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THE SLOW VIOLENCE OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL* PLANNING:
RACIAL INJUSTICE IN PUBLIC HEALTH CRISES

A Thesis Presented

by

MONIKA M. SHARMA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF REGIONAL PLANNING

February 2021

Regional Planning

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ABSTRACT

THE SLOW VIOLENCE OF *BUSINESS AS USUAL* PLANNING: RACIAL INJUSTICE IN PUBLIC HEALTH CRISES

February 2021

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This thesis is a critical analysis of the normative planning practice in relation to the aspirational principles of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) (especially Section A, Part 1: *Overall Responsibility to the Public*). By exploring several dimensions of typical, or *Business As Usual*, planning practices in a local planning department in Springfield, Massachusetts and contextualized within larger planning concerns in the United States, I illustrate that socio-spatial, racialized oppression is deeply embedded in these common practices. Through a multimethod approach that includes historical survey, archival research, interviews, and direct observation, I argue that most professional planning operates from within antiquated frameworks that prioritize professionalism and expertise over genuine community engagement, relationality, and collective agency. This structure contributes to weakened trust in government and inequitable allocation of attention and resources, thereby reproducing inequity, particularly in disaster contexts. While these are my findings from site-specific research, I contend that such outcomes are evident in planning departments more generally. Thus, I conclude that the exacerbation of inequity during crises is not isolated, but instead a result of deeply embedded neoliberal planning practices. Specifically, I identify key barriers to equitable planning as 1) absence of care, 2) over-reliance on economic development, 3) disconnects between research and implementation, 4) degraded linking social capital and top-down public participation, and 5) illusions of objectivity in planning. These patterns contribute to what I, following Rob Nixon (2011), call slow violence against vulnerable populations through professional silence about and complicity in violent structures. Associating these trends with the violence of COVID-19 and racism, I find that planning may be participating in structural slow violence against communities of color, especially in Legacy Cities such as Springfield, Massachusetts. Finally, I call for a shift in planning practice, wherein we acknowledge and take responsibility for the unavoidable political role of the planner. I propose five steps to redirect our practices: 1) acknowledge our past, 2) reject illusions of objectivity, 3) identify injustices and define resilience collectively, 4) center care frameworks, and 5) invest in the implementation of research findings.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, a global pandemic began to wreak havoc in countries all across the world. As I write this, we are seven months into the COVID-19 pandemic with no end in sight. The United States was late to react and respond to the rapidly worsening crisis. Because of this late and underwhelming response to COVID, cities and towns across the country have been severely affected and less able to socio-economically cope and recover. This lack of resilience has resulted in an inability to adapt to changing social and economic landscapes in the face of the virus. As of October 15th, 2020, the United States has nearly eight million cases of COVID-19 and over 215,000 deaths.¹ The White House issued a national state of emergency on March 13th, 2020 three days after Massachusetts, where Governor Charlie Baker issued a state of emergency on March 10th and a stay-at-home order on March 23rd.²

Not only has the COVID pandemic shut down life in the United States (as well as globally) on multiple fronts, but the violent health effects of the virus continue to be felt disproportionately by communities and individuals of color, particularly Black individuals and communities. For example, in Washington D.C. Black people have died from COVID at rates more than twice their share of the population. Similarly, a hospital in California found that Black patients are hospitalized at 2.7 times the rate of non-Hispanic whites, pointing to higher severity of infection.³ These higher rates of infection and death stem from a complex combination of

¹CDC, “Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the U.S.,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 28, 2020, <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker>.

²“Massachusetts State Parks COVID - 19 Update,” Mass.gov, accessed June 11, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-state-parks-covid-19-update>; “Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak,” The White House, accessed October 15, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-declaring-national-emergency-concerning-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak/>.

³ “To Grasp Who’s Dying of Covid-19, Look to Social Factors like Race,” *STAT* (blog), June 15, 2020, <https://www.statnews.com/2020/06/15/whos-dying-of-covid19-look-to-social-factors-like-race/>.

intersecting vulnerabilities, all of which point to underlying systemic racism, in which planning is implicated.⁴

In the midst of this unprecedented virus, George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis, was murdered by police officers. While George Floyd's name is one in a long list of Black Americans who have been killed by police officers, his murder has acted as a political catalyst. Two months after COVID swept the nation, on May 25th, 2020, George Floyd's murder prompted uprisings and protests nationwide. These widespread political movements are shaking the consciousness of non-Black Americans as well as the political climate in the United States. For the first time, the public health crisis of racism is being actively, publicly acknowledged on a large scale.⁵ Both COVID and racism are violent, intersecting, multidimensional socio-political crises.

On March 27th, 2020, a group of US Politicians including Senators Elisabeth Warren, Cory Booker, and Kamala Harris as well as Congressmembers Ayanna Pressley and Robin Kelly wrote an open letter to the US Department of Health and Human Services discussing the twin pandemics. Their letter draws attention to socioeconomic factors including poverty, which are structurally produced and often concentrated in communities of color. As a result, "unemployment, food insecurity and unstable or substandard housing conditions may further perpetuate disparities in health outcomes for people infected by the coronavirus, most specifically among low-income communities of color."⁶ which leads to a "vicious cycle: poverty is made

⁴ Elisabeth Warren et al., "Letter to HHS Re Racial Disparities in COVID Response," March 27, 2020, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020.03.27%20Letter%20to%20HHS%20re%20racial%20disparities%20in%20COVID%20response.pdf>; "American Planning Association: Join the Movement to Defund the Police," Google Docs, accessed October 15, 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/u/2/d/1b8VAEwzPCE8bpf5zJquVeO4-oVjjEvDQ7CzpuQ2gwzg/edit?urp=gmail_link&gxids=7628&usp=embed_facebook.

⁵"Racism Is an Ongoing Public Health Crisis That Needs Our Attention Now," accessed July 29, 2020, <https://www.apha.org/news-and-media/news-releases/apha-news-releases/2020/racism-is-a-public-health-crisis>.

⁶ Warren et al., "Letter to HHS Re Racial Disparities in COVID Response," March 27, 2020.

worse by the health and economic consequences of the epidemic.”⁷ Planning histories of promoting neoliberal agendas at the expense of equity are implicated in many of these health and economic consequences.⁸ The poverty inflicted on communities of color through systematic disinvestment is directly violent and exacerbated by crises.

We, as planners do not often acknowledge the injustices that lie in the history of this profession. This omission is an injustice to our communities, their ancestors, and future generations. I am calling for an empirical analysis of planning practice in the United States wherein we take responsibility for our participation in and complicity with the design and implementation of spatial and structural racism. I argue that it is our responsibility to design an anti-racist framework for practitioners to adopt, making it possible to hear and respond to calls for change. In planning education, care and compassion are overpowered by technical training. This prioritization is reflected in practice. We must recognize and take responsibility for the political role of the planner and adopt equity frameworks in plan development, implementation, and day-to-day practice. We must activate the vague aspirations in the AICP code of ethics that call for social justice and critical thinking, and we must center care and compassion more actively.

Conversations regarding embedded structural racism are ongoing and important, at this moment they are more urgent than ever. We are positioned at a pivotal moment in the United States. The two public health crises that we are facing are prompting a human and civil rights movement and blaring calls for radical change in the nation and worldwide. Crisis response has “both material and ethical consequences,”⁹ therefore said response must be based in ethical considerations as well as material.

⁷ Warren et al., 2.

⁸ “American Planning Association.”

⁹ Layla J. Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management,” *Gender, Work & Organization* 27, no. 5 (2020): 873, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12491>.

As in examining any field at this profound time, our current moment calls for us to go beyond typical research design and look at systems and processes through the lens of possible and necessary radical change. We must hold up the possibility of deep change in our minds and our conversations as planners and global citizens. Planning is not only an academic and professional field, but also requires social, emotional, and relational frameworks for existing and working within communities. Through my research, I have come to understand that planning has fundamentally fallen short of building and improving whole, equitable communities, both historically and as it is generally practiced today. Planning, in practice, is often reactive, isolated, and exclusive. The field of planning must imagine futures, develop creative solutions, and participate in knowledge production at the local level. Generation and implementation of planning endeavors must begin by holistically reflecting and supporting the needs and ideas of local residents, as well as reckoning with oppressive structures.

Through critical textual analysis, observation and experience, and qualitative interviews, I have identified a set of problems and will propose a framework for change within planning. This is a call to action: Planners and professionals in planning fields must stop and critically examine the systems in which we participate that have led to and exacerbated current crises and related inequity. If we do not respond to this moment by deeply interrogating and changing our systems, we, as practitioners will have failed our communities.

During and shortly after a crisis or disturbance, there is a window of opportunity to affect change. “Planners have a critical role in recovery”¹⁰ after a disaster; communities look to planners to facilitate reconstruction quickly and effectively. Planners must be involved in the recovery of communities on multiple levels, from the very start of their reconstruction or response through

¹⁰ Karl Kim and Robert B. Olshansky, “The Theory and Practice of Building Back Better,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 80, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 289–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2014.988597>.

implementation and retrospective analysis. Disasters may open windows for local action groups to engage and partner with nonprofits, municipal government, and community members. However, windows for change and collaboration in redevelopment do not stay open for long following a disaster.¹¹ The window of opportunity that emerges in response to a crisis for action is brief. This holds true for long-range plan development, and implementation as well. For this reason, it is important to listen to the community voices that are calling for change in the midst of crises and prioritize community interaction and response in our work.

In reaction to both COVID-19 and violent racism, the conversation and shift must begin now. If we, as planners, let this moment pass, we will succumb to the pattern we have been settled in for over a century. Systems change is urgent, and planners are uniquely positioned to influence, facilitate and engage with necessary change. We must analyze the barriers to planners' ability to do this in order to facilitate implementation. It is crucial to recognize the pattern of concern in moments of crises and understand how and why justice has not come to fruition. Black psychologist Kenneth Clark recognized patterns of injustice, violence, and inaction in response to public outcry:

*"I read the report of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee of the Harlem riot of 1935, the report of the investigating committee of the Harlem riot of 1943, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot [of 1965], I must again in candor say to you members of the Commission — it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland with the same moving picture reshown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction."*¹² -Kenneth Clark

To not respond adequately to the calls of communities would be an act of violence repeating a pattern we have seen many times before.

¹¹ Philip R. Berke and Thomas J. Campanella, "Planning for Postdisaster Resiliency," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 604, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 192–207, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716205285533>.

¹² "Fifty Years Later, What the Kerner Report Tells Us about Race in Chicago Today," Chicago Reporter, February 26, 2018, <https://www.chicagoreporter.com/fifty-years-later-what-the-kerner-report-tells-us-about-race-in-chicago-today/>.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

This research is conceptually based in frameworks authored by interdisciplinary scholars. Slow violence frames the ongoing structural injustice in which planning has historically participated. Initially conceptualized by Rob Nixon in reference to environmental devastation, slow violence refers to the cumulative imperial violence enacted through resource extraction that negatively affects already marginalized people.¹³ This violence results in “attritional, and mundane forms of death and disease that do not resolve into moments of spectacular destruction.”¹⁴ This slow violence is thus often relatively unnoticed by dominant society. This harm to ecosystems and human communities unfolds in a way that is everyday and persistent, yet not extensive enough to grab media headlines or political spotlights.

Slow violence unpacks the “attritional lethality”¹⁵ of the culmination of effects of development and globalization. Nixon examines this violence in the context of environmental degradation and the environmental movement.¹⁶ Authored by Sara Nelson, *The Slow Violence of Climate Change* is not only the cumulative effect of climate change and environmental degradation, but the inaction and “trudging pace” of response.¹⁷ Scholars also recognize the many dynamics at play within the neoliberal city, which act as forms of slow violence. Slow violence has implications and relevance in both the structural and day-to-day processes of colonialism and racial capitalism. These manifestations are ongoing “at the intersection of gender, class, race, and

¹³ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, UNITED STATES: Harvard University Press, 2011), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=3300958>.

¹⁴ Sara Nelson, “The Slow Violence of Climate Change,” accessed February 10, 2019, <http://jacobinmag.com/2016/02/cop-21-united-nations-paris-climate-change/>.

¹⁵ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.

¹⁶ Nixon, 8.

¹⁷ Nelson, “The Slow Violence of Climate Change.”

place.”¹⁸ For example, housing dispossession is a form of slow violence that inflicts chronic, urban trauma.¹⁹ Food inaccess, racial surveillance, landscapes of structural inequality, the dismantling of social housing, and gentrification are all forms of slow violence that are normalized in our world today.²⁰ Normalization of these violent policies and practices is what makes them so oppressive; this violence underpins *Business As Usual* practices, which I will describe below.

A significant component of slow violence is therefore the devaluation of certain lives that are not deemed worthy compared to the economic gains exacted through resource exploitation. Translating this framework of slow violence to my research helps me illuminate the disregard for rates of Black death during this pandemic, a violence that is magnified by the rush to return to “normal.” Moves back towards economic normalcy are primarily led by those who profit from historically colonial systems, largely those who are members of a white supremacist, authoritarian regime.²¹ Thus, akin to what Nixon explained in a different context, the deaths of Black people persists and is regarded as secondary to broader economic concerns.

I situate the slow violence of the pandemics within a conceptual framework centered on *Three Stories of Our Time* authored by ecophilosopher Dr. Joanna Macy and medical doctor Chris Johnstone. *Business As Usual*, the first frame, is a manifestation of the colonial empires

¹⁸ Caitlin Cahill and Rachel Pain, “Representing Slow Violence and Resistance,” *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 18, no. 5 (October 3, 2019): 1054–65.

¹⁹ Rachel Pain, “Chronic Urban Trauma: The Slow Violence of Housing Dispossession,” *Urban Studies* 56, no. 2 (February 1, 2019): 385–400, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018795796>.

²⁰ Cahill and Pain, “Representing Slow Violence and Resistance.”

²¹ Jasmin Zine, “Unmasking the Racial Politics of the Coronavirus Pandemic,” *The Conversation*, accessed July 29, 2020, <http://theconversation.com/unmasking-the-racial-politics-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-139011>; Maia Niguel Hoskin, “The Whiteness of Anti-Lockdown Protests,” *Vox*, April 25, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2020/4/25/21234774/coronavirus-covid-19-protest-anti-lockdown>.

Zine, “Unmasking the Racial Politics of the Coronavirus Pandemic”; Hoskin, “The Whiteness of Anti-Lockdown Protests.”

from which our current economy materialized. *Business As Usual* prioritizes economic development, growth, and profit over all else. Under this paradigm, crises is a temporary difficulty from which we will recover and from which corporations may benefit. *Business As Usual* roots itself in the maintenance of systems that were built on stolen land, the backs of the economic profits of slavery, and colonial empires.²² A key element of *Business As Usual* is the overwhelming urgency to “return to normal,” resisting radical change through normalizing economic prosperity and consumption. This urgency takes part in creating and embedding the pattern that Kenneth Clark identified in 1968.²³

Situating ourselves as planners and global citizens within this framework, we must understand and acknowledge that *Business As Usual* may seem to be the only possible reality for those entangled in our current systems. The very paradigm of defaulting to *Business As Usual* makes a shift away from systems ever more challenging. Those situated outside of the *Business As Usual* industrial complex, such as protestors, organizers, and advocates around the country, draw attention to the violence of *Business As Usual*.

The ferment of the current moment in the United States illustrates part of what Drs. Macy and Johnstone call the *Great Unraveling*, the second frame that identifies the moments when the inadequacies of current systems lead to their own destruction.²⁴ COVID is a public health crisis, the effects of which are felt most severely by communities of color. In addition to the more recent global pandemic, racism, specifically anti-Black racism, is a public health crisis in itself. These two crises are significant drivers of the *Great Unraveling*. The *Great Unraveling* frames the

²² Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy* (New World Library, 2012).

²³ “Fifty Years Later, What the Kerner Report Tells Us about Race in Chicago Today.”

²⁴ Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*.

collapse of intersecting social, economic, ecological and biological systems, including systemic racism.

The final frame in this triad is the *Great Turning*, which is the transition to life-sustaining systems as an outgrowth of transformational change.²⁵ Recognizing the current era as an *Unraveling*, I call for a *Great Turning* in planning in which we embark on a processual approach to racial justice by integrating multi-dimensional justice into our crisis response endeavors. This happens by positioning ourselves in kindness, care, and procedural undoing of racist systems from within.²⁶ In response to the profound need for systemic change, my thesis offers a meta-cognitive critical analysis of planning to make the case for dismantling systems of oppression and to underscore the liberatory possibilities embedded in such changes.

Through this research I draw together the frameworks of slow violence and of the *Three Stories of Our Time* in order to understand and analyze how planning is interacting with crisis and a fraught history. In my research, I assert that *Business As Usual* enacts slow violence upon vulnerable populations, contributing to *The Great Unraveling* and necessitating a *Great Turning*. This framework is pictured in the concept map below (Figure 1: Concept Map).

²⁵Macy and Johnstone.

²⁶ John Forester, "Our Curious Silence about Kindness in Planning: Challenges of Addressing Vulnerability and Suffering," *Planning Theory*, June 19, 2020, 1473095220930766, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095220930766>.

