- our independence, our tenacity, our bootstraps. The American investment in this dream,

\(^3\) Note that much of this section is drawn from an original paper written for Dr. Laura Richman’s Spring 2016 class “Stereotypes and Stigma”.
and the path to it, is significant and fervent. Increasingly, however, the dream is under scrutiny and the path, questioned. Far from being accessible to all Americans, it has been instead an almost exclusive domain of white America. The path to the dream house, as it were, is not only devoid of meritocracy, but is the well-worn path used to create, entrench, and perpetuate racism and inequality via the housing market. Critical and insightful research into the areas of stigma, racism, and housing can be useful in helping individuals and policymakers to better understand the implications of this reality and, in turn, to make better policy that can help all Americans regain or attain this American dream.

It is additionally important to understand the relationship between psychology and the history of housing inequality and policy in light of the current national and local urban revitalization and gentrification trajectories. What some individuals consider a smart financial decision – buying a home in a gentrifying neighborhood - is actually a larger part of how housing policy and the history of housing market logic disenfranchises certain groups of people. It seems so unlikely a candidate to be a vessel for stigma, racism, and inequality -- a pretty house on a hill. But the combination of stereotyping, stigma, and housing policy has made it so.

To gain a deeper, more thorough understanding of the way housing policy has been influenced by racism and the stereotyping and stigma undergirding it, we must back up not only into history but also into the psychology that has informed it. Patricia Devine outlines the foundation stereotypes build psychologically. She explains that, "stereotypes have a longer history of activation and are therefore likely to be more
accessible than are personal beliefs” (Devine, 1989, p. 6). She goes further to outline the implications this psychological foundation have on behavior, saying, “The present data suggest that when automatically accessed the stereotype may have effects that are inaccessible to the subject (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Thus, even for subjects who honestly report having no negative prejudices against Blacks, activation of stereotypes can have automatic effects that if not consciously monitored produce effects that resemble prejudiced responses” (Devine, 1989, p. 12). In one clean swoop, then, Devine demonstrates that stereotype activation can produce prejudiced response. This demonstration is critical when considering that policy is, after all, created and passed by individuals. The potential for biased and prejudiced behavior, even unwittingly manifested, has obvious and far-reaching implications, of course. If a policy-maker makes a decision or recommendation based on a stereotype, the result, as Devine points out, can be prejudicial.

American housing policy history is rife with what could be considered subconscious prejudice as well as conscious and intentional prejudice. Explicit prejudice and racism has been, historically, pervasive in housing policy in the United States. For example, in 1939 the Federal Housing Authority, led by Homer Hoyt, created and published a report called, “The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities.” The title, innocuous enough, masked the fact that the report stressed the maintenance of segregation (Kimble, 2005). Appalling to most people today, this pre-civil rights era housing policy entrenched the segregation of America’s neighborhoods and unequal access to housing. Housing policy at the time also
unequally impacted whites and blacks by allowing for industrial and commercial real
estate use in African-American neighborhoods while restricting these uses in white
neighborhoods (Gordon, 2014) -- thereby preserving the integrity of white
neighborhoods and damaging the African-American neighborhoods in terms of both
quality and property value.

The housing policies of the World War II era also reflected the stigma and racism
of the time. As GIs returned home from war and the country attempted to keep up with
the demand for housing the GI Bill came into being as a way to help veterans returning
from war attain loans and access to housing that would have previously been
inaccessible to them or their families. A critical vehicle for wealth accumulation, this
policy fast-tracked white families in their wealth accumulation (ibid). But, since it was
mostly denied to veterans of color and their families, it prevented a critical door to
wealth-accumulation from opening for them (Sullivan, Ali, Perez de Alejo, Miller, &
Baena, 2013). George Lipsitz puts it plainly when he says, “The Federal Housing Act of
1934 brought home ownership within the reach of millions of citizens by placing the
credit of the federal government behind private lending to home buyers, but overtly
racist categories in the Federal Housing Administration’s (FHA’s) ‘confidential’ city
surveys and appraisers’ manuals channeled almost all of the loan money toward whites
and away from communities of color” (Lipsitz, 1995). Or more succinctly, “Federal home
loan policies have placed the power of the federal government behind private
A final housing policy, redlining, made certain that white families could access loans for housing but prevented black families from doing the same (Michaels and Stasio, 2014). James Greer defines redlining succinctly as follows, “the publicly created disinvestment of a surprisingly large portion of the standing housing stock across wide swaths of central city neighborhoods” (Greer, 2014). He goes on to expand, outlining that,

*Historical redlining was geographic in character and resulted from public policies formulated at the national level and the actions of federal agencies that implemented these policies. Federal agencies established empirically based risk assessments of community housing markets based on both the quality, amenities, basic structural features, and upkeep of the housing stock as well as the social class, ethnic, and racial makeup of residents of a neighborhood. On the basis of these assessments, a large portion of the nation’s neighborhood housing markets were determined to pose too high a risk for the newly established long term, fully amortized mortgages that were created by New Deal legislation. These areas were denied mortgage insurance and redlined. (ibid.)*

The foundation of systemic inequality laid by redlining, or exacerbated by inequality, becomes even clearer when we see an original redlining map of Durham from 1937. The red areas, too risky for mortgages, were almost entirely African-American.
Simply put, redlining is the practice of “denying benefits based on racial divides” (ibid.). Here again we see the impact that stereotyping, stigma and racism have on policy and, consequently, the people impacted by it.

The influence of policy -- both positive (opening doors to wealth accumulation for whites via the GI Bill, for instance) and negative (preventing black families from
securing loans to buy homes and thereby accumulate wealth via redlining, for example) - has had clear and direct impact on perpetuating inequality. We can see, then, that a stereotype that some consider harmless, silly, or unimportant, can move into the realm of racism, and inequality with worrisome dexterity and consequence.

By understanding the housing market as something that creates and reinforces bias, prejudice, and inequality, as opposed to an innocuous and neutral economic engine, we can understand the ways in which it has historically paralleled the structure of trauma. American rhetoric about welfare queens and lazy poor people point to the pattern of blaming the victim. While American policy has set about creating ghettos, impoverishing neighborhoods, and funneling wealth into white communities while preventing it from entering black communities, the rhetoric that blames poor people or those unable to climb the economic ladder for their lot emulates this blaming the victim pattern which acts as a mechanism to create and perpetuate trauma. Warping reality is active here as well, for in order to convince a portion of the public that a system that has significantly contributed to undermining an entire demographic of people isn’t actually happening and, in fact, it is the fault of the individuals, is practically a definition of warping reality. Alongside warping reality often comes, as in this case too, silence. In order to warp a reality and have it function as a truth requires the silencing of individuals – their voices rendered silent despite attempts to speak up, speak out, and stand up for rights. These mechanisms of trauma have clearly been active in the national American housing landscape.
With the connection between trauma and national structures of inequality laid out, I move on to investigate Durham and its local housing history more closely and turn our attention from national housing market and federal regulation to the history of the local housing market and its accompanying structures, policy and codes.

History of Housing in Durham

Durham was an unusual Southern town due in no small part to the fact that its more earnest growth started after the Civil War (Roberts, Lea, & Leary, 1982, p. 25), which allowed it to develop if not free from racial enmity (which was in abundance), but at least free from the institution of slavery as a backbone to the economy and society. In addition to this unusual history for a Southern town, Durham also experienced a post-civil war boom in the tobacco (Anderson, 2011, p. 117) and cotton industries (Anderson, 2011, p. 150) which brought with it job opportunities (ibid.). Even more unique in a Southern American town of this era and region was the cooperation between white and black business owners (Repass, 2006). This unusual and even exceptional business atmosphere of cooperation helped create the vibrant black economy within Durham including a large number of black businesses such as hosiery, textiles, a haberdashery and grocery stores just to name a few (W. E. B. DuBois, 1912).

The strength of these black businesses in Durham lay in its core known as Black Wall Street – a clustering of some of the most prominent black businesses in town along what was then and is still now, Parrish Street. Together along with the neighborhood of
Hayti, referred to as “The Capitol of the Black Middle Class” by the 1920s (Wise, 2007), these areas formed the heart and the core of the black community in Durham. From WEB Dubois’ perspective Durham was certainly exceptional. He said:

To-day there is a singular group in Durham where a black man may get up in the morning from a mattress made by black men, in a house which a black man built out of lumber which black men cut and planed; he may put on a suit which he bought at a colored haberdashery and socks knit at a colored mill; he may cook victuals from a colored grocery on a stove which black men fashioned; he may earn his living working for colored men, be sick in a colored hospital, and buried from a colored church; and the Negro insurance society will pay his widow enough to keep his children in a colored school. This is surely progress (W. E. B. DuBois, 1912, p. 338).

Of course it would be naïve to think that Durham was a utopia without racism and free from the impact and consequences of segregation and racial inequality. Backlash and hostility certainly existed in Durham and in particular targeted Black Wall Street through store attacks (Wise, 2002, p. 41). As Jean Anderson puts it,

...most characteristic of Durham was...an easygoing tolerance, a live-and-let-live philosophy that may have been psychological expiation for unrestrained moneymaking. The 1890s saw colossal new fortunes built on hard work and business ingenuity, subsidized by an underpaid and overworked labor force. Paradoxical beliefs existed side by side. Whites enforced political restrictions and social separation on blacks at the same time that they voted them educational opportunity and winked at their economic advancement. Resentment coexisted with laissez-faire, and civil injustice with altruistic concern. A strong, self-sustaining, and dynamic black culture thus was able to emerge and flourish alongside these contradictory white impulses and unresolved conflicts in a house divided. (Anderson, 2011, p. 139)

The city was certainly unusual in its post-slavery history of cooperation between black and white within the business community and its strong presence of black businesses. However, this did not insulate it from the societal, structural, and policy-driven inequality so rife throughout the country. Consequently, Durham experienced and
suffered the same racism, violence, and white supremacy that existed in the rest of the country.