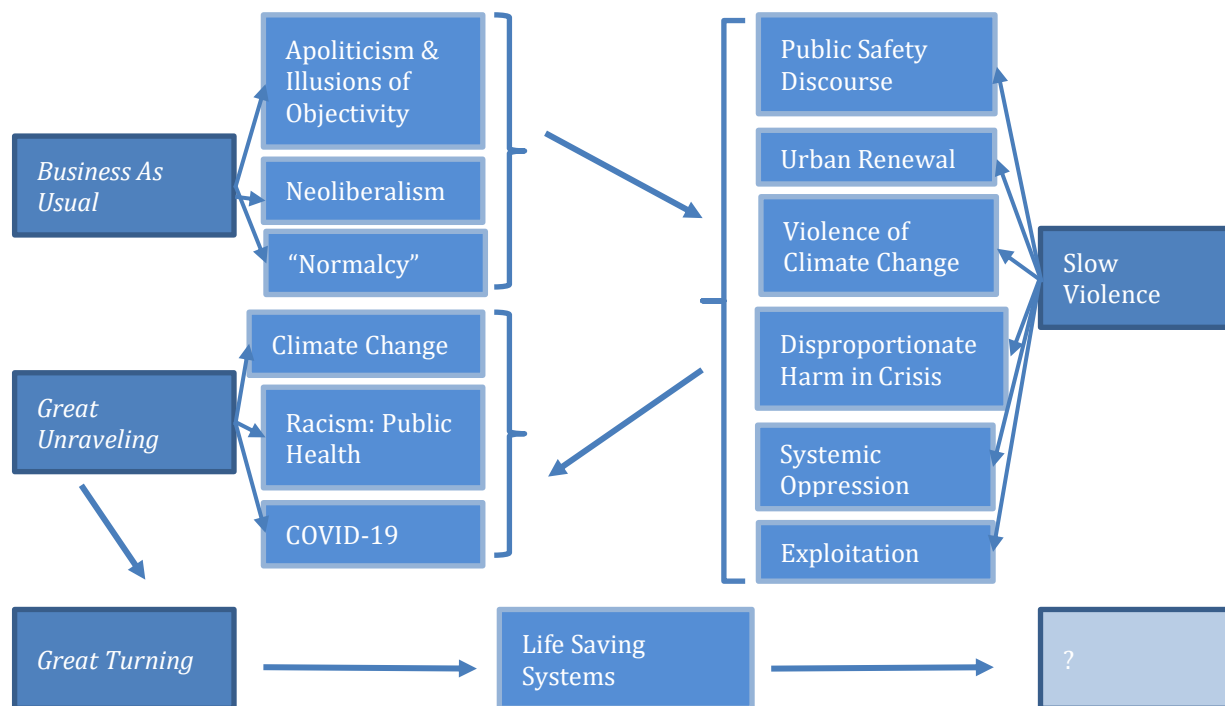


Figure 1: Concept Map

Operating from within this framework, I will present a microcosm of *Business as Usual* planning practice. I offer a case study focused on Springfield, Massachusetts contextualized by planning histories and broader planning themes. Through this research, I will unpack the legacy of planning in order to identify the violent, *Business As Usual* practices embedded in the field. Planning structures have, sometimes subtly, contributed to this moment of *Great Unraveling*. Based on my analysis I will propose actions and a reframing to activate the field in the *Great Turning*.

In both theory and in practice, I will contextualize crisis and injustice within disaster and planning frameworks. Current crises and the outgrowth of activism calling for change, recognize and reject the repercussions of ongoing *Business As Usual* and emphasize the realities of a *Great Unraveling*. The compounding socio-climatic crises in the *Great Unraveling* illustrate why we

must *Turn*. With this in mind, I will examine the practice of equity specialization within planning fields and discuss relationships between communities and their planning staff and agencies. I will draw upon interviews with planners as well as my own experiences within planning education and practice in order to identify patterns of *Business As Usual* practice as it is, while also exploring opportunities for radical, positive, and lasting change. I argue that structurally, planning exists firmly within *Business As Usual*, enacting slow violence upon individuals and communities of color. This recognition must prompt a processual approach to changing our field.

In this thesis I aim to answer the following questions: What are normative *Business As Usual* practices within Springfield? How are those practices contextualized by normative planning education and practice? How do those practices affect intersecting public health crises? What are prominent disaster response discourses and in what ways may those discourses be affecting slow violence?

I will begin by offering a background on planning that engages with slow violence situated within a *Business As Usual* framework. I will then offer background on the City of Springfield specifically. This background is situated within the framework described above in which we understand *Business As Usual* as contributing to slow violence. I will then review interdisciplinary literature pertaining to several components of *Business As Usual* systems and processes relevant to planning. These topics are as follows: 1) Absence of Care, 2) Over-reliance on Economic Development, 3) Disconnects Between Research and Implementation, 4) Degraded Linking Social Capital, and 5) Illusions of Objectivity in Planning. I will then describe my methodology and pull from diverse research methods. Following my methods, I will discuss my findings in Springfield contextualized by broader trends that I identify. Finally, I will conclude by offering a pathway for the field of planning, centering processual change, to redirect towards a *Great Turning*.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

In this background I will provide a context of the Planning field in conversation with planning theorists and equity scholars who have been critiquing *Business As Usual* planning for half a century. The framework for *Business As Usual* in planning situates my research. I will describe the hand planning had in building urban landscapes embedded with slow violence and socio-economic inequity. I will then discuss implications of *Business As Usual* planning in crisis to draw together the history and context of the field with the *Great Unraveling* which I have described. Finally, I offer a background of planning in Springfield, Massachusetts, the site of my research. I will tie planning in Springfield back to broad *Business As Usual* planning, as well as discuss crisis response planning in Springfield.

2.1 Slow Violence in Planning Perpetuated by *Business As Usual*

Paul Davidoff described planners' complicity in systems of oppression and capitalist exploitation by pointing out that “the city-planning profession's limited scope has tended to bias strongly many of its recommendations toward perpetuation of existing social and economic practices.”²⁷ Participation in the status quo in planning is encouraged by a political economic climate that facilitates and promotes neoliberal development patterns under the guise of objectivity. This description parallels the definition of *Business As Usual* practices, which is one of the major problems I have identified in my research.

Planners are obligated to correctly address injustice by centering all of our work moving forward on equity and social justice. Not only must planners focus on fighting socioeconomic injustices, but we must educate ourselves, our municipalities, and our communities towards

²⁷ Paul Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31, no. 4 (November 1, 1965): 331–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366508978187>.

becoming anti-racist actors. Antiracism is defined by *NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity* as "the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably."²⁸ Planners can play an important role in righting historical wrongs as we are uniquely situated with access to systems knowledge, interconnectedness, and an understanding of governmental and organizational complexity to begin addressing these damaging histories.²⁹

The field of planning has played a significant role in the systemic construction of three eras of violent, racialized urban landscapes. For example, in terms of urban housing, planners have helped to cultivate a series of discriminatory practices which have had wide reaching effects deepening multi-dimensional inequity. Three eras of housing discrimination are qualified by urban and regional planning scholar Dr. Andrew Greenlee.³⁰ The first era, encompassing housing policy until the late 1940s, was a product of lawful segregation which encompassed separate but equal policy. This first iteration existed through early race riots, the Black Belt, and up through the Great Migration. This period is marked by informal housing similar to the tenements in New York. The second era was the urban renewal movement. This process was the destruction of slum housing and the construction of public housing. The second period coincided with the passing of the Housing Act of 1949 and involvement from the Federal Housing Association (FHA). This time perpetuated existing segregation but was accompanied by a rhetoric claiming that the

²⁸"Anti-Racism Defined," Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, accessed June 17, 2020, <http://www.aclrc.com/antiracism-defined>.

²⁹John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning* (Taylor & Francis, 2016).

³⁰Andrew Greenlee, "The Making and Remaking of Chicago's 'Third Ghetto': The Politics of Race, Poverty and Residential Mobility" (University of Massachusetts Amherst, Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Zube Lecture Series, Olver Design Building. Amherst Massachusetts., September 8, 2018).

government was “fixing” social ills. Urban renewal, backed by federal funding allowed municipal officials to drastically change urban spatial boundaries, “destroying many urban communities.”³¹

The third era, offered by Dr. Andrew J. Greenlee, describes the housing situation from 1990 through today. Housing during this period aims to deconcentrate poverty and change the affordable housing stock through public-private partnerships. Through this process, residents are displaced, and historic public housing is gentrified. This approach to housing is a dual mandate, aiming to integrate the market and produce state led gentrification.³² This state led gentrification is also known more simply as economic development. Patterns of relocation, community destruction, and barriers to wealth building for poor and Black Americans are powerful forms of systemic racism.

The legacy of planning associated with housing segregation and urban renewal has had wide repercussions and supported structural disadvantages. Housing contexts illustrate planning’s complicity in the production of inequities. Furthermore, these histories have inhibited opportunities for wealth building in Black communities and embedded racialized disparities in the urban fabric of the United States.³³ Housing policy in the United States well illustrates planning’s complicity in the production of violent inequity. Remaining within frameworks that have led us to this point reinforces racialized slow violence. Such planning practices followed the lead of white supremacy to create geographies of oppression which resonate through crises today.³⁴

³¹ Annalise H Fonza, “Troubling City Planning Discourses: A Womanist Analysis of Urban Renewal and Social Planning in Springfield, Massachusetts, 1960–1980,” *Doctoral Dissertations Available from Proquest*, January 1, 2010, 20.

³² Greenlee, “The Making and Remaking of Chicago’s ‘Third Ghetto’: The Politics of Race, Poverty and Residential Mobility.”

³³Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning.”

³⁴ Mary E. Triage, “Constructing the Antiracial City: City Planning and Antiracialism in the 21st Century,” *Western Journal of Communication* 82, no. 5 (October 20, 2018): 613–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2017.1390148>.

It is neither straightforward nor simple to undo inequity and incorporate advocacy into municipal planning departments across the country. The wrought history of violence both slow and immediate between powerholding municipal institutions and communities of color has led to degraded trust from those on the receiving end of violence. Trust across this type of power gradient is also known as linking social capital. Linking social capital is one of three types of social capital. This type describes “norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting *across* explicit, formal or institutionalized *power or authority* gradients in society.”³⁵ These gradients include marginalized populations, the privileged public, municipal government, and other planning agencies and institutions. This power differential takes many forms and manifests in both slow and immediate violence. Cycles of deteriorating trust and linking social capital both cause and result from aforementioned forms of slow violence.

Planning directly participates in a slow violence of territorializing space and excluding marginalized people from wealth building opportunities and access. These violent processes implemented by planners are deliberate rhythms and patterns that manifest in physical space.³⁶ These patterns and rhythms of violence that planning has helped to embed in urban landscapes and communities are the result and maintenance of *Business As Usual* practices. An absence of trust is a huge barrier to effective planning, but it is one we have cultivated for ourselves. The *Great Unraveling* is marked by this degraded trust. As Kimberly Latrice Jones put it, “[we] broke the contract.”³⁷ Repeated breakage of social contracts is a form of slow violence, invalidating

³⁵Tristan Claridge, “What Is Linking Social Capital?,” January 7, 2018, <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/what-is-linking-social-capital/>.

³⁶ Leslie Kern, “Rhythms of Gentrification: Eventfulness and Slow Violence in a Happening Neighbourhood,” *Cultural Geographies* 23, no. 3 (July 1, 2016): 441–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474015591489>.

³⁷ *How Can We Win? Kimberly Latrice Jones*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLDMb0ve62s>.

human lives and needs. Trust between Black and other marginalized communities and institutions is often absent or lacking and rightfully so.

The American Planning Association (APA) issued an understated call to action within planning after the brutal murder of George Floyd and subsequent global uprisings calling for justice. The APA asserted that: “Together we can take an active role in rebuilding and transforming communities to create a society that ensures safety, health and prosperity for all its inhabitants. APA will continue to develop and deliver tools, techniques, support and encouragement to planners tirelessly combating all forms of racism and inequity.”³⁸ This call to action aligns with aspirational principles guiding the American Planning Association, which I will review in my literature review.

In order to ensure that community leaders maintain control, in pursuit of building trust, planners must prioritize power redistribution where power is inequitable. Unfortunately, “absent from planning literature is guidance on how to ensure grassroots preservationists of color retain control during engagement.”³⁹ This absence speaks to how the field regards the importance of grassroots work and elevating voices of color. *Business As Usual* planning does not provide a framework for collaborating with communities of color while ensuring that community leaders hold control. Issues of power and control, especially across racial lines, hold enormous implications in equitable outcomes of planning processes as well as in the production or degradation of linking social capital.

³⁸ “APA Statement on Righting the Wrongs of Racial Inequality,” American Planning Association, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://www.planning.org/policy/statements/2020/may31/>.

³⁹ Andrea Roberts and Grace Kelly, “Remixing as Praxis: Arnstein’s Ladder Through the Grassroots Preservationist’s Lens,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 301, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1622439>.

Prioritizing reciprocity within public engagement through centering social benefits is crucial in building resilience and linking social capital.⁴⁰ Linking social capital is highly relevant when it comes to connecting individuals to resources through local government or other institutions.⁴¹ Higher capacity for recovery in response to emergency situations corresponds with higher social capital, also known as better resilience.⁴² In order for people to know of and access resources provided in partnership with their government, they must trust those providing said resources. Where this trust is lacking, resource access and distribution is not possible, which is another manifestation of slow violence. Disaster response is affected greatly by planning legacies of perpetuating oppressive and violent systems and the absence of trust between planners and the communities they claim to serve.

Institutions that have aspired to address inequity and injustice have, all too often, focused on profit for those already in power over justice. This is consistent not only in general practice, but also in crisis response. This research considers social uprisings and public health crises in the same context as climate and environmental disaster. Slow violence is multiplied in the contexts of disaster and crisis. This violence takes the form of inequitable, ongoing harm. Insufficient institutional response to crisis when marginalized populations are those in harm's way is an act of slow violence.⁴³

⁴⁰Jason Corburn, "Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making: Improving Urban Planning for Communities at Risk," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 22, no. 4 (June 1, 2003): 420–33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X03022004008>; Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," in *Culture and Politics: A Reader*, ed. Lane Crothers and Charles Lockhart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2000), 223–34, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62965-7_12.

Corburn, "Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making"; Putnam, "Bowling Alone."

⁴¹Daniel P. Aldrich and Michelle A. Meyer, "Social Capital and Community Resilience," *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 2 (February 1, 2015): 254–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764214550299>.

⁴² Bianca Radu, "Influence Of Social Capital On Community Resilience In The Case Of Emergency Situations In Romania," *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, June 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.24193/tras.54E.5>.

⁴³ Nelson, "The Slow Violence of Climate Change."

2.2 Business as Usual Planning: Crisis Framing

Planning language most commonly used in reference to crisis and disturbance is centered around resilience. Despite critiques that the concept of resilience is ambiguous and inherently conservative,⁴⁴ it remains in rotation across disciplines when discussing shock, stress, and uncertainty. Planning and community resilience scholar Philip Berke and planning historian Thomas J. Campanella define resiliency as the “ability to survive similar future disasters AND create a greater sense of place among residents, diverse economy, and more diverse population.”⁴⁵ The most common use of resiliency language refers primarily to the first half of this definition; the incorporation of equity considerations is a more recent development. Equity considerations are often only included as an afterthought.

According to the United Nations’ *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and associated goals, resilience, sustainability, and social equity must exist hand in hand.⁴⁶ In a study of 100 cities, researchers found that efforts pursuing resilience measures rarely offered marginalized residents an opportunity to self-identify their needs. Plans that neglected to prioritize justice and equity through indicator evaluation were not able to approach resilient futures.⁴⁷ Resilience cannot exist without social justice and equity, and cities cannot hope to recover from, or respond to, crises without being just and equitable in their development and growth.

⁴⁴ Sara Meerow, Pani Pajouhesh, and Thaddeus R. Miller, “Social Equity in Urban Resilience Planning,” *Local Environment* 24, no. 9 (September 2, 2019): 793–808, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2019.1645103>.

⁴⁵Berke and Campanella, “Planning for Postdisaster Resiliency,” 193.

⁴⁶“Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development .. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform,” accessed July 27, 2020, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

⁴⁷ Joanne Fitzgibbons and Carrie L. Mitchell, “Just Urban Futures? Exploring Equity in ‘100 Resilient Cities,’” *World Development* 122 (October 1, 2019): 648–59, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.06.021>.

Some scholars argue that resilience conversations actually inhibit conversations about greater systemic change, as they focus on maintaining the systems that are in place rather than reconstructing them.⁴⁸ Despite the rise of resilience frameworks for planning, low-income communities have become only more vulnerable. We must reframe these discourses by asking “resilience of what, for whom, by whom?”⁴⁹ as we couple social and ecological conceptions of resilience.

Resilience for planners is also often framed as “building back better” which is a reactive approach. Such a notion waits for disaster to strike rather than working on building resilience proactively before a disaster strikes.⁵⁰ If we are to frame equity as a primary part of resilience and focus on proactively cultivating equitable resilience within our systems independent of actual disaster, planners should be aggressively pursuing equity and justice in all of our work.

Disaster, crises, and disturbances happen in cities and towns on many different levels. Most planning literature refers to crises specifically in the context of climate disaster. The Journal of the American Planning Association published an issue focused on recovery after disaster in 2014 comprised of articles describing planners’ role in post-disaster recovery. “Communities struck by disaster need processes for deliberation and engagement to decide how to rebuild or whether to relocate, and they need planners—working with them at multiple scales—to help them to do it.”⁵¹ Put differently, planners are responsible for supporting community resilience. This gives us great power to structure processes of engagement within paradigms of equity or not.