As the city turned from the late 19th century and into the 20th century Durham enjoyed the explosion of tobacco and textile production, which brought with it a population boom (Anderson, 2011, p. 167). With limited space for African Americans due to segregation, black communities were forced into the least desirable housing in the low-lying areas while the most expensive land in town remained almost entirely white-owned (Anderson, 2011, p. 137). Pauli Murray describes the black neighborhoods of her childhood:

*Shacks for factory workers mushroomed in the lowlands between the graded streets. These little communities, which clung precariously to the banks of streams or sat crazily on washed-out gullies and were held together by cow paths or rutted wagon tracks, were called Bottoms. It was as if the town had swallowed more than it could hold and had regurgitated, for the Bottoms was an odorous conglomeration of trash piles, garbage dumps, cowstalls, pigpens, and crowded humanity (ibid.).*

It's important to keep in mind the historic legacy of segregation and inequality, legally institutionalized through Jim Crow that created and maintained this unequal and substandard housing as it is these very housing conditions that, during urban renewal in the mid 20th century, targeted Hayti for renewal and relocation. The need for renewal and city intervention into poverty was evident in Hayti, but as Jean Anderson points out, while the principle behind urban renewal and its implementation in Durham (specifically in Hayti) was sound, “in its application its purpose was shaped to the uses of local leaders, uses not always in the best interest of the people it affected” (Anderson, 2011,
Even if all intentions had been good, the reality of urban renewal in Durham was the displacement and removal of an entire community.

While urban renewal effected other neighborhoods in addition to Hayti, they were either also black (see Crest Street section) or white and more affluent but had already seen the impact of white flight. Morehead Hill was a middle and upper class white neighborhood in which several large, historic homes were destroyed as well as home along Jackson and Chapel Hill Street. For instance, the original Morehead Hill home of George Washington Watts, who built his fortune alongside W. Duke Sons and Company as 20% owner as well as with investments in the Durham Electric Lighting Co., Erwin Mills, and the Interstate Telephone and Telegraph Co, was demolished in the 1970s to accommodate the building of the public housing project JJ Henderson towers. Keep in mind, however, that the home was no longer inhabited by the original owners, and after its use as a school ended in 1967 it had deteriorated past the point of habitability (“Lost Houses of Morehead Hill,” n.d.). Many of these middle and upper-class homes that were demolished to make way for Highway 147 or urban renewal had already been abandoned by their white, middle-and upper class owners who had moved to the suburbs or elsewhere (Roberts et al., 1982, p. 134) on the heels of white flight. Ultimately it was poor, black residents in Durham who bore the brunt of urban renewal and whose communities as a whole were destroyed in favor of improving the lives of the more affluent, white communities and interests.

It should also be pointed out that one neighborhood was successful in organizing against the impending urban renewal that made way for Highway 147. Crest Street, a
predominantly Africa-American neighborhood, having seen the reality of urban renewal at work in Hayti, effectively organized and, working with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) were able to come to a compromise and mitigation plan through negotiations that began in 1980 (Bachle, Hill, & Nifong, 1986, p. 7). The plan included funds to be rerouted for use in relocation, reconstruction, and recreational facilities for the community (Bachle et al., 1986, p. 10). While the history of Crest Street is heartening, it was unfortunately a lone case. Other neighborhoods affected and displaced by Durham’s urban renewal were not so lucky. The rule for urban renewal, of which Durham was no exception, was destruction and displacement.

Urban renewal launched nationally in 1949 with the passing of the Federal Housing Act, after which billions in federal aid entered local governments, Durham included, to redevelop “blighted areas.” For the next thirteen years, approximately $3 billion dollars (over $17 billion dollars today) moved from the federal government into local governments like Durham’s (Hyra, 2012, p. 503) despite unclear and inconsistent definitions of what it actually meant (Gordon, 2004). Making the case for blight, and hence urban renewal, included documenting the poor quality of housing, and its inappropriateness for rehabilitation. The consultants for Chapel Hill, NC who penned the 1962 Hayti-Elizabeth Project report, demonstrate this type of documentation when they conclude that, “Structural and environmental deficiencies affect 88 per cent of the structures in the project area...major clearance and redevelopment us necessary to restore the area to economic and social productivity” (City Planning and Architectural Associates, Chapel Hill NC, 1962, p. 10 or intro.). They delve into further detail in the
report, articulating, literally, their “Justification for clearance: Project N.C. R-17 includes some of the worst housing in the city. Nearly half of the structures have at least one structural deficiency. In many parts of the area, these substandard dwellings are crowded close together and are inadequately set back from the streets which themselves are too narrow” (City Planning and Architectural Associates, Chapel Hill NC, 1962, p. 7 of intro.).

With glaring omission, the consultants fail to discuss the assets of the community – the deep relationships, sense of neighborhood, cultural ties, and long history. They state the need to “restore the area to economic and social productivity” as if there is no economic or social value there that is already productive. Interviewee Nettie Alston, who grew up in the Hayti neighborhood prior to and during urban renewal, speaks to this dissonance when she shares that,

\textit{People were really close, not just on our street but neighboring streets. Pretty much the whole area. You knew everybody who lived on your street, regardless of how many people live in their house. It could be a single person, it could be two people in that household or it could be a household with eight children. You knew everybody. Everybody’s so friendly and everybody’s looking out for each other. (N. Alston, 2016)}

The urban renewal of the 1960s often sought majority if not complete clearance of longstanding and historic neighborhoods. The consultants for Durham’s project to redevelop Hayti were straightforward to that end, explaining, “The Plan proposes clearance of most of the project area. When subsequently redeveloped, the area once again will contribute to, rather than detract from the general well-being of the community” (City Planning and Architectural Associates, Chapel Hill NC, 1962, p. 10 of intro.). Here again the egregious oversight on the part of the Commission to recognize
the value Hayti provided for its residents and the city is clear. Durham’s city leaders and the urban renewal commission were ejecting a close-knit community in order to white-wash it and to, eventually, build a highway that would connect the white suburbs with the newly created Research Triangle Park – a place of work for mostly white, middle-class people. In short, Durham’s city leaders erased a historic, black neighborhood in the interest of white, middle-class Durham.

In addition, the underlying inequality of the neighborhoods targeted for urban renewal was longstanding and institutionalized included limited housing options due to segregation, Jim Crow, intimidation, violence, and redlining. Edward Goetz encapsulates this pressure from whites to prevent African-Americans from accessing white neighborhoods in a nutshell: “The ugly American history of residential intolerance predates, of course, the advent of subsidized housing programs. Efforts to maintain the racial purity of neighborhoods throughout the 20th century often included brutal and mob violence, official acts of government, and rulings from the nation’s highest courts…” (Goetz, 2003, p. 3) This purity maintenance also underscores the reality that, since African-Americans were prevented from actually leaving segregated neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods had the worst housing stock with the least amount of investment from landlords it also increased what city leaders would dub as “blight.” Consequently, the money funneled through the federal government,

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4 Redlining was a federal government policy that was explicitly racial and ranked neighborhoods based on residential security – black neighborhoods received the lowest ratings. The finance industry, Federal Housing Administration, and Veteran’s Administration followed these guidelines for lending making home loans for people of color essentially unavailable (Our Right to Say: Gentrification and Durham’s Future", 2015).
functionally wiped out black neighborhoods that had been created and prevented from prospering by federal and local policy, forcing relocation, and a decimating communities and cultural ties. Understanding the history of racism and its accompanying structural inequalities that built neighborhoods filled with “blight,” is critical since that blight is exactly the justification used to tear the neighborhoods down during urban renewal. Below is a map of Hayti in 1959, with streets named, prior to the displacement and razing of the neighborhood.

1. Map of Hayti in 1959

![Map of Hayti in 1959](source: (Open Durham, n.d.-a))
Compare it with a map of the same neighborhood post urban renewal, with the past streets drawn in to show the prior layout of the neighborhood.

2. Map of Hayti Post Urban Renewal

![Map of Hayti Post Urban Renewal](image)

Source: (Open Durham, n.d.-b)

This pattern of negative consequence due to state-sanctioned policy followed by state intervention to leverage economic interest from those very areas for the wealthy, privileged, and middle class is important to underscore not only for its unjust nature and ramifications (mass displacement from black neighborhoods during urban renewal) but
also because of the ways that this pattern continues to function today. The ongoing nature of this pattern will be addressed later in the paper in discussion about contemporary housing.

This is not to say that the communities deeply impacted by urban renewal sat back and watched it happen without intervention or resistance. On the contrary, citizens organized to provide feedback to city leadership. Their voices were clear, concise, dissenting, and offered nuanced arguments of the impact urban renewal had on their communities as it progressed. City and community hearings held by the Urban Redevelopment Commission and led by director Henry Moss (“Durham Urban Renewal Clippings Volume 4 1968-1969,” 2008) recorded in 1968 and 1969 capture this well. One citizen, speaking out against urban renewal and its accompanying community destruction and displacement, captures this sentiment:

*The whole situation is coming down to this; In 1960, whenever the ordinance was drawn up by the City of Durham and the people voted on it, black people in Durham passed that in ’62. And now it looks as if the promises that were made, all they doing is going back and rehashing the promises that were made, recognize that there were changes in government and whatnot. Basically, the people said this is a chance to improve our lot, and I don’t always want to get caught on the wrong side of the fence, but something tells me we should have gone against that thing in 1962. (Durham Redevelopment Commission meetings of 1968 and 1969, 1968)*

The murmurs of assent and agreement from the crowd during this citizen’s statement are unmistakable. The crowd clearly shares the same concerns. It is worth noting that in

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5 The Urban Redevelopment Commission began in 1958 in order to supervise seven urban renewal projects in Durham that targeted “blighted” areas; one in downtown and the other six in mostly black neighborhoods. The projects began in 1961 and were slated to be completed in a decade but they never finished (Durham Public Library, n.d.).
over 12 hours of audio, I hear no citizen speaking out in favor or support of how urban renewal was playing out in Durham. The dissent continues, unabated. In one meeting, a Mr. Alfred Clark, a contractor and the head of the Durham Builders and Trade Association (made up of black contractors who organized to protect their interests in response to urban renewal) speaks to the issues of white power, mass displacement, racism, and community. It is a long quote, but full of critical, astute points; I include it in its entirety in order to capture the multitude of points Mr. Clark includes as well as to fully share the emotion and perspective. To make it shorter would be to dilute its power and poignancy. He tells us,

"It’s hard for me to conceive [of] project 3 where project 3 will help the black woman or man. This thing, this decision that the commission have brought to you all, that they recommend to you all, have been a promise to us since Abraham Lincoln Days, which was a Republican, I hope I’m not steppin’ on anyone toes [laughter] till Richard Nixon Days, which is another Republican. These promises have been a long time and we’re still gettin’ promises.

I understand that they want, the recommendation they made to you all, they want you to accept it now, and then they will make amendments. But these are the things we was told Abe's days. Now they still want us to believe it. We can’t believe such things as that. If you vote on this thing now, and leave out what these people have asked for in their plans and leave the black contractor out without negotiating which you know we don’t have unlimited license which is hard for the black contractor to get, the limited license is even much hard for him to get.

Whatever decision is made here we want the commission to come and negotiate with us. And we want this job, this work, we want ALL the work in project 3, we don’t want subbing in project 3, we want the general work down there in project 3, then we wants to sub who we want to....Everything that ever happened in urban renewal it happened in the black area. And the credits that the city received was from building in the black area.

This thing has got to come to a head somewhere. I can’t conceive that the redevelopment commission is gonna do anything for the black people down there because recently North Carolina Mutual tried to buy a piece of property and had a larger bid than Roberts which is a large contractor, a construction builder. They accepted the smaller bid and sold Roberts the property. I mean, those are two giants. And we are small people down there. I just want to show you when two
giants get together what can happen. And in particular when the white man has the power. This thing did happen.

So we are asking this: the black contractors are saying that we want the general work in this area. We don’t want any subcontracting in this area. And we want house for house. You tear down one, build one. I don’t think this is a hard problem. You people don’t have a problem, all you gotta do is come down there and talk with these people. [inaudible]

This project 3 is gonna cause a problem. That’s our land down there. We want it. You know you move all of our people out over there to build Elkin. All you’re doing is moving us out. You’re buying the property in single lots and selling it back in blocks, which you know we’re not able to buy by block. But you buy it single. Now we want it just like you buy it, we want it sold back to us. It’s ours. It’s no one else but ours.

We been there for a long time. And I appreciate this council not accepting this recommendation from the redevelopment commission on the condition that they will make amendments. We’ve been promised too long. We don’t want any more promise. We want action. (Durham Redevelopment Commission meetings of 1968 and 1969, 1968)

Again, it’s a long passage but I include it in its entirety in order to communicate the depth of analysis and understanding held by Mr. Clark. In addition, as the chosen representative of black contractors in Durham, he demonstrates not just his own objections and dissent but also those of his community, their wish for replacing housing rather than razing it, the deep history of the community, and how urban renewal won’t serve black interests. His demonstration is critical because it raises an important question about the federal policy and its purpose. If the stated purpose of Durham’s urban renewal was to “restore the area to economic and social productivity”, and if the black community facing displacement as a repercussion of that very policy clearly states their dissent and articulates the fact that urban renewal isn’t and won’t serve the community, then it seems quite clear that the economic and social productivity is for
someone other than the community being directly effected, displaced, and dismantled.

In other words, who did this redevelopment serve if not the targeted communities?

An almost endless line of citizens stand up to share their disagreement with the redevelopment commission, to protest the way urban renewal was progressing, and to give voice to their opinions. Mr. Mebane does exactly these things when he articulates the issues with hiring outside consultants, “experts” to plan urban renewal when the real experts are the community are the community-members. He says to Mr. Everett:

*When you talk about expertise in planning, what you’re telling us is that because that man is educated at wherever he was educated probably UNC or Pittsburgh or somewhere else where they teach planning. But what you have to understand is that he is educated in the interest of those people who run UNC which are the same people who are sitting up there in extension. So that whatever he learned to develop will be learned in the interest of those people. So when he sits down to develop a plan for a city or anything else, his limited knowledge will be based not on what we see as our needs but as the people who taught him and they teach him not from the context of what are our needs but from the context of what are their needs. So that when he draws up any kind of plan it’s gonna always speak to them. So that when you start telling us about expertise you gotta understand that you telling us about expertise by your definition. [Mr. Everett tries to interrupt] Wait a minute, wait a minute, let me finish. ‘Cause there are two kinds of expertise. There’s the expertise that comes from a man saying that this is the way a city should be planned, structured, and all that. Then there’s the expertise that comes from living with rats and roaches and dogs and all that and then you have some idea of what kind of community you would like to have, and what you think would be valuable to that community. And our argument is, that our expertise is what should be considered, and not his, because he comes from outside, as do ya’ll. (Durham Redevelopment Commission meetings of 1968 and 1969, 1968)*

Critically, Mr. Mebane underscores the ways in which those hired to act as experts (in this case the consultants) represent the interest of those already in power as opposed to the community whose destiny they’re shaping. This critical view brings us back, once again, to the question of whose interest was being served in Durham during the years of
urban renewal, and how federal policy allowed local government to leverage economic incentives not for the community being directly affected, but for those already with privilege, wealth, and power.

The audio tapes of the urban renewal meetings show a community clearly announcing its dissent, organizing to protest the ways in which urban renewal was playing out, attempting to prevent it from continuing on, advocating for true representation in the process, and a commission that was patiently listening to their demands and passing the ordinances to move urban renewal forward. At one point in the meetings, a commissioner, over yelling voices, says,

*I’ve been serving on this commission for nine years with no salary, [people] won’t even buy me a lunch. Nine years, and me, not every week but every other week for nine whole years...If you don’t want this project...[swell of voices saying no], just say so because [more voices exclaiming no]...*

The dissent is vocally distinct, and clearly the meetings attendees do not want the project. They try to pass a motion to change the plan and the Commission says,

*I respect your motion and the second and everything else, but this is a public hearing, it’s not a vote. If you want to appoint a committee of property owners to [inaudible] the plans, [inaudible] for the property owners to have a better place to live in, [raises voice] the WHOLE IDEA of the thing [inaudible] if that’s not done then the whole thing’s a failure.*

Despite the ongoing attempts by community-members to derail the plan they oppose, the Commission concludes they will meet at a later date to consider everything that was proposed, and that there will be a public hearing at a later date will be announced. The later meetings are also recorded, and again with ongoing dissent, and despite the many
voices speaking out against the plan, the Commission passes it with all ayes (Durham Redevelopment Commission meetings of 1968 and 1969, 1968).

One citizen’s input captures the essence of the hearings, “They should have gotten ideas from people before comin’ up here. This is a waste of time. You’ve wasted three hours of everybody’s time...I’m concerned about everybody that’s black and I will fight until the end...”(Durham Redevelopment Commission meetings of 1968 and 1969, 1968). The goals of urban renewal, no matter how phrased or even if well intentioned, were not helping, renewing, or improving the communities they targeted. The concern for “everybody that’s black” was well founded, and played out exactly as these citizens feared.

The resistance to urban renewal and the direction it was heading in the 1960s evolved, as a matter of fact, into protests, marches, and resistance. As the 1968 application the city of Durham made to the federal government for the Model Cities program explained, “The city of Durham, North Carolina, is a microcosmic example of the accelerating urban crisis. The frustrations, pressures and passions which burst forth in explosive acts of violence from time to time throughout the country are no strangers to Durham” (“Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Model Cities Program in the City of Durham North Carolina,” 1968, p. Part 3–A, p. 1). The city’s application is so frank about the reality of violence in the city in response to the housing problems that they conclude:

*The community of Durham, North Carolina is committed to the Model Cities program not because we think it might possibly stop a riot. Our interest is based on the knowledge and recognition that a civil disorder is the outgrowth of feelings which are fostered and fester in the depressing conditions of the inner city* ("Application to the
Ultimately, urban renewal, even if well intentioned (and its arguable that it was not), failed to not only bring the neighborhoods defined as blighted into “productivity,” but also failed to actually help the people targeted in those neighborhoods and, furthermore, harmed them a great deal. It failed to alleviate poverty and contributed to staunch community dissatisfaction and displacement. In short, the mechanisms of the state purporting to help those in poverty, instead further disenfranchised them.

Nationally speaking, urban renewal projects most often situated themselves as programs to build more housing for people who were poor but, in reality, they razed more housing than they ever created to the tune of 90% of the low-income units that were removed were not replaced (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 374). As urban renewal routed long-time residents from their often socially tight-knit neighborhoods, white flight and suburbanization added fuel to this fire. Eric Avila and Mark Rose point out that,

*Federal officials...financed suburbanization, thus channeling resources away from the nation’s inner cities and leaving behind a wake of dilapidated infrastructure and racialized poverty. Americans attributed renewal and suburbanization to the work of the markets, overlooking the decisive hand of politicians and public policy. The skewed effects of these renewal and suburbanization programs denote a time ‘when affirmative action was white’*(Avila & Rose, 2009, p. 335).

This pattern is clear in the demographic data for Durham. In 1950, prior to Durham’s active urban renewal, Hayti (encapsulated by census tract 0012) was 94% black, a total of 8,059 people. The census tract immediately below, 0013, was 99% black - 4,383 individuals. Another predominantly black neighborhood included the Burch Ave/Lakewood neighborhood (encapsulated by census tract 0005) which was 55% black in
1950 – accounting for 4,076 people (“1950 vs. 1970 Racial Demographics, Durham NC,” 2016). Twenty years later in 1970, in the wake of America’s federal urban renewal policies shaping the Durham landscape, we can see not only the astonishing attrition of the black population in these historically black neighborhoods, but also the decrease (white flight) of the white population in city center neighborhoods, and, already, a push of the black population both into the areas the white population had fled and a push towards the Southern and, slightly, Eastern suburbs. By 1970 the black population in the neighborhood that had been Hayti (now encapsulated by census tracts 12.1 and 12.2) had plummeted from 8,059 and 94% of the population to 3,593. The white population in that neighborhood (which had been 498) is not accounted for in the US Census of 1970. Census tracts 13.1 and 13.2 (an outgrowth of what had been census tract 0013) showcase one of the areas where the neighborhood population moved. Census tract 13.1’s black population dropped to 2,115 from 4,838. Census tract 13.2, originally part of tract 0013 and assuming part of census tract C0021 (in 1950 a suburb that was 60% white) became 91% black – the white population of 20 years prior dropping from 60% to 9% (ibid.) The movement of white and black neighborhoods before and after urban renewal is clear in the maps below – showing not only the rigid segregation of the 50s but also white flight to the suburb and the movement of the black population deeper into the inner city as well as beginning to push South and East.