⁴⁸ Meerow, Pajouhesh, and Miller, “Social Equity in Urban Resilience Planning.”

⁴⁹ Elizabeth A. Walsh, “White Fragility as an Obstacle to Anti-Racist Resilience Planning: Opportunities for Equity-Conscious Partnerships,” *Journal of Urban Management* 7, no. 3 (December 2018): 187, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2018.12.005>.

⁵⁰Kim and Olshansky, “The Theory and Practice of Building Back Better.”

⁵¹Kim and Olshansky.

The pursuit of comprehensive, equitable resilience requires conversations about oppression and equity. This is “necessarily disruptive and unsettling, before it is creative and generative.”⁵² Having conversations about equity, recognizing privilege, and complicity in violent systems is often uncomfortable. In order to reach a point at which these conversations can be productive and generative, we must allow ourselves to be uncomfortable and unsettled. Practicing planners must recognize their own positionality, abandon the illusion of neutrality, and partner with community organizations and leaders to actively disrupt oppressive and harmful systems. Scholars call for proactive, equitable resilience planning that prioritizes relationship building and self-effacement regarding positionality. This must be prioritized in practice.

2.3 A Brief History of Planning Efforts in Springfield, MA

Planning and crisis response contexts presented above frame the history and development of Springfield. The violence embedded within planning history is blatant and unavoidable. Springfield, the site of this research, displays *Business As Usual* trends that I referenced in my introduction. Springfield’s development history represents a microcosm of planning trends. In order to contextualize this research we must understand these histories in Springfield. Places all have social, cultural, and political histories that situate them in the present moment. Examining Springfield’s planning history sheds light on the current, larger planning landscape.

Disproportionately negative effects of urban renewal are increasingly acknowledged by scholars and practitioners alike. However, researchers thus far have paid little to no attention to that history in Springfield, Massachusetts. A decade ago, then PhD candidate, now Humanist Celebrant Dr. Annalise Fonza completed an analysis of the history of urban renewal in Springfield, Massachusetts throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Fonza found that planners and

⁵² Walsh, “White Fragility as an Obstacle to Anti-Racist Resilience Planning,” 186.

historians alike have “grossly neglected” the socio-spatial connections between urban renewal and the Black community.⁵³ Fonza’s dissertation provides important context for understanding and examining planning in Springfield today. Patterns and discourses that Fonza identified contextualize *Business As Usual* approaches within local planning practices.

The Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA) was established in 1960. Urban Renewal coincides with the second era of housing discrimination described by Dr. Greenlee during which urban spatial boundaries were moved, breaking down many communities in the pursuit of urban renewal. The main job of the SRA was to pursue urban renewal. The SRA planned to redevelop and renew the Central Business District (CBD). This area of the city was home to immigrant communities, economically poor, racially segregated, and the entry point for newcomers to the city. Into the 1970s, Springfield qualified and received funding under the Model Cities Program (MCP) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs). Both of these federal grants administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) supported neoliberal agendas. In particular, they encouraged growth in the private sector and the privatization of public services. The SRA, within the same department as planning, still plays a large role in planning and disaster recovery in Springfield.

The city’s first planning director was William D. Toole. During Toole’s tenure, city officials were almost exclusively white, creating tension with the diverse population in the city. Toole supported criticism of socially and spatially exclusionary patterns in Springfield. He was involved with a state commission alleging that racist housing practices were taking place in Springfield. Black residents saw Toole as an advocate, but he was not popular downtown with the CBD development crowd. This historical disconnect between the Black community and the

⁵³ Fonza, “Troubling City Planning Discourses,” 31.

downtown development community in Springfield is very important in understanding the current socio-spatial landscape.

Discourse surrounding the urban landscape in Springfield through today is defined by the urban renewal era. Dr. Fonza conducted a womanist (intersectional feminist by her definition) analysis of urban renewal discourse in Springfield. In her analysis of qualitative interviews and review of documents, she found four narratives that framed and justified the work undertaken by urban renewal efforts. These narratives are as follows: (1) the Black community “was socially and culturally dysfunctional,” (2) “planners considered whites the ideal candidates for local neighborhood stability,” (3) Black Springfield residents were “not welcome beyond The Hill and in the surrounding suburbs due to white racism,” and (4) “white men were in control of local function of planning and they held the power to name and control others”⁵⁴ These discourses are explicitly racialized and speak to a larger issue of power and the violent production of exclusionary spaces. This very discourse justified aggressive territorialization of space, producing violent urban landscapes and making wealth-building near impossible for Black individuals, families, and communities.

Not one renewal era report, generated by planning entities, demonstrated any empathy for or cognizance of the Civil Rights struggle simultaneously under way in the United States. Fonza found that renewal era planning discourse was “rigid, robotic, and mechanical” absent of “critical understanding of what everyday life was like”⁵⁵ for Black families and residents of Springfield. Fonza concludes that urban renewal planning in Springfield was anything but progressive or oriented towards equity. Rather, it was deeply embedded in the socio-economic and spatial racism of Springfield. This trend also speaks to the valuation of professional knowledge over

⁵⁴ Fonza, 155.

⁵⁵ Fonza, 156.

other forms of knowledge, which I will revisit below. The issues of space and power that Fonza identifies are highly relevant to current urban landscapes and connect directly to the decision-making power and priorities that I find in my own research.

Fonza identified over-reliance on economic development as a key theme in Springfield planning, a tendency with wide-reaching implications. Focus on economic development and growth in cities is complex. In Springfield, this trend is partly attributable to its status as a mid-size Legacy City. Legacy Cities are also known as “shrinking, rust belt, or postindustrial cities.”⁵⁶ Other examples of Legacy Cities include Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. These cities were industrial powerhouses in the 1950s. However, following the industrial era, Legacy Cities faced severe disinvestment, decline, and population and job loss. As a result of this decline, these cities often exhibit deteriorating infrastructure, poor maintenance, jurisdictional segregation and fragmentation, and highly concentrated poverty.⁵⁷

Despite increased economic growth in more recent years, these cities harbor “persistent disparities” that must be addressed through policy, practice, and paradigm. Crises and disturbances exacerbate inequity in these cities.⁵⁸ Disinvestment in Legacy Cities in the 1970s and 80s coincided directly with the urban renewal era. This combination of factors reinforced segregation and polarization within these cities, exacerbating inequality and leading to racial, spatial, political, and socio-economic tensions.

⁵⁶ Stephanie Ryberg-Webster and J. Rosie Tighe, “Introduction:: The Legacies of Legacy Cities,” in *Legacy Cities*, ed. Stephanie Ryberg-Webster and J. Rosie Tighe, Continuity and Change amid Decline and Revival (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), 3, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvj7wn0p.4>.

⁵⁷ Ryberg-Webster and Tighe, “Introduction.”

⁵⁸ Tracy A. Corley et al., “From Transactional to Transformative,” May 2020.

2.4 Recent Springfield Planning

Over the last decade, Springfield, Massachusetts has experienced many crises and disturbances. These crises reflect local, regional, national, and global trends. Climate change related events that affected Springfield include a devastating tornado (2011), a severe snowstorm (2011), flooding incidents (2009, 2016), a dam failure (2006), and a heatwave (2013). Other important events include a gas explosion (2012), a global pandemic (2020), and ongoing police misconduct.⁵⁹ In Springfield, Massachusetts, the areas of the city that are most vulnerable to climate crises are also the neighborhoods with the highest percentages of non-white residents.⁶⁰

More than five reports regarding climate hazards and resilience in Springfield have been authored by various stakeholders since 2011. Three of these reports were developed by or in collaboration with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). The University of Massachusetts Amherst Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (UMass LARP) has also worked on two of these reports, in conjunction with PVPC.⁶¹ Of these reports, the most in-depth and comprehensive is *The Rebuild Springfield Citywide Plan*, published by the SRA in 2012. This plan was a response to the 2011 tornado that hit Springfield. The planning process for this comprehensive plan was traditional, organized by “Nexus Domains of healthy communities,” or themes that the development authority classified as crucial for community health. It theoretically

⁵⁹ Adam Frenier, “14 Springfield, Mass., Police Officers Indicted By Grand Jury In Assault Case,” accessed July 20, 2020, <https://www.nepm.org/post/14-springfield-mass-police-officers-indicted-grand-jury-assault-case>; “Springfield City Council Approves \$450,000 for Police Brutality Settlement,” masslive, June 18, 2019, <https://www.masslive.com/news/2019/06/springfield-city-council-approves-450000-for-police-brutality-settlement.html>; “Springfield Police Brutality Trial Delayed by Pandemic,” masslive, May 8, 2020, <https://www.masslive.com/coronavirus/2020/05/trial-of-gregg-bigda-in-springfield-police-brutality-case-delayed-by-pandemic.html>.

⁶⁰ Elisabeth Hamin, August Williams-Eynon, and Catherine Ratte, “Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan Vulnerability and Resilience,” Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning Studio and Student Research and Creative Activity (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, May 2017), https://scholarworks.umass.edu/larp_grad_research/53.

⁶¹ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield’s Climate Action & Resilience Plan,” June 2017.

revolved around public input. The report offers recovery initiatives and recommendations called “Major Moves” divided into six primary Nexus Domains: Educational, Physical, Cultural, Social, Economic, and Organizational. The report calls upon community leaders and members to take ownership of this plan and implementation.⁶²

Strong Healthy & Just: Springfield’s Climate Action and Resilience Plan, published in 2017, is the only plan I reviewed that centered equity in process or priority. Published by PVPC, it also has the most in-depth public participation process of aforementioned reports. This report is organized into four sections: Introducing Our Plan, Understanding Our Challenges, Engaging Our Community, and Taking Action On Our Priorities. Goals are identified as reducing GHG emissions and increasing community resilience. The Strong Health & Just (SHJ) Report summarizes PVPC’s engagement in six key activities. The first step in this engagement was “Informative and Interactive Resident Engagement Community Meetings to educate and engage residents, especially low-income residents and communities of color.”⁶³ Outcomes and results of these community meetings are not included in the report, which poses questions as to whether or not these community meetings truly impacted the decision-making process or report generation. The report also features no feedback from workshop participants on education or methodology, which raises questions about the long-term maintenance of and investment in these community engagement efforts.

Following community engagement, the planning team conducted interviews with “Key Sector Stakeholders,”⁶⁴ a community resilience building workshop, a citywide survey

⁶² “Projects | DevelopSpringfield,” accessed July 20, 2020, https://developspringfield.com/projects/rebuild_springfield.html.

⁶³ “Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield Climate Action & Resilience Plan | PVPC,” 28, accessed December 16, 2019, <http://www.pvpc.org/projects/strong-healthy-just-springfield-climate-action-resilience-plan>.

⁶⁴ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield’s Climate Action & Resilience Plan.”

administered both online and in person, and created a City-sponsored website. Other reports published by Springfield in this time period include a local hazard mitigation plan which focuses almost exclusively on grey infrastructure improvements necessary to build resilience; a 2014 progress report based on the City-wide plan published in 2012; and the 2017 *Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan: Vulnerability and Resilience*. This final plan was developed by Elisabeth Hamin-Infield and Augie Williams-Eynon with support from PVPC and in conjunction with the SHJ report. The goal for this last plan was to map and understand climate vulnerability within Springfield.

Reviewing Springfield plans and reports provides an understanding of what *Business As Usual* planning looks like in the city today. Understanding normative framing in Springfield planning helps illustrate the priorities within the department regarding plan development and crisis response. *Business As Usual* planning in Springfield's background is disappointingly devoid of equity frameworks and approaches. A history of structural complicity with and neutrality to systemic inequity constitutes the slow violence I argue underlies large scale *Business As Usual* planning. Contextualizing Springfield as a Legacy City provides a deeper understanding of historic and present dynamics of the city. Overwhelmingly, Springfield's history displays a pattern consistent with structural slow violence within planning.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review offers a broad description, survey, and critique of *Business As Usual* planning. To underscore the issues of this approach to planning, I present literature unpacking six dimensions of normative planning, including 1) Neoliberalism and Economic Development in Planning, 2) Knowledge Types, 3) Public Participation, 4) Social Capital, 5) Advocacy, Equity, and Antisubordination Planning and 6) Violence, Care, and Compassion. I have reached across disciplines in my research. I bring literature ranging from planning to feminist ethnography to environmental justice into conversation. I draw upon this diverse literature to identify and illustrate the slow violence of *Business As Usual* planning.

I unpack normative planning practices based in neoliberal individualistic paradigms through feminist theories regarding collective agency. I will discuss social, political, and economic shifts that have cultivated *Business As Usual* planning. This literature will highlight philosophies of care and planning practices in pursuit of equity that remain on the fringes of conventional practice. I also highlight literature that offers creative reprioritizations applicable to planning practice. Furthermore, this review presents and analyzes what I argue are skewed priorities within the planning profession. This literature review brings together interdisciplinary voices to describe and critique *Business As Usual* planning. These six elements paint a picture of the multidimensional dynamics within planning that are contributing to the *Great Unraveling*.

3.1 Neoliberalism and Economic Development in Planning

Neoliberalism, which took root in the United States in the mid-twentieth century and has grown more powerful since the 1970s, centers on limited government, free markets, and deregulation. This larger realignment occurred between government privatization and the

devolution of federal power.⁶⁵ This pattern is apparent across social services, administrative levels, and planning related focus areas. A clear policy example of policy highlighting this trend occurs in housing. Housing policy in the United States, despite a brief venture into public housing development to spark the construction economy post-WWI, is one of privatization and fragmentation. Historically, the United States government has most heavily invested in mortgages for white Americans.

Homeownership offers opportunities to build generational wealth and financial stability. Although homeownership has always been exclusionary, it has become increasingly more difficult to enter. Private homeownership, subsidized by the Federal Housing Authority and Department of Veteran Affairs in the 1940s and 50s, prompted white flight from cities, leaving most communities of color in deteriorating public rentals.⁶⁶ Neoliberalism compels governments to rely on a devolution of responsibility and thrusts accountability for housing provision onto the private and non-governmental sector. For example, policies like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (1986) and Section 8 voucher program (1974) were designed to subsidize private actors to build and manage housing to house low-income Americans. As there is money to be made in low-income housing, it is commodified and thus exploitative,⁶⁷ similar to other social services. This model, motivated by a private profit driven framework, supports oppressive race and class divisions.⁶⁸ The intent of housing policy in the United States has never been benevolent shelter

⁶⁵ Matthew F. Gebhardt, "Politics, Planning and Power: Reorganizing and Redeveloping Public Housing in Chicago" (Ph.D., United States -- New York, Columbia University, 2009), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304865637/abstract/3C939BDFE9DB4A82PQ/1>.

⁶⁶ David MP Freund, "Marketing the Free Market: State Intervention and the Politics of Prosperity in Metropolitan America," *The New Suburban History* 11 (2006).

⁶⁷ Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (Broadway books, 2016).

⁶⁸ Michael Harloe, *The People's Home?: Social Rented Housing in Europe and America* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

provision, but rather to spark the economy and control socio-spatial relations.⁶⁹ This era of transition towards privatism in housing coincided with the cutback of many welfare services.⁷⁰

Much of this movement is motivated by profit-driven goals. Policy changes such as this promoted individualism by degrading collective agency.

Planning policy has been embedded in the material shifts towards neoliberal practices since the late 1940s. For example, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) widened the bureaucratic role of planning authorities and agencies within housing policy. This process attracted private developers in pursuit of market-driven, profit-oriented approaches to urban revitalization. This granting system has led to diminished citizen roles in local redevelopment.⁷¹

This profit and market-motivated framework impacts both the operations and the priorities of planning actors. Economic development in planning leads to a set of tensions: between downtown and neighborhood investment, between job generation through economic development or real estate, and “the rich and powerful versus the poor and marginalized.”⁷² Leadership in economic development is driven by the developer, rather than the public official or the community. Development is increasingly based in public-private partnerships, subsidizing private growth and producing private sector profit. This process of economic development raises issues of public accountability. When concerns regarding issues of accountability are raised to planning agents, such concerns are often met with traditional cost-benefit analyses. Quantifiable resources and measurable outcomes through calculative reasoning are privileged over outcomes

⁶⁹ Peter Marcuse, “Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State,” *The Affordable Housing Reader*, Oxon, Routledge, 2013, 36–43.

⁷⁰ Brandon M. Weiss, “Residual Value Capture in Subsidized Housing,” *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 10, no. 2 (July 2016): 521–63.

⁷¹ Fonza, “Troubling City Planning Discourses.”

⁷² Norman Krumholz, “Equitable Approaches to Local Economic Development,” *Policy Studies Journal* 27, no. 1 (1999): 83.

processed through relational reasoning. Under this framework, situated knowledge and socio-economic structural disadvantages are unclear and go under-emphasized.⁷³ When economic development dominates the realm of the planner, the issue of who benefits does not lend itself to equitable outcomes.⁷⁴

The neoliberalization of planning is important to consider because it defines the practices currently underway in the field. Within several domains of economic development – such as infrastructure provision, management of commercial areas, and housing and neighborhood renewal - planning has shifted towards neoliberal approaches. This transition looks, in practice, like a shift from publicly planned approaches to market-centered ones, meaning an apparent shift towards serving business and economic growth rather than serving residents or the broader public. Neoliberal rhetoric in planning prioritizes economic freedom, efficiency, and entrepreneurialism over democratic practice within the field. Neoliberalism centers attention on and views economic indicators as paramount.⁷⁵

In planning theory, neoliberalism holds a valuable position which cannot be ignored as it explains the political and bureaucratic trends that have cultivated the current planning landscape. Spatially, neoliberal approaches to planning qualify urban landscapes as stages for market-oriented growth and gentry consumption practices. In this way, the political context for plan development and implementation is produced. Socially, neoliberalism produces and exacerbates socio-political polarization.⁷⁶

⁷³ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management.”