3. 1950 Racial Demographics Durham, NC
source: (‘1950 vs. 1970 Racial Demographics, Durham NC,’’ 2016)

4. 1970 Racial Demographics Durham, NC

Clearly, the federal government’s direct intervention into poverty and what became defined as neighborhood blight in the era of 1960s urban renewal perpetuated
the pattern of state-sponsored policies that targeted African-American and, often, poor people and neighborhoods. As Edward Goetz frames it,

_A responsible antipoverty policy should not lead with the demolition of low-cost housing and the forced relocation of the poor. This nation’s history with the urban renewal program suggests that without complementary actions reduce exclusionary barriers and incentives that foster and facilitate growing socioeconomic disparities – and the geographic expression of those disparities – and the scattering of poor people, in itself, accomplishes little._

Urban Renewal as Trauma

In this 1960s phase of urban renewal we can see not only the repetition of historic patterns of injustice and structural inequality, but also the similarities between these mechanisms by which centuries of inequality were reinforced by local government and federally-sponsored action and those mechanisms that function in trauma. The mechanisms of trauma, as discussed earlier, are:

1. Blaming the victim/ scapegoating
2. Warping/ denying reality
3. Use of fear as a regulator
4. Silence/ failure to bear witness

Blaming the victim, warping/ denying reality and silence are all mechanisms of trauma that are present in the process of 1960s urban renewal in Durham. It is important to note that while I consider fear to have been as ongoing part of racism, racist violence, and structures of housing inequality of the time (slum lords, substandard housing, red
lining, etc.) I don’t include it here as I didn’t find evidence of this mechanism in such clear ways. That said, an argument can likely be made that fear as a regulator, too, was active in 1960s urban renewal.

Blaming the victim, as opposed to seeking out, identifying, and dealing with root causes of deep problems, is clearly apparent in this phase of urban renewal. In Durham’s own 1968 application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Model Cities Program, the writers justify the need for the grant, writing that, “Where an individual’s formal education and cultural heritage have not equipped him to compete in America’s modern, technocratic society, he fails, and failure breeds failure until it becomes habit. The habit of failure saps the initiative and erodes what little may still remain of human dignity and self-respect.” The Application blames the residents of neighborhoods targeted for change directly, saying that, “The continuation of the concentration of disadvantaged minority surrounding the downtown district has been in large part to the nature of the people themselves, their limitations, and the ability of this area to most nearly meet their needs.” (“Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Model Cities Program in the City of Durham North Carolina,” 1968, p. 9) This kind of blame of the people or community most deeply affected by systemic injustice as the source of the problems themselves, as if their own character or morality were/are in question reiterates itself through American history. Goetz captures it thusly, “Concerns about the concentration of poverty...focus on the dysfunctional aspects of poor communities and on the barriers
these produce for families trying to make their way out of poverty” (Goetz, 2003, pp. 3–4).

Interestingly enough, the application does also acknowledge, even if subtly, entrenched and systemic inequalities that contribute to the concentrated poverty. The writers explain that,

*It has continued to exist, and persist, not only due to its internally generated forces, but also due to external forces which have tended to keep the ghetto compressed within limited, though expanding, boundaries and in isolated pockets in areas away from downtown. The restricted mobility of the ghetto residents, as a result of economic and social, as well as racial discrimination, has had a very decided impact on the perpetuating of existing patterns.* (“Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Grant to Plan a Model Cities Program in the City of Durham North Carolina,” 1968, p. 9)

Even with that acknowledgement of racial discrimination, the writers deflect the blame from city policies and state-sponsored Jim Crow, failing to place the blame where it belongs – on the shoulders of city and state policies that had shaped, over Durham’s short history, the entrenched and concentrated poverty they now sought to alleviate through urban renewal and its accompanying displacement – essentially a land grab veiled with benign motive. Blaming the victim, then, and its role in trauma-creation, certainly existed in the urban renewal Durham, and the nation, experienced in the 1960s.

Warping or denying reality or silencing, elements of trauma, are clearly present in the process of 60s-era urban renewal in Durham. In the most basic ways, primary documents of the era as well as scholarly work of the time fail to point to systemic racism and white supremacy as underlying forces to things like white flight. For instance, a 1973 thesis by Bruce Hutson examines urban blight and defines it as a “complex
phenomenon whereby various forms of obsolescence combine to produce decay” (Hutson, 1973, p. 1). The definition, however, is conspicuously devoid of any description of the systemic causes that have contributed to said blight – Jim Crow, racist violence, segregation, or red lining, to name a few. This definition and its absence of accountability or acknowledgement of history’s contributions to the contemporary landscape of inequality functions to enable and promulgate the silencing action as well as the warping and denying reality mechanisms of urban renewal. The 1962 project report itself for Hayti’s urban renewal leverages this perspective – focusing on blight, housing decay, and substandard living conditions and ignoring entirely the multi-layered strengths of the community. This warps the reality of the neighborhood and the people in it. Without their voices and perspective it silences and denies a reality other than the one sculpted in the report, which stresses “poorly aligned and unimproved streets,” “conditions which are unsanitary and unsafe” (City Planning and Architectural Associates, Chapel Hill NC, 1962, p. 1 of intro.), and that “Project N.C. R-17 includes some of the worst housing in the city...” going on to underscore that “Structural and environmental deficiencies affect 88 per cent [sic] of the structures in the project area...[so] major clearance and redevelopment is necessary to restore the area to economic and social productivity” (City Planning and Architectural Associates, Chapel Hill NC, 1962, p. 7 and 10 of intro.).

The report fails entirely to account for the strengths of the pre-existing community as well as the ways in which the city and state had conspired to create the very climate they were now denouncing. While they claimed to be executing the “major
clearance” on behalf of the community, we already know from the previous discussion about the demographic shifts of the area and the stark population decrease that the results were far from that goal. Instead, the actions of the city, enabled by the state and federal policy and dollars, ejected communities, actively silencing, warping, and denying the reality of the residents they claimed to represent. We can remember from the urban renewal commission meetings referenced earlier that the audience in attendance was angry, dissenting, desirous of a planner who represented their interests as opposed to the interests of the city (which were explicitly named as different). It is clear that the city smothered one reality in favor of another, created reality in order to justify their own needs, not only triggering these mechanisms of trauma and drawing this parallel between systemic inequality and trauma, but also emulating a long-standing international history of displacing poor, unwanted communities (different in different countries) in order to serve the needs of the state.

This pattern has historic roots in places such as (but not exclusively) Italy (Rome), France (Paris), and the United States (Native American reservations). In Italy, by the 1500s, the Catholic Counter-Reformation targeted anyone who wasn’t Catholic (including Protestants), targeted Jews, and in 1555 Pope Paul IV forcibly moved all of Rome’s Jews into a ghetto enclosing somewhere between 2,000-4,000 people (Koenig, n.d.) on 7 acres of land (Openshaw & Stevens, n.d.). 330 years later, Rome had become the capitol of a newly unified Italy and, as cities became increasingly concerned about its appearance, they ordered public works projects, among them ordering the Jews out of the ghetto and cleaning it up (Scott, 2002, p. 1). Rome placed the Jewish ghetto at
the top of the list whose *risanamento* (*Sano* meaning healthy and *risanomento* meaning a return to health) was “indispensable before any other urban initiative” (Scott, 2002, p. 2). This definition recalls something between urban renewal and slum clearance as well as suggesting a moral and cultural renewal (ibid.). This historic precedent for the urban renewal of the 1960s is critical as it underscores that what happened in Durham, or even Hayti more specifically, was not occurring in isolation. It demonstrates the history that a state power could, and had, previously deconstructed a community that it had intentionally ghettoized to prevent access and power in order to recoup the land to benefit not the community it has placed in the ghetto and subsequently displaced, but the city itself. Critically, it justifies these actions by claiming an improvement of morality, health, and “cultural renewal” of the targeted community. The pattern Roman Jews experienced from the 1500s to the later 1800s finds an echo in 1960s Durham, North Carolina.

Another example includes the displacement of Native Americans from their homelands in the United States. The American government, pushing westward, asked Native Americans to move west of the Appalachians, then west of the Mississippi. Eventually they were settled and forced onto reservations, which moved repeatedly (Fullilove, 2005, p. 57). Fullilove draws an important connection between the Native American land grabs and those that occurred in federally-funded urban renewal. She says,

*The land-claiming strategy embodied in the Housing Act of 1949 was straightforward. An interested city had first to identify the “blighted” areas that it wished to redo...Once the plan had been approved, the designated areas could be seized using the government’s power of eminent domain, the people and*
businesses that occupied the site were given a minimal amount of compensation and were sent away. The seized land was then cleared of all buildings and, thanks to federal subsidies, sold to developers at a fraction of the city’s cost. The developers then built businesses, educational and cultural institutions, and residences for middle- and upper-income people. In some instances, high-rise public housing projects were built on the cleared land (Fullilove, 2005, p. 58).

Fullilove highlights not only the similar patterns of land-claiming strategy, but also that those who profited were not those in the community, but developers and the new middle- and upper-income residents.

Paris, France, is an additional example of land-clearance that benefits a new and wealthier community. Under Napoleon Bonaparte’s nephew, Napoleon III (Pinkney, 1955, p. 125), the prefect of the Seine, George Haussman, transformed the city, beginning in 1853, from the twisting, turning, overcrowded alleyways of a medieval town to the modern city of boulevards, parks, and promenades that Paris is known for today (Pinkney, 1955). This transformation, however, came at a cost, and the people who paid were the working residents who were moved from the city center of Paris to the periphery (Fullilove, 2005, p. 64). Much like in Rome and The United States’ Manifest Destiny, it was the new residents who enjoyed the new benefits of Paris: the parks, less disease, greater water and air quality, among others, as opposed to those who had been forced to leave.

These historic examples of reclaiming land and forcing poor inhabitants to move is important insofar as it underscores the pattern and precedent of a city or state exerting power in order to remove an unwanted community in order to take the land and use it for a purpose seen as more beneficial. Durham North Carolina’s urban
renewal, however far removed it may seem from Rome, Paris, or the American Western frontier, is in fact a direct descendant of land reclamation and forced removals. In this framework it is much harder to claim the innocence of restoring the area to “economic and social productivity” as Durham did. The truth of the matter, and the motivation behind the professed intention, becomes far more transparent.

Thus far we’ve come to understand the parallels between trauma and structural inequality and the ways in which the function using similar mechanisms to create and preserve power-over. We’ve applied this framework to the lens of history and viewed both the national and local Durham, NC legacy of housing and urban renewal as well as the international, long-standing history of community removal to understand how it fits within this framework. We must now do the hard work of applying the framework to Durham’s 2016 landscape of housing to determine whether or not the patterns continue.
Chapter Three
Contemporary Housing Growth and Patterns in Durham, NC

The question remains of whether or not parallels of trauma and structural inequality seen in Durham’s urban renewal of the past recur today via contemporary housing policies and market or if the renewal we see today in Durham is a product of organic growth, free from pattern repetition and consequence and without negative impact. In this chapter I explore contemporary 2016 Durham, including voices from interviews carried out with local residents and housing stakeholders. Specifically I look at the ways in which massive decreases in federal funding for housing, state policy limitations and privatization converge to impact the availability of housing options and function as an action through inaction. Once explained, I apply the paper’s framework to understand the parallels between current housing patterns and trauma.

Action through Inaction: Federal Funding Decrease

While Durham’s past experienced the parallel between trauma and structural inequality in the housing market and housing system due to the Federal Government’s direct involvement through the urban renewal and the Housing Act of 1949 Durham’s present is seeing similar patterns for a different reason. As gleaned through interviews and research on contemporary housing, it is clear that these patterns repeat themselves
this time not because of the Federal Government’s direct action, but rather their increasing *inaction*. It is, in other words, an action, or a set of consequences, through lack of action. With decreasing federal funds contributing to increasing pressure to find solutions to complicated housing problems, local governments, Durham’s included, more and more turn to privatization which, weighted by neo-liberalism and color-blind racism, continue to erode otherwise honest and good intentions to provide adequate affordable housing stock. As Stephanie Coontz points out, “Ignoring the historical dependence of pioneer and suburban families on public support, as well as the continued reliance of industry on government handouts, some analysts asserted that the problems of poor families originated in the very fact that they received assistance at all” (Coontz, 1992, p. 80). This move away from government support through the federal government dramatic decrease in funding ignores the enormity of how government assistance has helped so many sectors of the American population and industry and leaves open the door for the pattern of trauma and structural inequality to replicate itself through the present inaction.

Additionally, it has become clear that these patterns of trauma and structural inequality in the housing market recur also in part because of North Carolina’s state government and the legislature’s intervention and restrictions on local municipalities including Durham. There are four areas of the housing system in Durham that reflect this pattern: 1. The decrease in federal funding that leads to a decrease in affordable housing; 2. State restrictions that prevent Durham from optimizing options to create
and maintain affordable housing; 3. The express and stated mission that downtown Durham is a place for everyone vs. the reality that it is not.

The decrease in federal funding for affordable housing is widely known and accepted. Several research subjects spoke to the decrease including Samuel Gunter, Director of Policy and Advocacy at NC Housing Coalition, who points out that “Generally the trend has been a downward one at the federal and state level in terms of financial commitment to housing, and increasingly local communities are having to kick in dollars to make affordable housing work” (C. Alston, 2016c). Public housing, beginning in the 1930s and into the 1970s, functioned as a major federal initiative to provide low-income housing with over 1.3 million public housing units built around the country (Goetz, 2011, p. 268). The public housing program as it first appeared in the United States embodied in large part the ideals of the New Deal: optimism for the potential the government could offer through investment and involvement and focused on features such as community and universalism (ibid.).

The decrease in federally funded affordable housing led to a need for additional ways to meet the housing needs of American towns and cities. In Durham, as in other places, a critical way of meeting this need was, and is, the privatization, at least in some part, of the affordable housing system. What had initially been the role of the state now became the role of public-private partnerships. This new hybrid structure utilizing both government dollars as well as private, however, raises complications not the least of which include muddying the waters of intention, purpose, and success as they pertain to affordable housing. While there are many proponents of this structure
who point to successful development in struggling cities (Wolf-Powers, 2005, p. 8), theorists also argue that “property-based economic development [is] a malign, even violent expression of neo-liberalism and elitism...urban officials with the power to regulate development and land use have been enlisted to produce a socio-spatial structure that supports the aims of property capitalists” (Wolf-Powers, 2005, pp. 10–11). Because of the history of structural inequality as channeled and reinforced through the housing market over centuries in the United States, the aims of “property capitalists” would, then, most often be those of the white and middle or upper classes. This approach also conflicts with the urban policy of the postwar period, which asserted that it was the central role of the state as opposed to a market-driven process that was crucial for reducing inequality while redeveloping a city (Mele, 2013, p. 601).

This shift from a public, state intervention for a public problem to a private, or partly private strategy to solve the same represents a neo-liberal ideology (Sager, 2011, p. 148). In this context of historical inequalities recreated through housing policies over time it is critical to point out that neo-liberalism rests on the shoulders of color-blind racism. As Mele explains, “What color-blind racial discourse [provides] is the underlying basis of legitimacy for the planning, implementation and promotion of neoliberal urban policies and practices that reproduce and enhance sociospatial inequality. In turn, color-blindness also provides the requisite discourses that construct exclusionary urban development as defensible, desirable, and essential to the improvement of the urban condition” (Mele, 2013, p. 599). Most of all, Mele argues, “Neoliberal urbanism does not circumvent the persistent reality of urban racial inequality. It reproduces, if not furthers,
it” (Mele, 2013, p. 600). This strategy, then, of public-private partnerships, created out of a need to meet the needs of affordable housing in a time when the federal government decreased its involvement both in time and resources, leads to a perpetuation of the inequality it seeks to alleviate nationally as well as locally in Durham. As Lisa Duggan puts it, “Neoliberals have promoted ‘private’ competition, self-esteem, and independence as the roots of personal responsibility, and excoriated ‘public’ entitlement, dependency, and irresponsibility as the sources of social ills” (Cacho, 2012, p. 19). In the words of Lisa Cacho, “The values neoliberalism publicizes, naturalizes, and universalizes also make indigent groups of color unable to prove the experience of discrimination” (ibid.). Neoliberalism produces the veil under which racialized inequality may reproduce itself, serving the function of Jim Crow without the ugly legal policy that can be resisted, fought, and dismantled.

Action through Inaction: State Limitation

The decrease in federal funding dollars for local affordable housing means cities and towns also try to meet their housing needs and shortages through urban planning codes. In some case they require developers to include a stipulated portion of their buildings as affordable housing – however that municipality defines it. Durham, however, while it makes an effort to offer incentives like a density bonus for developers to include affordable housing, is unable to make such a requirement due to restrictions
from the state legislature. Durham city attorneys Patrick Baker and Don O’Toole in a memo to councilmember Steve Schewel explain the restriction as follows:

*The legislature has granted the City of Durham charter authority to incentivize the development of voluntary [underlining original] private affordable housing. See City of Durham Charter § 94.2. The City is authorized to incentivize affordable housing by providing density bonuses or “other incentives of value to a developer of housing within the city . . . .” Pursuant to this Charter provision the City is authorized to incentivize the voluntary inclusion of affordable housing units in private development projects by offering developers something of value* (Baker & O’Toole, 2016).

The attorneys also point out that in 2001 state legislator Senator Wib Gulley of Durham introduced legislation that would have authorized inclusionary zoning for state-wide local governments – but it never made it out of committee (ibid.). Ten years later the North Carolina General Assembly further lessened local power but passing G.S. 6-21.7 – which gives a court permission, “to award attorney’s fees and costs to a litigant when the court finds that a municipality has acted outside the scope of its legal authority” (ibid.). The state legislature has made it very difficult for Durham, or any other North Carolina city for that matter, to implement inclusionary zoning and, therefore, promote affordable housing in one of the most effective ways in a market-based system where substantial federal dollars are a thing of the past. This is important to note in the context of the other incentives offered by the city, such as the previously noted density-bonus. In an interview local developer Lee Norris, made it clear that while incentives are

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6 Steve Schewel reached out to the city attorney’s office in response to a question I asked during our interview about where precisely it’s documented that the City of Durham cannot offer inclusionary zoning or require, by law, developers to include affordable units in their new buildings pursuant to Durham’s definition of affordable housing.

7 Please see Appendices for section 94.2.
effective in larger, competitive markets such as New York City or Chicago, they’re mostly useless in a middle-sized city and market like Durham where it makes the most sense to build by right (what zoning already allows). He says:

*Traditionally it has not had much impact on the development here in Raleigh and Durham because where it really has impact in high density places like New York or Boston or Atlanta or Chicago where land is so expensive that you have to build the maximum allowed because the land’s so expensive. The land is only worth what you can put on it. When you get into these real expensive markets you have to fill up the maximum box available in order to spread the land out over enough buildable square footage to be able to be competitive. In Durham you’re definitely not there...So the density bonus is a little bit bogus in terms of it being real effective in this market* (C. Alston, 2016b).

The effect for Durham, between ineffective bonuses for developers and being unable to implement inclusionary zoning, is to severely minimize the city’s effectiveness to provide affordable housing, try as it might. But it is not just the city council whose hands are tied; the planning department also faces limitations.