⁷⁴ Krumholz, “Equitable Approaches to Local Economic Development.”

⁷⁵ Tore Sager, “Neo-Liberal Urban Planning Policies: A Literature Survey 1990–2010,” *Progress in Planning*, Neo-liberal Urban Planning Policies: A Literature Survey 1990-2010, 76, no. 4 (November 1, 2011): 147–99, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2011.09.001>.

⁷⁶ Sager.

Planning is deeply political. Whether intentional or not, where neoliberal practices are normative the associated policies and practices further a political agenda. Planners practicing within neoliberal frameworks are embedding conservatism in the communities in which they work.⁷⁷ Despite its political implications, because of the normative nature of the framework, neoliberalism is often depoliticized, understood as a default across fields, especially in planning. Realigning goals and procedures with economic development through neoliberal lenses is a move away from reckoning with, and participating in, the political role of the planner.⁷⁸

Neoliberalism disintegrates collective identities, replacing them with individualized interests. This idea connects to a concept advanced in feminist ethnography, namely neoliberalism's exploitation of the "technology of self," theorized by Dana-Ain Davis. Davis describes how under neoliberalism individuals are "led to believe they are 'insured' against the insecurities of poverty if they move through processes of self-renovation."⁷⁹ Understanding hard work and self-renovation as a solution to poverty under neoliberalism places responsibility onto the individual. Attributing hardship to individual capacity conveniently overlooks systems critiques. This feeling of security under membership in individualistic neoliberal systems contributes to the degradation of unity and sharpens the need for collective agency.

In an example of neoliberal trends in Jersey City, government intervention in the marketplace to support business took priority over the needs of the public. In a 2015 study by St. Peter's University sociologist Donal Malone, the city's tax base was eroded by subsidies for finance, insurance, and real estate. This led to deepening inequity fueled by "years of budget

⁷⁷ Allan David Heskin, "Crisis and Response: A Historical Perspective on Advocacy Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 50–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944368008977015>.

⁷⁸ Gebhardt, "Politics, Planning and Power."

⁷⁹ Christa Craven and Dána-Ain Davis, *Feminist Activist Ethnography: Counterpoints to Neoliberalism in North America* (Lexington Books, 2013), 27.

deficits, cutbacks in city services and a shift in wealth upwards... Neoliberalism failed on its own terms in not providing the broad prosperity promised.”⁸⁰ Finding neoliberalism’s failure was in direct conflict with neoliberal theories imagining that widespread privatization will self-regulate and provide broad prosperity for all participants. This created inequity and produced social problems within the cities.⁸¹ Where planning is concerned, neoliberalism “mobilizes urban space as an arena for market oriented economic growth.” Economic development frameworks in planning focus on neoliberal frames and traditional cost-benefit analyses, which can lead away from equity in the enactment of policy.⁸²

3.2 Knowledge Types

In 1969 Sherry Arnstein authored a foundational typology called *A ladder of public participation*. While Arnstein’s work was an important intervention in the planning practice of the day, Arnstein’s ladder perpetuated the normative and problematic dichotomy of scientific versus emotional knowledge types. Lyles and Swearingen White analyze Arnstein through this lens and draw attention to the need for humility, compassion, and engagement with emotions, rather than avoidance, in order to engage meaningfully with community members.⁸³ Feminist ethnography has been calling for this re-valuation of objectivity and detachment in the social sciences for decades.⁸⁴ Although public participation lives in planning, there is a tremendous

⁸⁰ Donal Malone, “Neoliberal Governance and Uneven Development in Jersey City,” *Theory in Action* 10, no. 1 (2017): 56.

⁸¹ Malone, “Neoliberal Governance and Uneven Development in Jersey City.”

⁸² Norman Krumholz, “Planning in Cleveland: Working the Advocacy-Equity Side of the Street,” n.d., 8.

⁸³ Ward Lyles and Stacey Swearingen White, “Who Cares?,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 287–300, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1612268>.

⁸⁴ Lila Abu-Lughod, “Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 7–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07407709008571138>.

amount of overlap within ethnography and community engagement from an anthropological standpoint.

Community engagement is a multidisciplinary issue intersecting with education, sociology, anthropology, geography, public health, and beyond. Arnstein, like many planning scholars and practitioners, overlooked the value and necessity of breaking down ‘objectivity’ as a rule and guideline. The need to interrogate and challenge conceptions of objectivity is clearly outlined in histories of anthropology and other social sciences. Over three decades ago, ecofeminist scholar Donna Haraway proposed an epistemology in situated knowledge, which has underpinned feminist scholarship.⁸⁵ Feminist conceptions of situated knowledge account for socio-spatial factors including networks, connections, and community-oriented positionality that contribute to knowledge production. A modernization of this epistemology describes that “knowing is made possible by, and suffused with, one’s specific positioning.”⁸⁶ Objectivity professes to transcend social, political, and spatial contexts, and negate the value of subjective knowledge.⁸⁷ In this scheme, unique, local, situated knowledge is incredibly valuable to planning contexts. Valuing unique positionality requires accepting and validating a plurality of social, spatial, spiritual, and value-laden locators.⁸⁸

Posing objectivity and subjectivity as a dichotomy is an epistemic oversimplification, however the juxtaposition does stand in *Business As Usual* planning. The aforementioned dichotomy aligns with the “emotional paradox” identified by urban planning scholars Ward Lyles

⁸⁵ Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.

⁸⁶ Dragos Simandan, “Revisiting Positionality and the Thesis of Situated Knowledge,” *Dialogues in Human Geography* 9, no. 2 (July 1, 2019): 142, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820619850013>.

⁸⁷ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management”; Haraway, “Situated Knowledges.”

⁸⁸ Selma Sevenhuijsen, “The Place of Care: The Relevance of the Feminist Ethic of Care for Social Policy,” *Feminist Theory* 4, no. 2 (2003): 179–197.

and Stacy Swearingan White.⁸⁹ In the planning context, this phenomenon serves to devalue and invalidate “non-scientific” knowledge and histories. For instance, in participatory practices, lack of technical expertise is used as a justification to silence and ignore marginalized groups. Rhetoric of professionalism, expertise, and authority act as exclusionary and limit the power-redistribution that Arnstein and other scholars on community engagement call for. In order to move forward, if planners are hoping for collaboration with vulnerable and marginalized populations, we must acknowledge and grapple with the history of weaponizing professionalism.⁹⁰

Efforts to value and hear non “scientific” or subjective knowledges and histories are on the rise in planning theory. Elevating local knowledge and knowledge co-production models are based on re-framing power distribution, initially theorized by Arnstein.⁹¹ Co-production is the development of a collective wisdom, incorporating non-academic and non-professional input. Co-production is designed to be highly interactive between interdisciplinary academics and non-academics, valuing and incorporating local and non-technical or academic knowledges.⁹² Many of these new models and methods aim to build off of Paulo Freire’s work in action research,⁹³

⁸⁹ Lyles and White, “Who Cares?”

⁹⁰F. V. Harrison, “Harrison, F. V. (1991). Anthropology as an Agent of Transformation: Introductory Comments and Queries. Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation, 1-14.” 1991.

⁹¹Corburn, “Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making”; Jovanna Rosen and Gary Painter, “From Citizen Control to Co-Production,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 335–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1618727>; Roberts and Kelly, “Remixing as Praxis.”

⁹² Albert V. Norström et al., “Principles for Knowledge Co-Production in Sustainability Research,” *Nature Sustainability* 3, no. 3 (March 2020): 182–90, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-019-0448-2>.

⁹³Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Sheed and Ward, 1972); Inês S. Campos et al., “Climate Adaptation, Transitions, and Socially Innovative Action-Research Approaches,” *Ecology and Society* 21 (1) (2016), <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08059-210113>.

Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Campos et al., “Climate Adaptation, Transitions, and Socially Innovative Action-Research Approaches.”

focused on promoting the social inclusion, true consensus, and democracy that Arnstein argues participation can build. Allowing space for diverse forms of knowledge to hold power in decision making processes is crucial for responding to public calls for change. Relational and situated knowledges allow us to be open to “the idea that everyone is positioned differently and leads an existence which cannot be reduced to that of others.”⁹⁴ Elevating and understanding situated knowledges and recognizing usage of objectivity rhetoric is key to pursuing equity in community engagement.

Participatory action research offers frameworks for hearing and validating diverse knowledges. Greenwood and Levin describe four typologies of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in great depth in *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research*. These are: Collective Research, Critical Recovery of History, Valuing and Applying Folk Culture, and Production and Diffusion of Knowledge. The PAR model is focused on knowledge co-production. This model immediately problematizes cultures of expertise and professionalism that are currently present and restrictive in public participation and engagement. The PAR model also states that iterative processes that require long-term engagement and collaboration do not effectively fit into policy windows or academic contexts.⁹⁵ PAR methodology requires not only initial collaboration between planners and grassroots organizers and community members, but also an “adaptive and enduring”⁹⁶ process with the power to impact decision making and implementation in the long-term. This time scale may be most important for

⁹⁴ Sevenhuijsen, “The Place of Care,” 186.

⁹⁵Talia Sandwick et al., “Promise and Provocation: Humble Reflections on Critical Participatory Action Research for Social Policy,” *Urban Education* 53, no. 4 (April 1, 2018): 473–502, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918763513>; Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change* (SAGE Publications, 2006); Corburn, “Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making.”

⁹⁶Rosen and Painter, “From Citizen Control to Co-Production.”

complex issues with a longer time scale of their own, including processual systems change, such as examining climate change or systemic racism. Models of co-production are intended to break down hierarchies which exist almost exclusively in specific, academic settings, rather than within conventional planning practice.

3.3 Public Participation

Perhaps the most critical practice limiting the development of healthy, public-municipal relationships is the absence of public participation. Public participation is one of the most important and widely explored topics in the academic literature on planning. I will not argue for any one specific method of public participation, but rather discuss the shortcomings that are often widespread in the implementation of public participation. It is no secret that forms of truly collaborative, democratic approaches to public participation in planning are few and far between.

Goals of power redistribution exist not only in planning but across disciplines in both research and practice. Anthropological and sociological theories and research methods are slowly being integrated into planning. The planning field is changing towards equity, but how equity is implemented and prioritized in community engagement, plan development, and public participation is often far from radically supporting the redistribution of power.

Arnstein's ladder brings attention to the "critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process."⁹⁷ The pursuit of democratic practice in planning has led to the presence and prevalence of public participation in the field. While participation is considered the cornerstone of democracy, Arnstein qualifies participation hierarchies as spectrums of power distribution

⁹⁷ Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35, no. 4 (July 1, 1969): 216–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225>.

between the power holders and the power “have-nots.”⁹⁸ Barriers to effective, equity-driven participation exist on both ends of the spectrum.

On the side of the power holder, racism, paternalism and resistance to power redistribution inhibit non-traditional methods of participation. In the participatory experience of the “have-nots,” Arnstein cites inadequacies of political, socioeconomic infrastructure and knowledge base as well as challenges to organizing representative citizens groups as roadblocks to effective, non-traditional forms of collective participation.⁹⁹ Arnstein’s divides this hierarchy into three, larger categories: nonparticipation, degrees of tokenism, and degrees of citizen power. The scale ranges from manipulation on the nonparticipation end, to citizen control, wherein power is redistributed to those without.

Fifty years after Arnstein’s critique, however, community engagement is still often “conceived as simply making available opportunities for official transactions, such as town hall meetings or information sessions, rather than enabling citizen-to-citizen connections or meaningful feedback.”¹⁰⁰ Planning literature shows that the most dominant forms of public participation practiced across the United States today are not producing useful, collaborative planning outcomes for holistic community benefit.

Public participation should be a means to an end, but unfortunately, often it is only an end in and of itself.¹⁰¹ Isolated acts of participation within meeting structures, often described as antagonistic, do not produce the power redistribution Arnstein called for in 1969. Regardless,

⁹⁸Arnstein.

⁹⁹ Arnstein.

¹⁰⁰Eric Gordon and Jessica Baldwin-Philippi, “Playful Civic Learning: Enabling Lateral Trust and Reflection in Game-Based Public Participation,” *International Journal of Communication* 8, no. 0 (February 26, 2014): 759.

¹⁰¹M Buchy and S Hoverman, “Understanding Public Participation in Forest Planning: A Review,” *Forest Policy and Economics* 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2000): 15–25, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1389-9341\(00\)00006-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1389-9341(00)00006-X).

public participation is often funneled through single issue-focused, open-meeting proceedings. This model attracts primarily members of the public who are ardently in favor of or opposed to the issue at hand, and who feel as though they have a right to attend.¹⁰² When all participants represent polarized opinions, regardless of the outcome, some participants will be left disappointed. After unsatisfactory outcomes in a meeting, participants are inclined to blame the process. This dynamic fosters animosity and resentment between members of the public on opposing ends of a issues, as well as between the governing body and community members taking the time to participate and feeling ignored. Groups that attend these typical meetings are often hostile, as a result of holding baggage from previously unsatisfactory outcomes of participatory practices.¹⁰³ Significantly, when supposed opportunities for public participation attract only those who are strongly opposed to an issue, the potential for productive conversations, humanization, and collaboration dissipates. This contributes to the deterioration of trust between participants and their government.

A directly anti-racist and practical approach to planning is collaborative knowledge building developed between planners and “local stakeholders” who act “as full partners in a mutual learning process.”¹⁰⁴ Again, equitable approaches require validation of situated knowledges. For example, planner and researcher Andrea Roberts collaborated with grassroots preservationists in order to combine cultural performance, action research, and participatory preservation processes as mechanisms for soliciting community feedback on preserving historic Black settlement heritage. This approach to public participation stands in stark contrast to

¹⁰²Judith E. Innes and Judith Gruber, “Planning Styles in Conflict: The Metropolitan Transportation Commission,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71, no. 2 (June 30, 2005): 177–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360508976691>.

¹⁰³Buchy and Hoverman, “Understanding Public Participation in Forest Planning.”

¹⁰⁴ Greenwood and Levin, *Introduction to Action Research*, 3.

traditional models in time, scale, and value-judgements. This method should be incorporated more by planners because it allows multiple stakeholders an array of venues for participation and leads to co-production of ideas and plans.

Despite the rarity of collaborative knowledge building and anti-racist frameworks in conventional planning practice, PAR paths exist. Roberts and Kelly cite several examples of planners taking on the role of co-learner, rather than the holder of a valid information; this is in an effort to prevent exploitation of the public in the PAR model. Beyond initial collaboration, the process engagement must be flexible and abiding if it hopes to play a role in decision making and implementation into the future.¹⁰⁵ Working to implement long-term models of anti-racist planning and community engagement can provide a framework for quick collaboration when crises emerge. However, when it is time to respond to a disaster or disturbance, time compression does not allow for building new relationships with community members and advocates.¹⁰⁶ It is essential that these relationships and frameworks are already in place.

3.4 Social Capital

Definitions of social capital vary among researchers. However, the root of social capital theory is that membership and involvement in social networks and structures increases access to benefits and resources. This leads to positive impacts on both an individual and their community.¹⁰⁷ Some of these positive impacts include the flow of information and knowledge

¹⁰⁵ Rosen and Painter, "From Citizen Control to Co-Production," 335.

¹⁰⁶ Robert B. Olshansky, Lewis D. Hopkins, and Laurie A. Johnson, "Disaster and Recovery: Processes Compressed in Time," *Natural Hazards Review* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 173–78, [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)NH.1527-6996.0000077](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)NH.1527-6996.0000077).

¹⁰⁷ Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.1>.

sharing, and better community trust, engagement, and cohesion.¹⁰⁸ Public participation design must carefully and deliberately account for the complex power dynamics and value systems that are present within all participant groups.¹⁰⁹ Empathy-building contributes to the generation of social capital, another important outcome of effective, sustained, engagement between community members and local government. Planners embrace social capital as a motivator for public engagement, as well as a safety net to mitigate the isolation and absence of community that contributes to vulnerability.¹¹⁰ Social capital is important for many reasons, including the provision of social networks and resources for people who might otherwise be isolated from said resources.

The three types of social capital recognized by scholars are bonding, bridging, and linking. Bridging and bonding capital connect community members to each other across demographic differences and tighten bonds between already close community and family members. Linking social capital refers to levels of trust between individuals at different institutional levels where there is a power differential. Linking social capital is highly relevant in regard to connecting individuals to resources through local government or other institutions. In

¹⁰⁸ Ignazio Cabras and Matthew P. Mount, “How Third Places Foster and Shape Community Cohesion, Economic Development and Social Capital: The Case of Pubs in Rural Ireland,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 55 (October 1, 2017): 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.07.013>.

¹⁰⁹ Lindsey McEwen et al., “‘Learning for Resilience’: Developing Community Capital through Flood Action Groups in Urban Flood Risk Settings with Lower Social Capital,” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 27 (March 1, 2018): 329–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2017.10.018>.

¹¹⁰ (Nick Taylor, Ursula Hurley, and Philip Connolly, “Making Community: The Wider Role of Makerspaces in Public Life,” in *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, CHI ’16 (New York, NY, USA: ACM, 2016), 1415–1425, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858073>; Ramon Oldenburg and Dennis Brissett, “The Third Place,” *Qualitative Sociology* 5, no. 4 (December 1, 1982): 265–84, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00986754>).

order for people to know of and access information and available resources, they must trust those providing said resources in order to feel comfortable reaching out.¹¹¹

Social reproduction, or the “creation and maintenance of social bonds”¹¹² both intergenerationally and horizontally among different forms of community, underpins social organization and cooperation.¹¹³ Social reproduction produces and reinforces social capital. This form of capital becomes even more crucial in times of crisis. Family studies and Environmental design scholars Dana Vaux and Sylvia Asay state that “social resources are determining factors related to the outcome of a crisis... social resources represent help outside the family unit... Often social or community support has been an important resource to help stabilize families in times of crisis.”¹¹⁴ Communities with greater cohesion and social capital are more capable of overcoming periods of distress. The capacity for recovery after emergency situations is higher among these communities, leading to increased social capital and resilience.¹¹⁵ In order to increase adaptive capacities, ongoing social learning must be prioritized to manage and build resilience.¹¹⁶

Prioritizing the social benefits of public engagement is crucial in building resilience and linking social capital. Trust is built through reciprocal relationships, based upon Putnam’s

¹¹¹ Aldrich and Meyer, “Social Capital and Community Resilience”; Radu, “Influence Of Social Capital On Community Resilience In The Case Of Emergency Situations In Romania.”

¹¹² Nancy Fraser, “Capitalism’s Crisis of Care,” *Dissent* 63, no. 4 (October 13, 2016): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1353/dss.2016.0071>.

¹¹³ Fraser, “Capitalism’s Crisis of Care.”

¹¹⁴ Dana E. Vaux and Sylvia M. Asay, “Supporting Families in Crisis: Awareness and Use of Third Places,” *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 48, no. 1 (2019): 24, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcsr.12325>.

¹¹⁵Radu, “Influence Of Social Capital On Community Resilience In The Case Of Emergency Situations In Romania.”

¹¹⁶ McEwen et al., “‘Learning for Resilience’.”

understanding of the “‘virtuous circle’ of social capital.”¹¹⁷ Looking at creative mechanisms for building social resilience, which are both holistic and preemptive, must move to the center of planning efforts.

3.5 Advocacy, Equity, and Antisubordination Planning

Models for advocacy and equity planning have been circulating for over half a century. Planner and planning theoretician Paul Davidoff rejected the role of a planner as solely a technician in 1965, after recognizing “The massing of voices protesting racial discrimination have roused this nation to the need to rectify racial and other social injustices.”¹¹⁸ Davidoff’s observation draws a direct parallel to our current moment. Davidoff aligns himself with the school of thought that rejects the notion of objectivity. He recognizes that value judgements are inescapable and necessitate both acknowledgement and transparency. Further, he argues that planners must not only recognize their values but advocate for them.¹¹⁹

The planner must maintain transparency in their positionality, critically interrogating how their identities and viewpoints align with their communities. Advocacy planning is based on advocating in plan development for interest groups outside of government that have been oppressed. Davidoff asks that planners acknowledge their biases and take responsibility for educating and informing groups and agencies of the conditions and needs of the communities they represent. Davidoff’s proposal for a new version of planning came in the wake of Urban Renewal, which destroyed Black communities and deepened systemic inequality in the United

¹¹⁷Corburn, “Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making”; Robert Putnam et al., “Using Social Capital to Help Integrate Planning Theory, Research, and Practice: Preface,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 70, no. 2 (June 30, 2004): 142–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360408976369>.

¹¹⁸ Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning,” 331.

¹¹⁹ Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning.”

States. The argument for advocacy planning is not about outcomes, but rather the process of planning and representation within that process. Davidoff's model is not a perfect one, as it can play into gatekeeping and the manipulation of the public. It also poses problems in asking planners to speak for groups, rather than elevating participants, especially vulnerable populations who have been historically silenced, to speak for themselves.¹²⁰ Still, the field has resisted widespread integration of advocacy-style approaches.

Planner, educator and author Norman Krumholz's proposal for equity in planning builds upon Davidoff's work. Krumholz presents his own revision as a model to address poverty and racial segregation. This theory is built upon a recognition that planning has been "too timid."¹²¹ Equity planning recognizes the importance of concrete goal setting. Krumholz's work in Cleveland, Ohio actually practicing equity planning was a risky undertaking, as it challenged the economic priorities of dominant entities within the city. Despite being two decades after Davidoff's theorization, equity approaches were radical. Krumholz' approach to planning called for resistance to development processes that deepened inequity through exploitation and imbalances of wealth and political power. The approach of Equity Planning is to deemphasize traditional planning issues such as land use, zoning, transportation, and urban design and instead aim to "provide more choices to those who have few, if any choices."¹²² Redistribution of power, wealth and resources is a key product of successful equity planning.¹²³ However, differing

¹²⁰ Heskin, "Crisis and Response."

¹²¹Norman Krumholz, "A Retrospective View of Equity Planning Cleveland 1969–1979," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 48, no. 2 (June 30, 1982): 173, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944368208976535>.

¹²² Krumholz, 166.

¹²³Catherine L. Ross and Nancy Green Leigh, "Planning, Urban Revitalization, and the Inner City: An Exploration of Structural Racism," *Journal of Planning Literature* 14, no. 3 (February 1, 2000): 367–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854120022092719>.

perceptions of equity based on positionality are an obstacle to equity planning's ability to eradicate socio-spatial inequalities encoded in our communities.¹²⁴

Antisubordination planning builds upon the work of Davidoff and Krumholz in advocacy and equity planning. Antisubordination planning draws upon critical race theory, equal protection rights, and antidiscrimination. Antisubordination planning stems from a recognition that the timidity in planning, as acknowledged by Krumholz, has persisted. Antisubordination planning is a theory based upon equal protection, founded on the reality that equal citizenship cannot be accomplished in our current state, when severe social stratification persists. This approach requires first an analysis of durable social inequality, then a recognition of institutional as well as conscious and implicit bias that shape both policy and practice. Finally, Antisubordination planning requires actions which will put an end to practices that worsen existing inequality, while prioritizing practices which focus on correcting disparity. Analysis, recognition, and action all require the robust evaluation of the effects any policy or action might have on racial, social, spatial, and economic disparities rather than traditional cost-benefit analyses. The key to Antisubordination planning is exploring alternatives to any policy or action, evaluating each alternative's capacity for inequality reduction, and pursuing whichever alternative will have the greatest impact on lessening or preventing disparity.¹²⁵

3.6 Violence, Care, and Compassion

The *Business As Usual* paradigm is based on the misconception that we are living in the realization of a "wonderful success story."¹²⁶ A key element of this perception is the underlying

¹²⁴ Justin Steil, "Antisubordination Planning," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, December 7, 2018, 0739456X18815739, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18815739>.

¹²⁵ Steil.

¹²⁶ Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*, 15.

assumption that times of crisis or economic downturn are temporary and that life will soon return to *normal*. Those of us who prosper under *Business As Usual* policies are distant from the problems and realities of others. We find ways to fit into systems the way they are, instead of imagining alternatives or envisioning radical change. Business As Usual depends on constantly increasing consumption and up-holding western, normative traditions as our ultimate goal. The second story in Macy and Johnstone's paradigm is the *Great Unraveling*, adapted from political activist and author David Korton.¹²⁷ This story is characterized by a declining perception that the state of our world will be 'okay.' Polls, both domestic and international, display high rates of alarm and anxiety regarding economic decline, resource depletion, climate change, social division and war, and the mass extinction of species.

Macy and Johnstone's use of the *Great Unraveling* reaches far beyond my own application. However, they assert that facing and reckoning with reality is necessarily overwhelming and uncomfortable. This challenge is directly applicable to addressing the oppressive systems that I examine as embedded within many planning structures. The third story that Macy and Johnstone describe is "the transition from a doomed economy of industrial growth to a life sustaining society committed to the recovery of our world."¹²⁸ Known as the *Great Turning*, these changes parallel shifts in action also known as the Ecological, Sustainability, and Necessary Revolutions. The *Great Turning* requires courage and solidarity. Millions of organizations across the globe are already working for ecological and social justice within the *Great Turning*, though this remains widely unnamed. When we name a unifying movement, it

¹²⁷ David C. Korten, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007).

¹²⁸ Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*, 26.

becomes recognizable, familiar, and real.¹²⁹ *Business As Usual* is a blindness to widespread alarm and to the work being done to dismantle violent systems.

Care is a process, and its consideration today is made necessary by “urgent temporalities of sustainability and catastrophe,” both of which planning increasingly engages with.¹³⁰ Care is a multidimensional concept. Feminist, ethicist, and Psychologist Carol Gilligan defines care as “an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone.”¹³¹ This web of connection Gilligan poses ties back to Macy and Johnstone’s theories of interconnectedness through life-sustaining systems.¹³² Philosophies of care stand in conflict with traditional business theories that underlie planning today. Parallel to *Great Unraveling* theories, crisis response absent of care is characterized by a purpose of returning to *normal*. Philosophies of care applied in disaster response call for social transformation, parallel to the *Great Turning*.

Ethics of care critique *Business As Usual* neoliberal planning frameworks which are based around independent citizenship.¹³³ Instead, an ethics of care values concepts of relationality, interdependence, trust, and collective agency.¹³⁴ Nonviolence is an integral part of care, be that violence overt or slow. Therefore, I assert that absence of care is a form of slow violence. The absence of care in disaster response planning specifically is a violent paradox.

¹²⁹ Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*.

¹³⁰“Caring Ecologies | Transversal Texts,” accessed July 17, 2020, <https://transversal.at/transversal/0318/salvini/en>.

¹³¹ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Harvard University Press, 1993), 62.

¹³² Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*.

¹³³ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management.”

¹³⁴ Sevenhuijsen, “The Place of Care.”

Because *Business As Usual* systems are violent, disrupting those detrimental systems through processual shifts is an act for nonviolence. We are currently operating within a state of neoliberal financialized capitalism in which social reproduction or “care work” is commodified. Social reproduction is intertwined with relationality and interconnectedness. It is the “social glue” which holds together the social connections upon which general society and economic production depend. The work of much of this reproduction is afforded no “monetized value.” The social capacities on which social reproduction depends are diminished when we withdraw public support and require providers to work strenuous and exhaustive hours. Within this regime, the intersection of increased working hours and a reduction of services has created a systemic depletion of our ability to maintain social bonds.

Feminist and critical theorist Nancy Fraser draws attention to the disjointed nature of organizing and activism regarding care work, limiting collective capacity to accomplish counter-hegemonic goals. Topics falling into care economies range from a shorter work week, to childcare, to housing, food, and water. Ethics of care value “notions of relationality and interdependence,”¹³⁵ paying special attention to pre-existing structural disadvantages.¹³⁶ Fraser insists that we, as a society, must demand unification under a new system of organization, valuing social reproduction.¹³⁷ I would like to extend this call for collective agency to the planning field. Centering care as a means to unify and address manifestations of inequity within our cities and communities would be central to a transition within the field of planning.

In the midst of this *Great Unraveling*, John Forester published an important piece on kindness and compassion within planning. The noted absence of kindness and compassion in

¹³⁵ Sevenhuijsen, 179.

¹³⁶ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management.”

¹³⁷ Fraser, “Capitalism’s Crisis of Care.”

planning literature and rhetoric is curious, given the field's aspirations regarding justice and equity. Humanizing the communities within which we work is a first step in approaching equity and justice, yet this cannot be accomplished without applying a framework of care. Forester presents a four-pronged framework for applying care in planning practice without doing so in a self-congratulatory way:

*“(1) first, recognizing an other’s vulnerability, loss, or suffering; (2) second, gauging the sources producing their vulnerability; (3) third, recognizing how we might actually influence, actually mitigate, that vulnerability to make a difference; and (4) fourth, not least, developing our motivation to act, to make that difference in deed.”*¹³⁸

Forester warns that naming care and calling attention to the virtue of our kindness initiates a transactional relationship in which we are owed gratitude or claim false empathy. This sentiment is echoed in philosophies of care, “Empathy can also, however, lead to paternalism or to entrenched divisions of moral roles between care-givers and care recipients, for example, that of rescuer and victim.”¹³⁹ Paternalistic dynamics that reduce actors to savior and sufferer are disempowering. Forester argues that centering procedural compassion while refraining from publicly naming that care is the kindness for which planners are responsible.¹⁴⁰

Collectively, patterns identified above tell an alarming story about *Business As Usual* planning. If we can tie together the above dimensions of planning and bring them under the framework of care, we may be able to approach justice and equity in our work, and aid in a *Great Turning*. There is no single answer to aforementioned inequities. Planners and planning professionals must embark on a systematic shift towards building trust through valuing social connectedness, justice, care, and compassion above individualistic economic growth. A *Great*

¹³⁸ Forester, “Our Curious Silence about Kindness in Planning,” 2.

¹³⁹ Sevenhuijsen, “The Place of Care,” 186.

¹⁴⁰ Forester, “Our Curious Silence about Kindness in Planning.”

Turning in planning can only exist if we are to understand and engage with how *Business As Usual* within our field has fed into and even precipitated this *Great Unraveling*.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Process of Research Design

I arrived at this methodology through the design and collapse of several earlier projects. I began this project design focused on Participatory Action Research (PAR) and reciprocal, responsible community engagement.¹⁴¹ As I began to understand the barriers to doing this project ethically, and in a way that would be useful to municipalities, I pivoted. I re-aligned myself with a project I had been working on as a research assistant in Springfield. I designed a community mapping exercise aimed at knowledge co-production with a grassroots organization (Make-it Springfield). When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, again I pivoted, this time to looking at social networks facilitated by local government, nonprofit organizations, faith groups, and more. When George Floyd's heinous murder prompted a nationwide uprising, I redirected, again, to the thesis presented here.

Through all of these iterations, beginning in the Spring of 2019, I was in conversation with planners, scholars, and non-profit organizations. The conversations I had in concert with and between this evolution are important parts of the findings presented here. I kept detailed notes of all of the conversations I had with these experts and have referred back to these conversations in the development of this thesis.

In order to develop a qualitative critical analysis of planning at this moment in the *Great Unraveling*, I have taken a mixed-methods approach to this research. This approach is the result of an iterative research design process that I adopted as I tried to accommodate a rapidly changing research landscape. I will revisit the key elements of the iterative research design below, but it

¹⁴¹ Greenwood and Levin, *Introduction to Action Research*; Roberts and Kelly, "Remixing as Praxis."

should be noted that the circumstances of COVID-19, global uprisings, and my conversations are as much responsible for this research design as I, the researcher, am.

This research is embedded participatory research and focuses on answering my research questions: **What are normative *Business As Usual* practices within Springfield? How are those practices contextualized by normative planning education and practice? How do those practices affect intersecting public health crises? What are prominent disaster response discourses and in what ways may those discourses be affecting slow violence?** Accordingly, my methodology consists of qualitative fieldwork, centered upon semi-structured interviews and participant observation, and textual review of archived plans and academic scholarship.

4.2 Textual Research

I conducted textual analysis of academic manuscripts to ascertain normative practices and related shortcomings within the planning profession. I also reviewed texts that afford insight into integrating anti-racism into urban plan development and implementation. In addition to this academic literature analysis, I also examined professional planning documents for the city of Springfield, relating mostly to disaster and climate response. I closely reviewed five reports published in or about climate crises and recovery in Springfield. Plans reviewed include Springfield Local Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (2016), Rebuild Springfield Citywide Plan (2012), Rebuild Springfield Progress Report (2014), Strong Healthy & Just: Springfield's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (2017), and Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan: Vulnerability and Resilience (2017). I also reviewed the Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (2018) as a point of reference. These reports were published by a range of institutions and agencies, including UMass, PVPC, The Springfield Redevelopment Authority, and more. A significant element of this textual analysis has been a screen for equity considerations on multiple fronts. I searched for whether and how equity is framed and applied in

academic texts as compared to professional planning documents. Scanning for and understanding these differences can highlight disconnects.

My relationship with this literature and these concepts has been enormously influential in the development and evolution of this thesis work. Continually reckoning with and negotiating my own positionality and the power that I, and the field of planning, hold has shaped my engagement with textual materials as well.

4.3 Fieldwork: Interviews

I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with individuals in planning, community, and economic development in the city of Springfield. I conducted 9 of these semi-structured interviews via Zoom. For the final interview, questions and answers were exchanged via email due to the subject's availability. Inside of Springfield municipal government, I interviewed three individuals in the Springfield Planning Department as well as two individuals from the Economic Development Department. These two departments are both under the Office of Planning and Economic Development, which also houses the Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA). Outside of municipal government I spoke to a Planner at PVPC, two individuals associated with UMass and the UMass Design Center in Springfield, and two individuals working with community non-profits in Springfield. I did not ask interviewees to self-identify any characteristics, although I was referred specifically to certain interview subjects based on identities. I will use these identifications in my research as they speak to many of the *Business As Usual* patterns.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will use department names to describe interview subjects as subjects did not give consent to having their names included in this thesis. Interviews were regarding professional roles and responsibilities rather than sensitive personal information. However, it is in the best interest of professional relationships as well as my own critical engagement to refrain from naming subjects in my analysis and discussion. I intend to focus on

professional roles explicitly as I aim to draw attention to structural and professional dynamics rather than personal ones. I will use job titles and other identifying characteristics with some discretion in relation to some information as is needed to support this research.