Durham’s planning department has a full plate, especially managing the contemporary growth in the city. In response to a question about the planning department’s plans for downtown Durham, a long-term planner responded that “We have DDI – Downtown Durham Incorporated – and they do the more detailed planning for downtown. We work with them” (C. Alston, 2016e). Staff capacity is a concrete issue that’s difficult to navigate and manage no matter the department or field. However, in light of planning for a city, especially one that’s growing by leaps and bounds, it raises a significant concern given the risk and reality of displacement. If the planning department sets forth their goal as working with the “community to develop long-range and special area plans containing policies to direct growth” (“Durham North Carolina,”
2016) but in reality outsource much of the specific planning to Downtown Durham Inc., whose articulated mission is to “create an environment for private development in Downtown Durham by focusing our efforts in five main project areas: Economic development, parking, appearance, safety, and promotion” (“Downtown Durham,” 2016), then the community, especially those who are in need of affordable housing, haven’t actually been included or even really considered in the direction of Durham’s growth. Furthermore, the entirety of the Durham City and County Planning’s management staff and a third of the planners are certified by the American Planning Association (AICP) which holds those who they certify to their ethical standard. This includes, among a lengthy description, the following commitment that “The planning process must continuously pursue and faithfully serve the public interest” and listed among the seven requirements is that planners must, “Strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons” (“AICP Certification,” n.d.). It also states as one of its principles and responsibilities to the public states, “We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs” (“AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,” 2016). Thus, if the needs of Durham’s downtown area, which includes some of the city’s low-income citizens and direct access to public transportation (critical to that population), are outsourced to a non-governmental agency without the same ethical obligation to
serving the entire community and especially those who are disadvantaged, and whose stated mission excludes such a commitment, then the planning department is missing one of its critical purposes and the low-income citizens of downtown neighborhoods will continue to be excluded from the community as it grows more and more to meet the needs of the creative class – those who are whiter and wealthier.

Action through Inaction: Exclusion via Privatization in Durham

Exclusion via privatization is of more concern and even a little surprising given the language used over time in Durham’s various planning documents, and its historically clear inclusion of all communities in the goals for Durham. A downtown development plan from 1960 articulates inclusive nature of downtown, stating its planning principals as follows: “The primary function of the Central Business District is to serve the entire community and its tributary trade area as the dominant center for retail shopping, finance, professional and business services, government, and civic affairs” (Tarrant, 1960, p. 11). Almost thirty years later, The Downtown Durham’s 1989 Revitalization Plan, written by the City-County Planning Department, cites specially that “Downtowns...are a reflection of the people who comprise the city and indicates their goals and hopes for life. In a sense, a city’s downtown is everyone’s neighborhood (Durham City-County Planning Dept., 1989, p. 1). However, that language has shifted and in 2005 the comprehensive plan stipulated a less inclusive goal, recording that “The ideal result of comprehensive planning is to guide public and private actions and
investments to produce an urban environment that is safe, attractive and efficient place in which to live and work” (City of Durham Planning and Community Development Department, 2005, p. 2). The explicit naming of all residents as important parts of downtown is now conspicuously absent. The planning department has accomplished a tremendous amount, so much of it positive, in the past 30 years, and that should not be ignored. But the pivot away from any obligation to take into consideration the needs of those who are low-income is disconcerting, especially in light of the increasing use of public-private partnerships in order to secure Durham’s revitalizations.

Much like the urban renewal of the 1960s, the risk of funneling federal dollars into the city that will benefit only those who are of the middle- and upper-classes is real, and being realized in Durham. This shift in language, while seemingly innocuous or harmless, can contribute to real consequences, including displacement. Lanier Blum, housing advocate and employee at Self-Help, pointed out in an interview that what’s going on in Durham is replacement. She says:

*It’s replacement that takes advantage of buildings with good bones and a transportation system that focuses its attention here, and all the public amenities to create a whole new future space and current space that transforms and replaces what we had in many ways...It’s become this really, really groovy, beautiful, attractive center for arts, entertainment, and luxury living that Durham really didn’t have before...It’s been a transformation and a replacement...and it does ultimately displace those elements of economic activity and housing activity that were geared towards low-income people, or available to low-income people...It’s creating whole neighborhoods that are no longer accessible* (C. Alston, 2016a).

Selina Mack, Executive Director of Durham Community Land Trust, concurs, explaining that the movement in the housing market represents gentrification and, along with it, displacement. She says in her interview, “In the last 3-5 years we’ve seen a pretty
aggressive emergence by private investors building housing that's selling on the market for half a million dollars right next to a Habitat [for Humanity] house or a [Durham Community Land Trust] senior rental property...The downside to that is that we’ve lost a lot of people who have been in this neighborhood for a very long time who were displaced...I would certainly call it gentrification.” She goes on to define gentrification as “Escalating housing costs that don’t incorporate in any way the existing tenant and people in the neighborhood, don’t embrace them in any way. No blending of the neighborhoods, not creating a means for those who have been a part of the neighborhood to continue to be a part of the neighborhood” (C. Alston, 2016d). This population movement is clear in census data. Looking at the maps below we can see the change from before Durham’s current growth trends to 2015, after the development and growth was in full swing.

5. 1980 vs. 2015 Racial Demographics
The changing demographics are clear, and the reversal in movement as compared to the first maps we saw is notable: Downtown neighborhoods that had become majority African American through the years of divestment and white flight, have reverted to majority White, and the push of African American populations into the South, North, and East neighborhoods and suburbs continues. Notably, census tract 8.2, 64% African American in 1980, is now 64% White (and now listed as census tract 22) which includes what was tract 8.1 which was 74% African American in 1980 (“1980 vs. 2015 Racial Demographics of Durham, NC,” 2016). Tract 3.1, which had been a majority White neighborhood, became 51% African American in 1980 but dropped by 2015 to 33% African American, and the White population rose to 54%, the same rate it captured in 1970 after urban renewal, but still far lower than its Jim Crow population as part of
census tract 0003 which was 82% White in 1950 (ibid.). Census tract 11, which was 88% White in 1950 became 61% African American in 1970. Still majority African American in 1980 and today, the Black population is dropping as the White population moves in and displaces – altering the demographics from 79% African American in 1980 to 66% in 2015 (ibid.) These numbers demonstrate clear demographic shifts that follow the patterns of the urban renewal of the 1960s and contemporary gentrification. – underscoring the reality that while planning documents, guiding ethics, and perhaps even intent claim that downtown Durham is for everyone, the data lays bare the reality that downtown Durham is increasingly for a white population, and increasingly so as growth continues.

To reiterate, what I’ve found is:

1. The decrease in federal funding led to a decrease in affordable housing
2. State restrictions prevent Durham from optimizing options to create and maintain affordable housing
3. The express and stated mission that downtown Durham is a place for everyone vs. the reality that it is not.

Ultimately, this leads to something of the same side of a different coin for urban renewal. In the 60s, federal intervention displaced thousands of families and citizens in Durham even while the argument for such displacement was to benefit those very people. Those benefits never materialized, and the remaining, nearly vacant and undervalued land in downtown Durham created the canvas on which today’s wave of growth now rests. Today’s absence of federal intervention, i.e. its decreased funding,
has led to flourishing gentrification with private and public-private investment as well as limited state and city ability to regulate and mandate affordable housing.

**Gentrification as Trauma**

The patterns of trauma evoked by past urban renewal are rooted in the mechanisms blaming the victim, warping/ denying reality and silence. Contemporary Durham sees not only a repetition of these mechanisms but the addition of a new method of silence and silencing in the form of namely color-blind and increasingly neo-liberal policies and as evidenced by proliferating privatization in the housing sector. Lipsitz explains the erasing and silencing of the realities that have unequally structured the lives of African-Americans in the US. He says,

> Many recent popular and scholarly studies have explained clearly the causes for black economic decline over the past two decades. Deindustrialization has decimated the industrial infrastructure that formerly provided high-wage jobs and chances of upward mobility to black workers. Neoconservative attacks on government spending for public housing, health, education, and transportation have deprived African-Americans of needed services and opportunities for jobs in the public sector. A massive retreat from responsibility to enforce antidiscrimination laws at the highest levels of government has sanctioned pervasive and overt and covert racial discrimination by bankers, realtors, and employers.

> Yet public opinion polls conducted among white Americans display little recognition of these devastating changes. Seventy percent of whites in one poll said that “African Americans ‘have the same opportunities to live a middle-class life as whites’” (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 380).

He goes on to demonstrate this silencing when he says, “As long as we define social life as the sum of conscious and deliberate individual activities, then only individual manifestations of personal prejudice and hostility will be seen as racist. Systemic,
collective, and coordinated behavior disappears from sight” (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 382). It is just this kind of silencing and making invisible that is taking place in the contemporary Durham housing market – spare little overt intent can be found that any individual or government entity is explicitly trying to force African-Americans in need of affordable housing out of the city. But, as previously demonstrated, the reality is, in fact, that this is occurring steadily and, given the inability to meet the needs of affordable housing, is set to continue occurring over time. Mele explains further how this color-blindness vests into silence when he says,

*Neoliberal urbanism does not circumvent the persistent reality of urban racial inequality. It reproduces, if not furthers, it...Exclusionary urban redevelopment is premised on neoliberal policies that prioritize public investment in the built environment, but also on a corresponding color-blind racial ideology that renders assertions of structural racial inequality and systemic racism silent* (Mele, 2013, p. 600).

As Durham continues to turn over its downtown city planning to a private entity and without the ability to set affordable housing mandatory minimums for developers, the city, its leaders, and citizens are poised to regurgitate long-standing structural inequality through the housing sector. This time, inequality with a smile and a pat on the back, since the mechanisms by which the inequalities persist have been effectively erased and silenced, warping the reality of the housing market and activities that are making affordable housing more and more obsolete. In this way, Duhram’s contemporary housing policy emulates the very structure of trauma.

The contemporary parallels between trauma and structural inequality via the housing market are stark and concerning. But the reason for concern doesn’t end there. Given the city’s redevelopment and increasingly unaffordable housing stock and the
consequential data demonstrating displacement, the city is actually in violation of the
United Nation’s mandate on the right to adequate housing. The mandate lays out
multiple aspects of the right to adequate housing, including that it contains freedoms.
One of the freedoms is the “The right to choose one’s residence, to determine where to
live and to freedom of movement” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights, 2016). The UN outlines more specific elements of adequate housing,
including when it is not adequate. A few of these points are salient for the purposes of
this paper, specifically:

- **Affordability**: housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises
  the occupants’ enjoyment of other human rights.
- **Accessibility**: housing is not adequate if the specific needs of
  disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.
- **Location**: housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment
  opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other
  social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas. (ibid)

In the current landscape of Durham housing market and dearth of affordable
housing, it becomes clear that in the areas of the above-mentioned affordability,
accessibility, and location, the city is not meeting the UN’s mandate of adequate
housing as a human right. As affordable housing availability decreases in the city, those
who need it must find it where it is available – increasingly out of the city center and
further from services, public transportation, and jobs. This violates the tenets of
accessibility and location. Karen Lado, consultant to the city of Durham for affordable
housing, explains that “As of 2012, there were 19,500 low-income renters (42% of all
renter households) who were paying more than 30% of their total income for housing.
Almost 11,000 of these households, the majority very low income, were paying over
50% of their income for housing (Lado, 2015). With such pervasive housing-burdened renters, the city finds itself also in violation of the affordability tenet since this housing-burden impinges an individual or family’s ability to enjoy other human rights.

In summary, current factors including (1) massive decreases in federal funding for housing, (2) state policy limitations and (3) privatization have adversely affected the availability of housing options. These realities, while a far cry from the bulldozers that decimated Hayti and threatened Crest Street during urban renewal, still function to erode one community on favor of another whiter, more affluent one. In doing so they indeed, do repeat parallels between current structural inequality and trauma. Furthermore, the extent to which Durham fails to deliver adequate housing opportunities for all communities, particular the most vulnerable communities, violates the United Nation’s statute on housing right. It is grave indeed.

As discussed early on in the paper, however, healing is possible but it can’t happen in silence. In the next section I explore the power of reparations internationally, the United States’s resistance to reparations within its own borders and, despite this, why it is so critical for the country.
Chapter Four
Reparations and Apologies, Lost and Found

The current development of downtown Durham reflects a bias towards the affluent, white, middle- and upper-class consumer and citizen and as such, excludes people who are low-income, and because of this country’s history of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation, are often low-income people of color. Because the federal government has so significantly reduced the resources available to fund affordable housing, and the state government has so substantially tied the hands of Durham city leaders, a case arises against both based on implicit bias – creating adverse effect even without intention. Eva Paterson, writes that:

*It is crucial that courts have some mechanism to prevent race from affecting housing decisions and to ensure that the dream of a genuinely unified citizenry is realized with all Americans having the opportunity to thrive. Implicit bias and housing segregation can be redressed through mechanisms that promote diverse and integrated communities, such as the disparate impact standard*...

Disparate impact recognizes that implicit biases can produce discriminatory results even without intent, and allows for such results to be remedied. Disparate impact also combats housing discrimination in cases where intent may exist, but is subtle or hidden. The disparate impact standard gives courts a tool to ferret out potential discrimination where a protected group is disproportionately burdened by municipal action.

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8 This section was first written for the independent study completed with Dr. Wahneema Lubiano in Spring 2015.

9 Note that “disparate impact standard” is equivalent to the “disparate impact theory” which The National Fair Housing Alliance defines as “a legal doctrine under the Fair Housing Act which states that a policy may be considered discriminatory if it has a disproportionate ‘adverse impact’ against any group based on race, national origin, color, religion, sex, familial status, or disability when there is no legitimate, non-discriminatory business need for the policy. In a disparate impact case, a person can challenge practices that have a ‘disproportionately adverse effect’ on those protected by the Fair Housing Act and are ‘otherwise unjustified by a legitimate rationale’” (Durham Public Library, n.d.).
The reality of disparate impact occurring today through gentrification in Durham and built on the foundation of urban renewal, could make a case for the City of Durham suing the Federal Government were that possible. However, this action isn’t possible due to sovereign immunity (Nabulsi, 2013). Given this reality and restriction, a policy solution emerges in the form of reparations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines reparations as “The making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged” (“Reparation,” n.d.). The United Nations frames it more fully, explaining that reparations:

...are meant to (partially) redress gross and systematic human rights violations, not sporadic or exceptional ones...It implies that the universe of potential beneficiaries is large and that they probably suffered various and multiple forms of abuse...Part of what needs to be redressed in the cases that are of concern here is not only a large number of individual violations, but violations that come about in systematic ways, either as a consequence of the deliberate adoption of abusive policies or as a predictable consequence of other choices. Reparations in these contexts must not only do justice to the victims, but also contribute to re-establishing essential systems of norms, including norms of justice, which are inevitably weakened during times of conflict or authoritarianism (“Rule-of-Law Tools for Post-Conflict States: Reparations programmes,” 2008, p. 10).

Within the context of the United States the movement for reparation came together under the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America and, as Ta-Nehisi Coates explains in his seminal article for *The Atlantic*, “For the past 25 years, Congressman John Conyers Jr., who represents the Detroit area, has marked every session of Congress by introducing a bill calling for a congressional study of slavery and its lingering effects as well as recommendations for ‘appropriate remedies.’” That bill is now referred to as “HR 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African
Americans Act” (Coates, 2014). It has yet to be passed. For Durham and in the context of this paper reparations would be a form of redress for the system inequalities woven into the fabric of political, social, and institutional life since the city’s inception. This would of course including systemic inequalities in housing that the city has mirrored – segregation, redlining, Jim Crow, urban renewal, and the list goes on.

But reparations, truth and testimony is a complicated process, as evidenced by those processes that have taken place, and are currently taking place, in locations like South Africa, Germany, the Caribbean, and for the Japanese-Americans who secured reparations for internment during World War II. The examples of reparations in locations outside of the United States help put into context the kinds of violations that have occurred that have been worthy of reparations redress and the approaches these countries have taken. It also underscores the connection reparations play in the healing of trauma and, as such, remind us of the connection between trauma and systemic inequality and violence. As Laub puts it, “the testimonial enterprise is yet another mode of struggle against the victims’ entrapment in trauma repetition, against their enslavement to the fate of their victimization.”

This struggle, however, requires reparations. As Colvin points out, the South African [Committee on Reparations and Rehabilitation’s] final reparations and rehabilitation policy stated two reasons for reparations. First, it argued that ‘without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no healing or reconciliation.’ It added that reparations were necessary to ‘counterbalance amnesty.’” (De Greiff, 2010, p. 193) He elaborates, noting the Commission states,
additionally, that “the granting of reparation awards to victims of gross violations of human rights adds value to the ‘truth-seeking’ phase...”(ibid.) Healing, then, isn’t just about truth telling, testimony, and the power of storytelling. Healing is made whole, if you will, through reparations. The international examples of reparations, and their varied conclusion and impact, include Haiti, South Africa, Germany and Japanese internment in the United States.

Reparations in Haiti

One of the first actions of fiscal reparations took place well over one hundred years ago in 1825 in the newly free country, Haiti. Only twenty-one years after its independence from France, President Jean-Pierre Boyer led the country with an authoritarian grip and, “ultimately confirmed the military-style political structures established under the regimes of Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion.” It was in this manner that Boyer came to accept the three-part offer made by the French King Charles X that would exchange recognition for a crippling fee: 1) Haitian ports would be open to all nations but France would pay only half the tariffs, 2) Haiti would pay France 150 million francs “to compensate the former colonists who request an indemnity”, and 3) in return France would recognize Haiti as an independent nation. (L. Dubois, 2012, p. 99) The indemnity, reparations for the loss French slave owners suffered upon the emancipation of those they’d enslaved, was equivalent to about 3 billion in today’s dollars (L. Dubois, 2012, p. 7). Yet, in 2003 Carol Williams reported from Port-Au-Prince for the Los Angeles Times that, according to the Haitian government, “France owes
[Haiti] exactly $21,685,135,571.48...not counting interest, penalties or consideration of
the suffering and indignity inflicted by slavery and colonization.” (Williams, 2003) France
exerts a stranglehold over Haiti up through the present day, joined by other global
powers including the United States.

In fact, the indemnity quite possibly acted as a major player in the ousting of
President Aristide. The role of the United States is important since it can be seen as a
reflection of the insecurity the United States feels in regards to any reparations taking
shape – especially one in relation to past enslavement and ongoing inequality. As
president, Aristide would raise the issue of the indemnity, demanding repayment from
the French. Again Farmer outlines the events that might help explain his removal as
assisted by the US:

Taking up the question of the historic French debt, Aristide declared that France
‘extorted this money from Haiti by force and . . . should give it back to us so that
we can build primary schools, primary healthcare, water systems and roads.’ He
did the maths, adding in interest and adjusting for inflation, to calculate that
France owes Haiti $21,685,135,571.48 and counting. (ibid.)

This intersection of events points to the threat any reparations movement poses not
only to the French government, that would be responsible for these payments and
navigating those politics, but to the US government. Reparations movements in Haiti
and any success they achieve apply pressure to the US government to follow suit, in that
like France, the US is a country that legally allowed slavery.

Reparations in South Africa
Standing in contrast to the reparations made to the colonizer and oppressor in the case of Haiti and France, Christopher Colvin argues that the, “South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) ushered in what was probably the most publicized and celebrated post conflict transition process undertaken in the last fifty years.” Despite this, he notes that,

_The negotiations that brought about the end of apartheid rule in South Africa are notable, though not unique, for their singular lack of attention to the question of reparations. Except for the Interim Constitution, none of the documents produced during the negotiations even mentions reparations; they are instead concerned almost exclusively with amnesty and indemnity for those on the side of the conflict._ (De Greiff, 2010, p. 178)

Interestingly, especially in the context of this paper, Colvin explains that reparations were, in fact, discussed,

...but a policy on reparations was never codified. When they did consider reparations, the negotiators focused on offering the opportunity for storytelling to victims and truth telling by perpetrators. Both kinds of information were deemed vital to the rehabilitation of victims: victim narratives because they offered the chance for recognition and psychological healing, and perpetrator narratives because they offered the equally restorative chance to hear the truth of what happened. Beyond the production of these narratives, however, the negotiations failed to further engage with the question of reparations after apartheid. (De Greiff, 2010, p. 178)

South Africa then, initially focused on the healing aspect of testimony.