The municipal Office of Planning and Economic Development is highly male dominated, so gender identifiers for all except for one EcoDev interviewee are male. Planners will be Planner 1, Planner 2, and Planner 3. Economic Development Staff will be EcoDev 1 and EcoDev 2. One UMass interviewee is a professor who works in design in Springfield, I will identify him by this title. The other UMass affiliated interviewee is more connected with the Design Center and far more embedded in the community in Springfield, therefore I will identify her as a UMass Design Center Representative. I will identify the planner I spoke with at PVPC as PVPC Planner. Both of the individuals I spoke with in the non-profit sector were women. The first woman I spoke with I refer to simply by her sector. The other woman I spoke with is also deeply embedded in many dimensions of the Springfield community. One of her many roles is as a Transformative Development Fellow through MassDevelopment, so I will refer to her by this title, as this dimension of her work is the most useful to my analysis.

At the very beginning of my thesis research, while I was focused on climate migration to Holyoke, I had several conversations with one individual who was formerly a municipal planner in Holyoke. Although he now works at the state level, I will refer to him as a Holyoke Planner, as most of my conversations with him were in reference to this role. He was then then conservation planner and head of the sustainability department for the City of Holyoke. My conversations with him through the development of my research gave me great insight into the role and limitations of planners.

I structured interviews around a set of six questions and sub questions (see Appendix A: Interview Schedule). Questions were designed to prompt broader conversations about crisis response, community engagement in crisis response, and overall professional engagement with broad systemic issues surrounding *The Great Unraveling*. During interviews, I actively coded

conversations and themes based on values and process, either representing *Business As Usual* or equity-centered planning. I took detailed notes based on the coding table offered on pages 58 and 59 (Figure 2: Interview Coding).

Michael DiPasquale, a professor at UMass Amherst and the committee chair of this thesis, connected me with my first round of interviewees. Michael has long-standing relationships in Springfield and has long worked to build reciprocity and partnerships with the Springfield community. Michael is deeply connected to the UMass Design Center in Springfield and co-founded Make-it Springfield, “A Downtown Community Makerspace.” After speaking to the individuals Michael connected me with, I asked interviewees to recommend additional people for me to speak with. This snowball recruitment method¹⁴² allowed for me to speak to people working in many different sides of municipal governments and several different nonprofit agencies.

In order to understand how *Business As Usual* values are interacting with the public health crises at hand, I searched for critical awareness in both my interviews and my additional interactions. While planning is often highly reactive, advocacy and equity planning calls for more proactive, radical long-term approaches. Entering interviews with this understanding, I asked interviewees to discuss connections between public health and climate crises. The goal of these interviews was to get a general sense of the interviewee’s self perception of their role in planning and community development in Springfield. I also designed these interviews to give subjects the opportunity to bring up equity, rather than imposing my own beliefs regarding equity frameworks upon them.

¹⁴² Julie Hicks Patrick, Rachel A. Pruchno, and Miriam S. Rose, “Recruiting Research Participants: A Comparison of the Costs and Effectiveness of Five Recruitment Strategies,” *The Gerontologist* 38, no. 3 (June 1, 1998): 295–302, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/38.3.295>.

During interviews, I asked questions to get a sense of the collaboration that may be happening between different departments, agencies, and organizations. I asked about work before and during COVID to get a sense of how subjects' job responsibilities may have altered to assist in crisis response. Following this, I asked about parallels between COVID and other environmental crises, as for the purpose of this study, I sought to draw that parallel. I then asked questions that touch on community engagement and practices surrounding soliciting community engagement before and during COVID in order to gauge how planners value community input and engagement.

My first research question required me to understand and name *Business As Usual* planning values. The process through which participatory research can access reflective knowledge is reflection and dialogue, utilizing critical engagement for analysis. I accomplished this reflection and dialogue in pursuit of uncovering and recognizing *Business As Usual* values through semi-structured interviews in combination with my own experience and interactions within planning spaces. Important uses of reflective knowledge include emancipation, autonomy, and responsibility, all outcomes I call for from planning practitioners in my conclusions. I engaged critically with my professional, educational, and research environments, in addition to more direct research. These mixed methods constitute the reflective knowledge building I present in this research.¹⁴³ Research designed in pursuit of reflective knowledge production is well justified and exemplified by feminist research and critical theory.¹⁴⁴

In my interviews deliberately, and more informally in observation and conversation settings, I was searching for reference to and validation of relational and situated knowledges.

¹⁴³ Peter Park, "People, Knowledge, and Change in Participatory Research," *Management Learning* 30, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 141–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507699302003>.

¹⁴⁴ Lila Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 7–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07407709008571138>; Park, "People, Knowledge, and Change in Participatory Research."

Planning relies heavily on community life (similar to social capital), as well as socio-spatial attachment, which necessitate these knowledges. Despite its importance in community life, relational knowledge is not always considered to be valid knowledge in modern, western academic epistemology.

To close, I asked interviewees what the conversations surrounding recent uprisings have been in their respective workplaces. This, again, was to get an idea of if and how their work has acknowledged, changed, and adapted to respond to widespread calls to address structural racism in government and elsewhere. As I conducted interviews with people from different agencies and departments, follow up and initial questions evolved to reflect emerging trends.

The table below (Figure 2: Interview Coding) describes my interview analysis. The table is organized in five columns, 1) Topic, 2) *Business As Usual* Values, 3) Equity-Centered Values, 4) *Business As Usual* Processes, and 5) Equity-Centered Processes. The Topic column corresponds closely to initial questions, except for the final topic, “AICP Aspirational Principles” which acts as a screen for overall values and processes that reference ethics, justice, or equity. Value and Process columns are divided to delineate which values and processes represent *Business As Usual* paradigms, and which represent equity centered paradigms. Columns two and three are designed to identify the framing of my interviewees’ responses. These columns present principles that either constitute or resist slow violence within planning. During interviews I was searching for how interviewees spoke about topics, especially in terms of professional principles. Process columns outline the practical manifestations of values that interviewees spoke to. While values columns offer analysis for interviewees principles surrounding topics, process columns provide analysis for how interviewees understand their departments to operationalize those values in practice.

Topic	Business As Usual Values	Equity-Centered Values	Business As Usual Processes	Equity-Centered Processes
Inter/Intra-Municipal Collaboration	Inside Department of Planning and Economic Development; Collaboration in development but not implementation;	Inside AND outside of Department of Planning and Economic Development; In plan development AND implementation; Ongoing collaboration	Discreet collaboration; Professional and departmental connections only	Ongoing collaboration; collaborative organizational network (PVPC collaboration specifically); familiarity, personal relationships
Self-perception of professional role	Economic Development focus; Breadth of role; Bureaucratic	Perceived role in addressing vulnerability and oppression: able/willing; Breadth of role: Imaginative and generative	Center on business or community; Language about community engagement: burdensome; Reactive	Center on broader community or community; Language about community engagement: generative and positive; Proactive
Impacts of COVID on work	Responsibility in crisis; Economic development	Responsibility in crisis; community and public health focus	Slow/reduce or stop work vs; Center on business or community	Move into disaster response: Community response
Disaster/Crisis Response	Recovery focused on Central Business District; Returning to <i>Business As Usual</i> , “normal”	Vulnerability and vulnerable populations (harm): Window of Opportunity	Adaptation; Crisis Management	Mitigation; Response parallel to another disaster/crisis
Community Engagement Pre/During COVID	Bureaucratic; Burdensome; Disposable	Social infrastructure, isolation, vulnerability; Generative, collaborative vs. Trust/linking social capital; Validating community knowledge	Decreased engagement during crisis; Reactive outreach to fulfill requirements in Economic Development response	Increased engagement during crisis; pre-emptive, relationship building
Uprisings	Public safety framings; no discussion of causality	Language regarding race, justice, violence; national, regional, local scales; interacting with systems of oppression;	Individual engagement; Collaboration with police	Professional, structural, departmental engagement

AICP Aspirational Principles	Bureaucratic; Paradigms surrounding normalcy, dismissal or responsibility	“pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions” ; “seek social justice... recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration”; “systematically and critically analyze ethical issues in the practice of planning” ¹⁴⁵	Failure to engage with any of these topics	Reference to any of these aspirations, equity language; framing for other topics
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Figure 2: Interview Coding

¹⁴⁵ “AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,” American Planning Association, 2–3, accessed July 8, 2020, <https://www.planning.org/media/document/9121296/>.

Themes that emerged in the table above were useful in guiding conversations. As interviews were semi-structured, values and processes in the table above became clearer through more in-depth conversations. Interviews were arranged by asking subjects to dial in to a Zoom interview that I recorded. I also took detailed notes during interviews which contributed to my fieldnotes. Interview recordings were not transcribed or reviewed as they were lost due to technical difficulties. Although my initial intention was to transcribe interviews for more in depth coding, this became impossible.

Beyond interviews, I also had more informal conversations and interactions with individuals at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, those working in Springfield through MassDevelopment and the University of Massachusetts, Holyoke planning, and the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals. Another crucial method in my research design has been critical engagement through embedded dialogue in planning, between the fall of 2018 and the Spring of 2020, to understand values.¹⁴⁶ This method, described by Peter Park, in *People, Knowledge, and Change in Participatory Research*, is a method to develop reflective knowledge.

4.4 Fieldwork: Participant Observation

I have observed engagement and planning processes from several different positions. Through unstructured observation, I collected empirical data. For this thesis, participant observation and critical engagement includes: 1) Zoning Board of Appeals process with Wayfinders in Agawam, Massachusetts, 2) Professional engagement with local planners, PVPC, and the LiveWell Springfield campaign in the Springfield public health department, 3) experiencing the *Great Unraveling* (including intersecting public health and justice crises) as a

¹⁴⁶ Park, “People, Knowledge, and Change in Participatory Research.”

conscious global and local citizen and community member, and 4) my experience in the Masters of Regional Planning program at the University of Massachusetts.

The design and analysis of these observational settings has been impacted by my work in planning and planning related non-profits in Western Massachusetts. I have been working in affordable housing organization Wayfinders and Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity for the past five years, which has been incredibly influential. This work has taken many different forms and shed light on a complex, white-dominated, non-profit landscape that interacts with several dimensions of planning. My work with PVPC and LiveWell over the past year brought me directly into planning agencies in plan development and community engagement on topics like climate change, proactive mitigation, and equity. My work with PVPC pivoted, alongside my thesis work, to discuss and address racism in Springfield today more directly.

I have also been closely observing the global COVID pandemic and Black Lives Matter uprisings as a conscientious planner. I have attended protests, participated in anti-racist activism, and education initiatives as a graduate student, employee of Pioneer Valley Habitat, and socially conscious adult in this world at this moment. The final place wherein I have collected empirical data is within my Master's of Regional Planning Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I have finished my coursework and will soon be as qualified as a freshly graduated Master of Planning. My experience in the classroom, as well as the course of studies I took in my time at the University of Massachusetts, have been an important part of this data collection. In my discussion of the field of planning, the knowledge, skills, and values planners are armed with in graduate school is an important indicator of how well they will be able to better serve and support their communities.

Analysis from critical engagement and embedded dialogue that I conducted through this research also falls into the interview coding table (Figure 2). The above framework for analysis outlines themes that emerged in all dimensions of this research and reinforces the dichotomy between *Business As Usual* and equity.

In summary, the process of crafting an ethical and feasible research plan has led me down a path of producing highly relevant and useful findings, albeit different ones than I anticipated a year ago. Situated in the *Great Unraveling*, it would be unjust to attempt to conduct research into socio-economic planning issues without centering equity, specifically racial equity. In pursuit of bringing forth the AICP aspirational principles, our moment necessitates investigating the interrelatedness of these issues, and “systematically and critically analyze[ing] ethical issues in the practice of planning.”¹⁴⁷ This research is designed to understand and highlight the interrelatedness of issues, as we planners aspire to.

Repeatedly, as my research design was finalized, a hugely important change in the socio-political landscape would call into question the feasibility or ethics of that project. To avoid acknowledging and working within those challenges would have constituted an example of the *Business As Usual* problems I aim to call in with this thesis. Thus, the ultimate combination of archival and field research offers an opportunity to understand the dynamic landscape of the planning profession in western Massachusetts and writ large.

4.5 Limitations

This project is a case study of Springfield contextualized by broader conversations regarding planning theory and practice. Due to the very nature of this project, I encountered many limitations that should be mentioned. First of all, information regarding the global pandemic as well as public responses to racism is changing very quickly and has been since the beginning of this project. For this reason, contextual current event information goes out of date quickly, and it is not possible to include all new developments. In order to respond to those rapid changes, I was

¹⁴⁷ “AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,” 2–3.

operating on an accelerated timeline of my own. Due to the collapse of other projects, I was not able to interview every planner in the Springfield department. In addition to my own rushed timeline, professionals in every field were in the process of adjusting to working remotely full-time, as well as coping with extremely distressing circumstances. I reached out to many more community members, public sector employees, and collaborators in Springfield for interviews than are cited in this thesis. Unfortunately, I did not hear back from many of them. Again, I attribute much of this to the intersecting public health crisis I have described. I would have liked to conduct more interviews with Springfield planners and community members, my own colleagues, and my classmates. Much of the data presented here is anecdotal, which would benefit from validation. More qualitative data would build out this case study and reinforce my assertion regarding normative planning practices withing Springfield.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

I will analyze a series of vignettes to illustrate the violence of the *Business As Usual* approach to planning. None of these stories are, by themselves, particularly remarkable. The experiences and conversations I illustrate below are situated within the greater Springfield area of Western Massachusetts. Presenting my data through vignettes is a valuable tool to depict the very normal dimensions of planning that inhibit generative, equitable practice.

Springfield, a mid-size legacy city, while unique in many ways, offers a representation of planning practice resulting from structural contexts. These processes and outcomes are not unique to Holyoke, Springfield, Agawam, or any other city for that matter. Instead, taken together, the vignettes from my field research display the insidious oppression of *Business As Usual* practices in planning and in related community development fields. I offer a case study of Springfield contextualized by broader concerns within planning education and the profession. I connect these narratives to bring attention to the slow violence present in mundane participation in dominant systems. Discussion and analysis is situated within the *Great Unraveling*.

Here I present and discuss five problematic practices I have found: 1) Absence of Care, 2) Over-reliance on Economic Development, 3) Disconnects Between Research and Implementation, 4) Degraded Linking Social Capital and Top-Down Public Participation, and 5) Illusions of Objectivity in Planning. These issues constitute what I have deemed *Business As Usual* planning in the context of the *Three Stories of Our Time*. These practices are the very normative practices, constituting slow violence, that have brought us to exacerbated crisis in this *Great Unraveling*.

I begin by describing my entry into planning research, exploring a project in Holyoke, and relating it to health outcomes when the public health crisis from COVID-19 became imminent. Initial on-the-ground explorations informed all of my observations and priorities as I moved forward in my research. I then discuss crisis response and resilience from within the

planning department of the city of Springfield, Massachusetts along with viewpoints of municipal government, juxtaposed with those of external planning agencies in Springfield. Following this, I explore social capital, public participation, and knowledge types through my own experiences as a field researcher working through a public participation process in Agawam, Massachusetts. I then describe my experience in planning education and understanding of equity specializations through the UMass Amherst department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) and work with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC).

Finally, I tie the above issues together and propose a processual change towards a new ethics of care within the planning profession.¹⁴⁸ I submit that this research highlights an important conversation within the planning field because, as one Holyoke planner I spoke with warned, “We will not survive if we don’t address the racism that exists right now.” This fear is a nod to the *Great Unraveling* and the danger of current systems. Below, I explain the complex causes that I have found to be the basis of *Business As Usual* planning that produce and sustain slow violence.

5.1 Absence of Care in Disaster Response Planning

Ethics of care critique *Business As Usual* neoliberal planning frameworks based around individualism.¹⁴⁹ Instead an ethics of care values concepts of relationality, interdependence, trust, and collective agency.¹⁵⁰ Nonviolence is an integral part of care-centered frameworks. Therefore, I assert that absence of care is a form of slow violence. The absence of care in disaster response planning specifically is a violent paradox.

¹⁴⁸ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management.”

¹⁴⁹ Branicki.

¹⁵⁰ Sevenhuijsen, “The Place of Care.”

Here I offer my experience at the beginning of this research (which evolved beyond this project for countless reasons) which revealed very important themes that I often returned to in the development of this thesis. These themes include resource allocation for research rather than implementation and a fundamental disconnect between theory and practice. Other takeaways include 1) patterns in Springfield municipal government that display a lack of care and compassion toward vulnerable residents, and 2) the importance of social networks and services in the wake of disaster, especially among socially vulnerable populations.

In originally conceptualizing this research, I had hoped to investigate climate migration¹⁵¹ in Holyoke, Massachusetts. During the development of this idea, I was in conversation with the conservation planner and sustainability department head for the City of Holyoke. The city was seriously impacted when Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in the fall of 2017.

Holyoke is 99% urban with a population of over 40,000.¹⁵² The city is 52% Latinx. As of the 2010 census Holyoke had the greatest Puerto Rican population per capita, outside of The Island, in the United States.¹⁵³ The Puerto Rican population in Holyoke is still deeply connected to The Island, with much movement between The Island and Holyoke. Due to strong social, familial, and community networks, there was a massive migration of people from The Island to Holyoke after Maria. Holyoke was thrown into disaster-response mode as they received large groups of people fleeing Puerto Rico (The Island). One night in January 2018, transitional housing in Western Massachusetts held 902 people displaced by Maria.¹⁵⁴ In all, about 5,000

¹⁵¹ This term is fraught, in my usage I aim to reference relocation, either permanent or temporary, forced by events relating to climate change.

¹⁵² “Holyoke, Massachusetts (MA 01040) Profile: Population, Maps, Real Estate, Averages, Homes, Statistics, Relocation, Travel, Jobs, Hospitals, Schools, Crime, Moving, Houses, News, Sex Offenders,” accessed July 29, 2020, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Holyoke-Massachusetts.html>.

¹⁵³ “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Holyoke City, Massachusetts,” accessed July 29, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/holyokecitymassachusetts#qf-headnote-b>.

¹⁵⁴ “EBC Climate Change Program: Lessons Learned from Massachusetts MVP Grant Program | Environmental Business Council of NE,” accessed July 22, 2020, <https://ebcne.org/event/ebc-climate->

people came through Holyoke after Maria. Many of them first filtered through Springfield, where, according to a Holyoke planner I spoke to, they were met with neither care nor support. The same planner told me that Springfield municipal government did little if anything to help the situation. This reflection upon Springfield's response points to an inability or unwillingness to quickly re-prioritize and respond to need in crisis. Climate crisis like Hurricane Maria is a symptom of the *Great Unraveling*.

The Holyoke Planning Department received a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant to conduct research on Holyoke's response to the significant migration. The planner I spoke with has also applied for an MVP Grant for an infrastructure improvement. Infrastructure improvements that would help the city of Springfield actually support the people who were relocated. Unfortunately, the department was awarded the research grant but no funds to implement findings. The planner I spoke with described this as a typical practice in allocation of funds. Allocating of resources to study vulnerable populations but not support them, unsurprising to the planner I spoke with, is very frustrating. Investment in research and academic production instead of building resilience and equity is fundamentally a form of exploitation and a manifestation of slow violence. The Holyoke Planner's response and common critiques of extractive academia¹⁵⁵ show that this allocation for research over implementation is *Business As Usual*.

Allocation of resources for the production of academic and professional knowledge rather than for systems and materials that may actually improve quality of life for those in need is an act

change-program-a-massachusetts-response-to-municipal-adaptation-resiliency-the-municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-program/?instance_id=.

¹⁵⁵ Sibyl Wentz Diver and Margot Natalie Higgins, "Giving Back Through Collaborative Research: Towards a Practice of Dynamic Reciprocity," *Journal of Research Practice* 10, no. 2 (July 1, 2014): M9–M9.

of violence. Ethics of care call for reciprocity and trust.¹⁵⁶ Absence of care through reciprocity and co-benefit to vulnerable populations participating in research deteriorates linking social capital.¹⁵⁷ Without reciprocity, extraction through research perpetuates *Business As Usual* and deepens the divide between municipalities and vulnerable populations.

This dynamic, present between research institutions such as the University of Massachusetts Amherst and frequent research sites such as Springfield and Holyoke, is not unseen or unnamed. Every fall, organizers in Springfield connected with the Five Colleges (University of Massachusetts Amherst, Hampshire College, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College) host an event called Holyoke Bound. Workshops, speakers, and presenters try to impart upon students the damage of temporary, extractive interaction with Holyoke. In essence, Holyoke residents are tired of students entering their community to study them, extracting knowledge, receiving a degree, and never returning or offering any reciprocity. This pattern stands not only in academia, but in practice as well, as illustrated by the experience of the Holyoke Planner. This trend is not specific to Holyoke or Springfield, but a trend within academia and research practice of which we must be cognizant.

In one particular meeting I had with the planner in Holyoke in the Spring of 2019, he was very upset. He named his anger and frustration to be that “people don’t f*cking care.” He explained his frustration to be with finding that secure, mainland, white American powerholders did not care about the thousands of people fleeing destroyed homes and communities on The Island unless it directly affected them, their home values, or their taxes. Powerholders were unable or unwilling to collectively identify and prioritize addressing the injustices of the crisis. In *Business As Usual* frameworks, neoliberal individualism is paramount, leaving no room for

¹⁵⁶ Branicki, “COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management.”

¹⁵⁷ Corburn, “Bringing Local Knowledge into Environmental Decision Making”; Putnam, “Bowling Alone.”

relational caring. This dichotomy limits considerations of care and compassion in planning. The planner in Holyoke expressed to me great care for the community he was serving, but he felt powerless to motivate those with more power than him to fund or consider that care in ways that might actually benefit the vulnerable.

Individuals displaced by disaster are highly vulnerable. Climate migrants from The Island were displaced and houseless, one dimension of vulnerability. The connections that brought these individuals and families to Western Massachusetts were resilience factors related to social capital. Research conducted by Holyoke Planning found that those doing the most to support individuals and families displaced from The Island were those with the fewest resources. The job of caring for the most vulnerable became the work of the next most vulnerable. This burden reinforces cycles of poverty in the community and pushes the goal of equitable crisis response further from reach.

In this example, we see calculative frameworks within crisis response taking priority over allocating attention to relationships and quality of care. These same frameworks prohibit collaborative, iterative phases of recovery, prioritizing distinct, goal-oriented phases. These frameworks are restricting planning from moving towards relational logic understanding situated knowledge, which is integral caring response.¹⁵⁸ According to the planner I spoke with, investigating and supporting relational support networks in Holyoke would have been one successful example the Holyoke planner cited of this move was a subtle effort among city officials to look the other way in relation to overcrowding as a result of permanent Holyoke residents housing unhoused people fleeing The Island. This tacit agreement to turn a blind eye was based in care, dependent on flexibility and willingness to value social and experiential knowledge types. Despite the importance of decisions based in relational logic, they are not built

¹⁵⁸ Branicki, "COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management."

into municipal practice. This leaves us wondering how to facilitate flexibility and care in planning.

The vulnerability represented by those moving between Puerto Rico and Holyoke is paralleled in many disasters. When disaster strikes, the inordinate death and destruction incurred by vulnerable, especially Black individuals and communities, is a startling reality. Violence caused by crisis is multidimensional.¹⁵⁹ Inequity in impact of disaster reaches far beyond the moment of crisis and is exacerbated by problematic institutional response. This inequity is not universally recognized. A recent survey by Axios-Ipsos found that while 70% of African Americans are very “concerned that official responses to the pandemic are being biased against some racial groups,” only one third of white respondents shared that view.¹⁶⁰ This represents a significant disconnect between the experiences and perspectives of Black and white Americans. This disconnect reflects two issues; the first issue is the racially biased crisis response. Institutions with histories rooted in inequity that they have not addressed reproduce those inequities in crisis response. Gaps in perception like the one described above also contribute to an evasion of responsibility on behalf of white Americans for correcting racially inequitable crisis response. This perception allows response to avoid considering pre-existing and intersecting inequities, which are crucial contexts. The second issue this study speaks to is the lack of trust Black Americans have in officials and official responses. Lacking trust, which I will build upon below, is a result of official response not fulfilling their responsibility to care for the Black community. One symptom of the *Great Unraveling* is a diminishing sense that things will be okay. This is demonstrated by a lack of trust in institutional protections.

¹⁵⁹ Nelson, “The Slow Violence of Climate Change.”

¹⁶⁰Margaret Talev, “Axios-Ipsos Poll: Massive Gulf in Public Opinion Based on Race,” Axios, accessed July 3, 2020, <https://www.axios.com/axios-ipsos-coronavirus-week-11-george-floyd-db1a465c-957e-4f91-a21c-2f2aaf3600b4.html>.

Be it delusion or denial, the ignorance on behalf of white Americans illustrated by crisis response in Holyoke and the survey above is an absence of collective agency that allows for the reproduction of *Business As Usual* systems during crises. Official response to the COVID pandemic mirrors that of many other disasters. Lack of collective understanding and absence of care act as barriers here, just as they did in Holyoke Planning's plea for care.

Disaster response within planning practice void of care is inflexible and non-iterative. *Business As Usual* crisis response regards crisis as temporary, with an end goal of returning to normal, operating without taking into account pre-existing and coexisting crises. Care frameworks for addressing crisis recognize broader social context, capitalizing on social transformation intertemporally.¹⁶¹ Addressing said problems is impossible if, as planners, we are not collectively and publicly identifying problems of injustice through centering relational care frameworks and prioritizing implementation of solutions. As nonviolence is central to ethics of care, where care is absent, violence is present.

5.2 Over-reliance on Economic Development

Absence of care stems from overwhelming focus on economic development in thought process and decision making. Economic development rhetoric in planning prioritizes individualism, economic freedom, efficiency, and entrepreneurialism over care and justice. Neoliberal governance frameworks center attention on, and value economic indicators as paramount.¹⁶² In my review of planning in Springfield related to disaster, I found that the municipal government outwardly seems to value economic growth of the highest importance. Reports developed in Springfield capitalize on "Restore[ing] Springfield's role as the economic

¹⁶¹ Branicki, "COVID-19, Ethics of Care and Feminist Crisis Management."

¹⁶² Sager, "Neo-Liberal Urban Planning Policies."

heart of the Pioneer Valley by: strengthening the city's downtown area."¹⁶³ Building healthy communities is included as a value for recovery and growth within the city, but not without also providing economic benefit. The city has planned to grow and develop new and existing medical campuses for a dual goal: to enhance access to health services and as "priority economic development strategy."¹⁶⁴ Reports make little mention of vulnerable residents, instead presenting strong language and discourse emphasizing downtown development. This pattern leads us to the conclusion that the economy, specifically downtown investment, is the priority of planning into the future in Springfield.

In general planning practice, state sanctioned gentrification under the guise of economic development enacts slow violence upon historically marginalized communities. During crises, when people's livelihoods, homes, health, and lives are at stake, prioritizing the economy over these basic needs multiplies violence against the most vulnerable. Extra-municipal plans developed in Springfield engage far more actively with equity than municipal ones. Despite this, municipal plans have much more success in implementation than plans developed by external agencies, such as the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Plans developed by the city, focusing on downtown development, see continued investment, ongoing consideration in decision making, and greater accomplishment of defined indicators. While these are not inherently problematic actions, no planners made mention of social dimensions of crisis response beyond economic ones. Annalise Fonza's dissertation found the same patterns of overwhelming emphasis on downtown economic development in her study of Springfield during the urban renewal era.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Develop Springfield and Springfield Redevelopment Authority, "Rebuild Springfield: Citywide Plan" (City of Springfield, February 2012), 94.

¹⁶⁴ Develop Springfield and Springfield Redevelopment Authority, "Rebuild Springfield: Progress Report 2014," May 2014, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Fonza, "Troubling City Planning Discourses."

Springfield, like much of the world, is affected by increasingly frequent and severe disasters and crises. Municipal government and local agencies have produced a series of mitigation and response plans. To juxtapose two plans developed by different entities: The Rebuild Springfield Plan (developed by the SRA and affiliated offices) mentions equity (in relation to social equity rather than financial) two times over the entire 149-page document. The SHJ report published by PVPC mentions equity in the same capacity eight times over their far shorter 66-page document. The SHJ report centers of climate and environmental justice, which implies social justice considerations.¹⁶⁶ The Rebuild Springfield plan's reference to justice is largely criminal justice, promising to "use the weight and resources of the entire criminal justice system to address elevated incidents of crime and disorder."¹⁶⁷ This framing of justice, crime, and disorder is socially complicated by histories of criminalization and demonization of certain racial groups in the United States. I will expand upon this below.

Plans developed outside of municipal government are the ones centered on equity, justice, and caring for Springfield residents. In contrast, plans developed with municipal government focused on economic development, and government sponsored gentrification. Rebuild Springfield, the first in a canon of reports generated regarding development and resilience in Springfield, does not explicitly name poverty, vulnerability, equity or segregation. Plan development was organized by "Nexus Domains" of healthy communities: educational, physical, cultural, social, economic, and organizational. The only section of this report that touches on injustice is the social domain, where food inequity is presented as a justice issue. The remainder of the social domain focuses on bringing young professionals into the city and

¹⁶⁶ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, "Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield's Climate Action & Resilience Plan."

¹⁶⁷ Develop Springfield and Springfield Redevelopment Authority, "Rebuild Springfield: Citywide Plan," 66.

improving public safety. This plan takes a “Building Back Better”¹⁶⁸ approach. Rather than focusing on repair, this plan prioritizes improving the city to attract “young professionals.”¹⁶⁹ Seizing the window of opportunity for change after a disaster is a valuable principle, however, the issue of who changes are for raises equity and justice concerns.

After reviewing Springfield planning documents I spoke to three planners, and two people working in EcoDev. The only crisis response that interviewees in these departments discussed with me were the small business grants that they are administering. Planner 3 told me that the primary concern of the planning department during COVID was to help small businesses through grants and programs like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Planner 2, told me that besides these grants, they are getting back to the “normal grind.” Centering returns to normal in crisis response is a trademark of *Business As Usual* and acts as a barrier to recognizing an *Unraveling* and looking towards a *Turning*.

Planner 3 told me that the department boiled down to the basics in response to COVID, meaning that they zeroed in on keeping the department running. Planner 2 told me that his workload did not really change. EcoDev 1 and 2 told me that they have administered hundreds of grants to small businesses. EcoDev 1 emphasized that there has been an “all hands-on deck” approach within the Office of Planning and Economic Development to the granting program they administered. The very rhetoric of returning to a normal grind, boiling down to basics, and focusing in to support business is indicative of the culture of municipal planning in Springfield. Business as Usual practices are both a departmental priority and a capacity issue.

I also had the opportunity to speak with a Transformative Development Fellow with MassDevelopment place in Springfield. She works closely with EcoDev leaders and municipal

¹⁶⁸ Kim and Olshansky, “The Theory and Practice of Building Back Better.”

¹⁶⁹ Develop Springfield and Springfield Redevelopment Authority, “Rebuild Springfield: Citywide Plan.”

staff, which she mentioned lack age, gender, and racial diversity. This homogeneity fails to reflect the diverse community in Springfield. In the wake of COVID, she has been working closely with business owners. She quickly realized that there is no unified way to connect with businesses in Springfield as the city has no contact list. This means that businesses in need of support must seek out, rather than be guided to, resources. Planners and EcoDev staff recognized the unprecedented nature of this disaster, but not one of them spoke to equity considerations in the effects of or in their response to the crisis during our interviews. The national PPP does not require lenders to consider equity factors through the application and granting process. If the primary crisis response method adopted by planners is PPP and similar programs that lack equity, the whole crisis response is lacking in explicit attention to equity.

Themes throughout Springfield plans are consistent with the trend of my conversations with planners and EcoDev staff. Overwhelmingly, we see a reactive, economic preservation response to COVID in pursuit of returning to normal. This raises two issues, the first of which is a siloed, economic development response to a public health crisis. Again, the intersectionality of planning as well as their professional history of collaboration across departments, positions planners well to engage with a multidimensional crisis. Springfield Planning in particular has participated in the production of several cycles of community engagement, long-term plan development, and has collaborative relationships with other municipal departments including public health. Therefore, I argue that reducing to an exclusively economic development response does not constitute enough engagement from a planning department. Once again, we must raise the issue I mentioned above: who is this response for?

The granting program in Springfield is under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the CARES Act. While theoretically designed for small businesses, the Transformative Development Fellow in Springfield found barriers that barred some of the most vulnerable businesses in Springfield from accessing support services. For instance, she found information regarding granting programs to be disjointed. She also encountered limited fluency and access to

technology as huge barriers to very small businesses. EcoDev 1 recognized that print and scan requirements for applications posed barriers for many people. These hurdles severely limit who can benefit from granting programs. Dealing with the double burden of seeking out and understanding grant programs and navigating the bureaucracy necessary to apply for aid is difficult enough. In this case, these barriers compound vulnerabilities. Paradoxically, vulnerable businesses with less bureaucratic capacity are the most in need of aid.¹⁷⁰

The Transformative Development Fellow’s observation that this granting program was not designed for small vulnerable businesses is validated and reflected by nationwide studies. Several studies found that larger small businesses, including branches of larger enterprises, were privileged in PPP administration, leaving smaller businesses out.¹⁷¹ Because of this, reducing to an economic development approach, driven by PPP money, actually can reproduce and deepen inequity.

If businesses were capable of navigating the double burden of seeking out and managing bureaucracy of granting programs, equity considerations were applied. Despite equity barriers to application, once applications were received, the city of Springfield applied their own equity framework. This approach “awarded points to those businesses that are minority owned, woman owned, minority-woman owned, or veteran owned. Points were also allocated to businesses that

¹⁷⁰ Kelly Bergstrand et al., “Assessing the Relationship Between Social Vulnerability and Community Resilience to Hazards,” *Social Indicators Research* 122, no. 2 (June 2015): 391–409, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0698-3>.