Reparations in Germany
Germany, according to Ariel Colonomos and Andrea Armstrong, showcases a new kind of reparations that represented a turning point. They take the position that, “West German payments to the State of Israel and Jewish victims of the Holocaust since 1950 are an unprecedented landmark in the history of reparations” (De Greiff, 2010, p. 390) on account of new and unprecedented innovations and that “the German reparations program...dwarfs reparation efforts all over the world” (De Greiff, 2010, p. 411). This model effort at reparations, despite any shortcomings, points to the necessity of social accountability. Colonomos and Armstrong clearly point out that, “Reparations are a threat to the traditional vision of the state, notably because they strengthen accusations of collective responsibility against the state” (De Greiff, 2010, p. 412). It is an absence of social accountability, and ongoing resistance to social accountability, that contributes towards the difficulty in achieving reparations in the United States. This absence and resistance will be discussed in further detail later.

Reparations for Japanese Internment in the United States

Eric K. Yamamoto and Liann Ebosugawa discuss reparations in the case of Japanese Americans post internment in the 1940s. Reparations, in this case,
culminated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988...[which] authorized a presidential apology and the payment of $1.2 billion in reparations to the Japanese Americans incarcerated by the USA without charges or trial on account of their race during World War II” (De Greiff, 2010, p. 257). This concrete and quantifiable success story (each surviving internee received $20,000) is something many consider a victory in the field of reparations, if still imperfect or even, as Yamamoto and Ebesugawa note, arduous. (De Greiff, 2010, p. 276) Still, reparations in this case allowed not only for financial redress (even if largely symbolic), but also “fostered long overdue healing for many” and that reparations were “cathartic for internees. A measure of dignity was restored. Former internees could finally talk about internment. Feelings, long repressed, surfaced” (ibid.). The authors here point out the way in which reparations can act as an intervention, a source of healing for the “trauma of racial incarceration [and]...scars on the soul” (ibid.). The healing after Japanese American internment, then, occurred emotionally as well as fiscally. The success of this reparations movement, however, prompts the larger question of justice and exactly when others, who are just as deserving, will receive reparations. The authors connect these dots, concluding their essay,

At bottom, the social meaning of Japanese American redress has yet to be determined. The key legacy of redress is likely to be how Japanese Americans act when faced with continuing racial subordination of African Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Latinas/os and Asian Americans, and with reparations claims of deserving groups throughout the world. (De Greiff, 2010, p. 277)
Resistance to Reparations in the United States

The unanswered question of reparations in the United States, as queried by Yamamoto and Ebesugawa and echoed by so many others, hangs still, in mid-air fueled partly, at least, by the resistance on the part of the US to discuss reparations or even acknowledge the legacy left by slavery in the form of institutional racism. Allie Yee notes this American resistance to reparations saying, “Reparations are not popular: A HuffPost/YouGov poll last summer found only 15 percent of Americans thought the government should make payments to black Americans who are descendants of slaves while 68 percent disagreed...” (Yee, 2015). Mazzocco et al recorded even starker data, noting that in a 2002 CNN/Gallup poll “Among 820 White respondents, 90% indicated that they would not support reparations payments, while only 6% indicated support. A similar poll of 723 White adults conducted by Bobo and Dawson in 2000 gauged opposition to government-sponsored reparations to slave descendants at 96%” (Mazzocco, Brock, Brock, Olson, & Banaji, 2006, p. 262).

Yee captures even further nuance to reparations resistance, recording Ta-Nehesi Coates’ perspective that the, “Lack of action on HR 40 [the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act]... is evidence of a
resistance to reparations that is not simply about the details of the policy or even about the transfer of capital. It is about a more fundamental threat to American identity and American exceptionalism...It is about the threat to white identity” (Yee, 2015). The HR 40, the bill that introduces reparations, had as many as 81 co-sponsors in the 1990s but in the recent years there “have been few co-sponsors at all...and none have signed on so far to the version introduced in the current session” (Yee, 2015). Roy L. Brooks puts it simply, “the slavery redress movement has met resistance at every turn...the federal [US] government has been reluctant to issue an apology, let alone provide reparations for an era generally regarded as one of the most shameful in all of history” (Brooks, 1999, p. 309). It is clear, then, that resistance to any form of redress or reparations for slavery, Jim Crow, and structural inequality in the United States is strong.

American avoidance of reparations takes on deeper meaning when considering the ways in which the United Statesscapegoats Germany for the Holocaust while avoiding responsibility for our own historic and contemporary atrocities. A simple search on The New York Times online archives stretching back to 1851 reveals over 102,000 results for the search term “Nazi” and only 184 for the search term “reparations” (limited to the United States) (“archives search,” n.d.-a). Even then, many of the results focused on reparations for other communities or individuals like Japanese Americans or Iran hostages. A similar search on National Public Radio website came up with over 1,800 search results
for “Nazi” and only 251 for “reparations” (“archives search,” n.d.-b) here again many of them focusing elsewhere than the United States including reparations in Greece or the Caribbean. I contend that this disproportionate focus on Germany’s Holocaust allows the United States to avoid its own responsibility and social accountability for atrocities, past and present, to literally project its own responsibility onto another nation and scapegoat Germany. In doing so, The US is able to avoid facing the truth and reality of slavery’s ramifications, and consequently, prevents the healing that accountability would create. This increasingly allows space for ongoing anti-reparations dogma and, furthermore, this avoidance allows for the legacy of inter-generational trauma to compound over time and generations. This silence, deflection, and avoidance of social accountability allows for the blame to be, continuously, placed on the victim and victims. It serves material interests, including the preservation of power and privilege.

While international in scope, and seemingly far from the local machinations of a Durham government and housing landscape, these examples of reparations underscore the multitude of ways that reparations can take place as well as the way that they can serve to ease the trauma inflicted through systemic inequality, violence, and discrimination.
Conclusion

In this paper I have explored the similarity in structure between inequality and trauma theoretically and applied the resulting framework to the history of housing in Durham as well as the present. Through the research and interviews I conducted I was able to arrive at a multi-faceted conclusion. Two key points arose:

(1) Durham’s downtown planning has in many ways been outsourced to Downtown Durham Inc which leaves the city center vulnerable to the effect of neo-liberal policy and the historic legacy of economic inequality. Durham’s planning material historically and today centers the importance of downtown as a space for the whole community; additionally many of the planners in Durham’s planning department are held to a specific ethical standard that echo this priority. The planning department has an enormous amount of work to accomplish and have informally or formally passed off the planning to Downtown Durham, Inc, a private non-profit who have succeeded since their founding in being not only a critical catalyst, but also a leader in downtown’s revitalization and transformation. However, as a private entity they are not obligated to the same planning priorities or ethical standard and can focus, instead, on their own goals. This privatization compounded by neo-liberal policy and color-blind racism leaves Durham’s already-vulnerable citizens further at risk for displacement due to skyrocketing rents, mortgages, and home-ownership costs.
(2) The decrease of federal funding and the increase in state restrictions on housing policy place strong limitations on what Durham’s city leadership can actually accomplish to meet the need for affordable housing, despite the well-intentioned, talented, and knowledgeable stakeholders in the field. Combined, these issues result in the repetition of displacement of the low-income and often people of color who lived in (or near) downtown Durham and accessed it for services and daily needs.

Ultimately, in Durham we are seeing a shift in who can or cannot afford to live in Durham driven not by innocuous and neutral market forces, but rather an embedded structural inequality playing out in today’s landscape marked not by the heavy federal intervention of the 60s and 70s but, rather, a federal abdication which has led to local solutions that lean on color-blind racism to both justify the means to an end and avoid accountability. In the end, the city is participating, even if unwillingly, in a repetition of centuries-old patterns of trauma that, in fact, amount to violations of human rights; they just happen to be hidden behind a veil of good intentions, justifications, and neoliberalism. It is imperative to openly acknowledge this reality in order to both address it and provide for reparations as well as terminate this so-far ceaseless cycle of trauma and structural inequality.

Further Research and Next Steps

Structures of inequality and trauma, how they build and maintain power, have much in common. These patterns and similarities occur, sadly, in Durham’s housing
history as well as Durham’s contemporary housing landscape and policy. This repetition of trauma evocation and violation of human rights makes a strong argument for reparations. Understanding the connections between contemporary inequality and trauma can be helpful in magnifying and deepening the call for action and change to policymakers. However, further research is needed to expand on these ideas and further solidify their proof. Calculating the gentrification index in Durham would be invaluable in quantifying and proving its existence and simplifying the understanding of its impact to the public, media and policymakers as would digital tools like infographics. Further research is also needed on whom exactly downtown Durham currently serves -- such as business owners’ and patrons’ demographics, in addition to any decrease in services offered to low-income communities as well as businesses no longer able to afford rents. It would be useful, additionally, to explore the connections between gentrification and affordable housing shortages with any correlation to crime, unrest, and violence. It is invaluable, as well, to seek examples of city housing successes, many of which arose in interviews. Of course, additional interviews with stakeholders such as the Community Development Office, activists, additional government representatives, etc. would aid in deepening the understanding of where Durham is in its housing zeitgeist. As is so often the case, much has become clear in the course of this project, only to reveal the magnitude of work still left to be complete.
Sec. 94.2 - Low and moderate income housing; density bonuses.

(a) The city council may provide for the granting of density bonuses in one or more zoning districts in which residential uses are permitted, or provide other incentives of value to a developer of housing within the city and its extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (if any), if the developer agrees to construct at least 15 percent of the total housing units within the development for persons and families of low and moderate income. The size of the density bonus may vary with the percentage of housing units constructed within the development for persons or families of low and moderate income.

(b) The city council may provide for the enforcement of a developer's commitment to provide low and moderate income housing by ordinance or through the adoption of rules and regulations. Such ordinance or rules and regulations may require the developer to record restrictive covenants applicable to the property, to convey real estate interests in the property, to enter into binding contracts satisfactory to the city or to take any other lawful action prescribed by the city. The city may prescribe the period of time during [which] the developer's commitment shall be binding.

(c) When used in this section, the following words or terms have the meanings indicated:

1. Density bonus means an increase in the number of housing units allowed on the tract of land upon which the development is located, when compared to the maximum number of housing units which would be allowed on the tract of land in the absence of the density bonus.

2. Low and moderate income has the meaning prescribed by regulations of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development applicable to the City of Durham's metropolitan area. In the absence of such regulations, the term "low and moderate income" shall have the meaning prescribed by the city council by ordinance or resolution. The term "low and moderate income" shall also be construed to mean low or moderate income.

(Laws 1991, Ch. 503, § 1)
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