¹⁷¹ Paul Kiel Gillum Jack, “Different Names, Same Address: How Big Businesses Got Government Loans Meant for Small Businesses,” ProPublica, accessed October 4, 2020, <https://www.propublica.org/article/different-names-same-address-how-big-businesses-got-government-loans-meant-for-small-businesses?token=N4k88uB8H681Ql3s7NXVvflOxrkBWSTf>; “Not-So-Small Businesses Continue To Benefit From PPP Loans,” NPR.org, accessed October 4, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/04/850177240/not-so-small-businesses-continue-to-benefit-from-ppp-loans>; Emily Stewart, “The PPP Worked How It Was Supposed to. That’s the Problem.,” Vox, July 13, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/7/13/21320179/ppp-loans-sba-paycheck-protection-program-polling-kanye-west>.

are owned by and employ Springfield residents.”¹⁷² In a press release on July 16th 2020, Mayor Sarno and Chief Development Officer Sheehan announced that the city had funded \$1.2 million of \$4.5 million requested by small businesses. We have no data on the distribution of funds or success of equity scoring approaches in Springfield, which will be important in gauging the success of this equity screen.

Unfortunately, equity was not accomplished in communities around the country. Not only was the PPP designed to support primarily larger businesses, but the inequity in distribution of funds at the national scale was also along racial and ethnic lines. The Global Strategy Group for Color of Change and Unidos US¹⁷³ conducted a nationwide survey with Black and Latinx business owners and workers regarding the execution of the federal stimulus. They found that only 8% of African American small business owners and 14% of Latinx small business owners received the assistance they applied for. Not only is there clear inequity in administration of grants, but this survey finds barriers to application for African American and Latinx small business owners. More than one third of Latinx small business owners expressed concern that they were ineligible for assistance, and 42% of African American business owners thought they would be denied assistance.¹⁷⁴ According to the CEO of the advocacy group Small Business Majority, John Arensmeyer, distribution of these funds neglected underserved businesses and actually widened the wealth gap.¹⁷⁵ Even with an equity screen, PPP and similar programs do not

¹⁷² “Springfield Awards 84 New Grants to Local Small Businesses as Part of the Third Round of ‘Prime the Pump,’” accessed October 12, 2020, https://www.springfield-ma.gov/cos/index.php?id=news-story&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=14402&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=cd25bf9ab82ccf2ccb7c578b5251ea3b.

¹⁷³ UnidosUS is the largest Latino nonprofit advocacy group in the United States; Color of Change is a civil rights advocacy group founded in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

¹⁷⁴ “First COVID-19 Survey of Black and Latino Small-Business Owners Reveals Dire Economic Future,” *Color Of Change* (blog), accessed July 22, 2020, https://colorofchange.org/press_release/first-covid-19-survey-of-black-and-latino-small-business-owners-reveals-dire-economic-future/.

¹⁷⁵ “Why the \$2.2 Trillion-Dollar Bailout Benefited the Rich,” *Time*, accessed July 22, 2020, <https://time.com/5845116/coronavirus-bailout-rich-richer/>.

constitute a sufficient or equitable crisis response from planning. Planners' and EcoDev staff's reference to collectively tackling granting speaks to capacity barriers to a diverse crisis response approach. Structurally, even with an equity screen applied to this neoliberal crisis response, an isolated approach like this actively maintains the *Business As Usual* prioritization of economic prosperity.

5.3 Over-reliance On Economic Development: Public Safety

Beyond the maintenance of wealth inequity, economic development and downtown growth rhetoric are often coupled with that of public safety. In a 2014 Rebuilding Springfield Progress report, the primary progress actions highlighted in the social domain were increased police deployment, a new public-safety initiative in the South End, a potential grocery store, and a new public health initiative promoting wellness. The South End is one of the most socially vulnerable neighborhoods in the city of Springfield,¹⁷⁶ with a high rate of subsidized housing. It directly abuts Metro Center (see Appendix B: Social Vulnerability Map- Springfield, Ma and Appendix C: Subsidized Housing Map: Springfield, Ma).¹⁷⁷ Heavily emphasizing public safety rhetoric preceding quality of life improvements for residents of the South End shows that the report aims to address racialized fears before improving quality of life for vulnerable community members.

Racism is a public health crisis that causes both immediate and slow violence upon Black individuals and communities in the United States.¹⁷⁸ Crises including racism constitute the *Great*

¹⁷⁶ Hamin, Williams-Eynon, and Ratte, "Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan."

¹⁷⁷ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, "Springfield Neighborhood Data Atlas," accessed June 5, 2020, <http://www.pvpc.org/content/springfield-neighborhood-data-atlas-released>; Hamin, Williams-Eynon, and Ratte, "Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan."

¹⁷⁸ "Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue," accessed October 15, 2020, <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence>.

Unraveling. Racialized creation of exclusionary space tracks back to urban renewal, but operates also under a new name: public safety. An open letter to the American Planning Association (APA) Board of Directors was submitted on July 24th with 525 signatures from planning and planning related professionals, although the letter now has many more signatures. The letter calls for the APA to issue an “improved follow-up...one that supports calls to defund police departments” to their initial statement in response to George Floyd’s murder and subsequent uprisings entitled *APA Statement on Righting the Wrongs of Racial Inequality* (described in *Background: Slow Violence in Planning Perpetuated by Business As Usual*).¹⁷⁹ The open letter cites the same history of structurally produced, racialized violence that has had ripple effects including “creating the preconditions for over-policing of communities of color and disinvestment in community health and safety.”¹⁸⁰ The letter goes further to call out planners complicity in governmental and institutionalized racism and policing, and the subsequent responsibility we hold to acknowledge and redress that complicity. Amongst other examples of the violence of police involvement in planning, the letter describes the symbiotic relationship between increased policing and accelerated gentrification.¹⁸¹

Public safety in Springfield is a means to further downtown development. Public safety discourse present in Springfield Reports, mirrored across in the United States, is highly racialized and is a consequence of mass incarceration.¹⁸² Public safety, in this report, is presented in tandem with an increase in police presence. An almost identical deployment of police presence in

¹⁷⁹ “APA Statement on Righting the Wrongs of Racial Inequality.”

¹⁸⁰ “American Planning Association.”

¹⁸¹ Abdallah Fayyad, “The Criminalization of Gentrifying Neighborhoods,” *The Atlantic*, December 20, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/the-criminalization-of-gentrifying-neighborhoods/548837/>.

¹⁸²Michelle Fine, “Structural Racism and Critical Participatory Evaluation,” in *Marking Progress: Movement Towards Racial Justice, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equality Critical Issues Forum*, vol. 3, 2010, 37–40.

minority neighborhoods was a side effect of the neoliberal agenda in Jersey City.¹⁸³ Heavy emphasis on law enforcement, both blatant and disguised as public safety, is coded racism. Increasing police and surveillance may make some people feel safer, however, it also leads to “material dispossession that exacerbates racial inequality and normalizes further structural violence, while simultaneously legitimating and perpetuating the cultural violence.”¹⁸⁴ Despite the use of this language by planning in Springfield, we must acknowledge the violent implications.

We cannot isolate these two realities from one another, and we must recognize the violence of public safety rhetoric. Racialized mundane police violence affects “social liquidation of undesirable populations in the vernacular of public safety.”¹⁸⁵ Public safety rhetoric cannot be disentangled from disproportionate punishment, profiling, and forced removal in the United States. All of these factors indicate and impact deepening inequity in our cities and communities. To continue utilizing this language without a deep understanding of the socio-cultural implications is violent.

In order to understand the Springfield-specific context of public safety rhetoric, it is important to unpack the context of the Springfield police and their relationship with the community. Fifty-seven cases of misconduct have been filed against the Springfield police department since 2006. The city has paid out almost \$4 million dollars in police misconduct lawsuits.¹⁸⁶ State sanctioned violence through law enforcement has a racialized cumulative

¹⁸³ Malone, “Neoliberal Governance and Uneven Development in Jersey City.”xt

¹⁸⁴ Priscilla Bustamante, Gaurav Jashnani, and Brett G. Stoudt, “Theorizing Cumulative Dehumanization: An Embodied Praxis of ‘Becoming’ and Resisting State-Sanctioned Violence,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 13, no. 1 (2019): e12429, <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12429>.

¹⁸⁵ Orisanmi Burton, “To Protect and Serve Whiteness,” *North American Dialogue* 18, no. 2 (2015): 42.

¹⁸⁶ “Springfield Paid out \$3.9 Million over 10 Years in Police Misconduct Lawsuits - Masslive.Com,” accessed July 21, 2020, https://www.masslive.com/news/2017/09/springfield_police_misconduct_lawsuits.html.

dehumanizing effect.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the emphasis in planning reports on increased policing does not necessarily contribute to enhanced safety and security for socially vulnerable populations. Rather, activating public spaces through development in concert with increased police presence provides “neither the perception nor reality of safety for Black, Brown, and Indigenous attendees.”¹⁸⁸

Increasing police presence in the name of public safety is often a territorial act of claiming space for wealthier, and often white, residents. This is an act of state sanctioned, slow violence. Designing a city inhabited by socio-economically diverse, largely Black and Brown individuals and families for higher income white people is violent. A common tactic in economic development is designing a city to attract people that the municipal government wants, for tax, aesthetic, or other purposes. Springfield has explicitly expressed a desire to bring in young professionals, a demographic often associated with gentrification. We return to the question: **who is the city for?** The history and implications of policing and public safety discourse are not addressed even remotely in Springfield planning documents, general or disaster related. This *Business As Usual* practice is an act of slow violence, criminalizing the occupation of space and exacting violence upon communities of color.

The entrenchment of neoliberalism within municipal governments, and planning departments specifically, shapes disaster recovery and planning. The Springfield planning department is integrated with the office of Economic Development (EcoDev). Planning, EcoDev and the SRA all work together under The Office of Planning and Economic Development. Structurally associating planning with EcoDev binds planning to an economic development agenda.

¹⁸⁷ Bustamante, Jashnani, and Stoudt, “Theorizing Cumulative Dehumanization.”

¹⁸⁸ “American Planning Association.”

I contend that economic development is not an appropriate disaster response from planning departments and agencies. We see economic goals prioritized in crisis response efforts made by the Office of Planning and Economic Development. This response validates one type of suffering: conventional economic loss. An approach like this is a statement of commitment to *Business As Usual* practice. Isolating crisis response to market-oriented programs is an approach actively ignoring long-standing inequity. Over-reliance on economic development in planning and crisis response insufficient from a planning perspective centered on justice. It also has violent implications based on its relationship to police power. Market-oriented strategies indicate the structurally produced distance between planning endeavors and human care and compassion.

5.4 Disconnect Between Research and Implementation

We see dominant economic development discourse in plans produced regarding Springfield, how those patterns play out in implementation adds a layer to equity considerations. Plans and reports published regarding planning in Springfield are the result of research conducted by a network of local and regional planning actors. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is the entity associated with planning in Springfield that has an equity framework for their work. Rhetoric surrounding social and racial justice are most heavily presented by PVPC and UMass Amherst. This work is continuous and evolving. While planners at PVPC are pushing equity agendas in partnership with some municipal programs, implementation to affect change is another issue.

In partnership, PVPC and LARP developed a spatial analysis of Springfield in the context of climate change.¹⁸⁹ This analysis and a subsequent report focus on geographically and socially vulnerable populations within Springfield. Based on the spatial analysis completed by Elisabeth

¹⁸⁹ Hamin, Williams-Eynon, and Ratte, “Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan.”

Hamin-Infield and Augie Williams-Eynon at UMass, PVPC proceeded in developing a Climate Action & Resilience Plan (CARP). The plan is called Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. The Springfield CARP had an intensive community engagement process motivated by a commitment to equity.

This plan is not focused on economic development, but rather urban resilience and environmental justice. The orientation of this report directs sustainability efforts towards climate justice for the city and for the diverse and vulnerable populations currently living there. With this valuable approach, the SHJ report stands in contrast to economic development heavy documents produced by the Springfield Department of Planning and Economic development.

PVPC, as a regional planning agency, acts as an outside consultant to municipal government. Regional planning agencies lack “command-and-control authority.”¹⁹⁰ While regional planning agencies receive funding to support equity-based issues, and often conduct research and plan development prioritizing said issues, they do not have implementation power. In order to implement plans, regional planning agencies need collaboration, buy-in, and commitment from municipal planning offices.¹⁹¹ In my conversations with planners in Springfield, PVPC was not framed as a key planning partner.

When I asked interview subjects who they collaborate with both within and outside municipal government, they responded with much more emphasis on collaboration within municipal government, Mayor Sarno’s office in particular. Springfield Planners 2 and 3 mentioned the existence of the commission only after being pushed to speak beyond collaboration with other municipal departments. Planner 1 collaborates largely with “consultants and at times

¹⁹⁰ Karen Trapenberg Frick et al., “Collaboration and Equity in Regional Sustainability Planning in California: Challenges in Implementation,” *California Journal of Politics and Policy* 7, no. 4 (2015): 2.

¹⁹¹ Frick et al., “Collaboration and Equity in Regional Sustainability Planning in California.”

non-profits.”¹⁹² Collaboration with the public health department and LiveWell Springfield (a public health institute) came up as new collaborations. Even this partnership revolved around economic concerns, referring to public health considerations regarding COVID-19. LiveWell and PVPC have a relationship as non-governmental organizations working towards health equity in Springfield. However, this link was not part of planners’ narratives surrounding COVID response or collaborative networks. No planner or individual in EcoDev that I spoke to made any mention of equity, which is a key goal of PVPC’s work in Springfield.

The Office of Planning and Economic Development in Springfield holds implementation power. If the municipal department does not view PVPC as an integral partner, plans developed by them will not necessarily have the opportunity to impact the city. Plan development is an intensive process, requiring work from planners and the public. When a plan like Strong, Healthy & Just is developed, it may be futile if the municipal government is not committed to implementation. In May 2018, just under a year after the SHJ report was published, PVPC released an implementation action chart. Only 58% of action items had any implementation action status, many of which were “ongoing” or “in process.” The “Sustainability Dashboard” website is listed as potentially funded. The web address listed (resilientspringfield.org) is not a valid web address. Website maintenance is low-hanging fruit in terms of implementation. One key goal for the report was to maintain this sustainability dashboard into the future to keep information accessible. The website was meant to act “as a transparent means of engaging and communicating with residents on implementation of the SHJ plan and of celebrating successes.”¹⁹³ The inactivity of the web address listed points to a lack of the promised transparency. If this website was not made or maintained, it is likely that many other action items

¹⁹² Planner 1 (Anonymous), “Thank You!,” June 24, 2020.

¹⁹³ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield’s Climate Action & Resilience Plan.” 42.

on this list have faded out of focus. The only action category that had no implementation at all was Building Human Resilience, which referred to supporting vulnerable communities within Springfield. Selective implementation by the city government has seemingly prioritized action items that match the economic development goals of the city.¹⁹⁴ The lack of emphasis on PVPC collaboration and failure to implement or maintain a website made to keep the public in-the-loop highlights an equity issue.

The SHJ CARP published by PVPC utilized a creative, intensive, inclusive community engagement process. In the development of the SHJ CARP, PVPC “encountered both a desire to see the City leading by example with respect to climate action and resilience combined with a fear that the City would not follow through.”¹⁹⁵ This concern is representative of a lack linking social capital between community members and their government. The SHJ report identified action items to address this lack of trust as follows: (1) “Lead by example to implement priority recommendations in this plan,” (2) “Ensure ongoing resident engagement in plan implementation and refinement over time,” and (3) “Build confidence in city government.”¹⁹⁶ Linking social capital is built by ongoing conversations and commitment to bringing into fruition responses to the needs voiced by community members.

Regional planning agencies hold little implementation power. The UMass professor associated with Springfield that I interviewed criticized “some of the planning efforts (including PVPC) as not specific enough.” He recognized that, “Many studies bring to light what is already known (Environmental Justice etc.) but they do not lead to real physical change, a lot of money is

¹⁹⁴ Frick et al., “Collaboration and Equity in Regional Sustainability Planning in California.”

¹⁹⁵ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Strong, Healthy & Just: Springfield’s Climate Action & Resilience Plan.”

¹⁹⁶ City of Springfield Office of Community Development and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 41.

spent on feasibility studies.”¹⁹⁷ Despite a collaborative community engagement process with valuable input, if goals outlined in plans produced externally do not align with goals set internally, change cannot happen. No matter the quality or value of the work being done by PVPC, if the Office of Planning and Economic Development for the city is not committed to similar outcomes, goals will not be accomplished.

This dynamic is yet another microcosm of structural barriers to creating systems change. The power to implement held by extra-municipal entities is limited. Sustained collaboration in the name of greater equity and justice for all residents is vitally important within municipal planning. Research without implementation is exploitation. Knowledge production processes request labor from community members and promise change in return. Fear expressed by the public that the City would not follow through is an example of the lack of linked social capital, which results from and perpetuates a pattern of unfulfilled responsibility to the public.

5.5 Degraded Linking Social Capital and Top-Down Public Participation

Distrust expressed by participants in the SHJ engagement process is not unique and has a ripple effect. In the participatory process, hierarchy is clear. Stakeholders bring a range of knowledge types. In conventional participation specialist and expert knowledge holds great power, while relational and experiential knowledge holders are disempowered. Arnstein named hierarchical participation that negates relational knowledge types as manipulation and called for power redistribution. The academic planning field is constantly in pursuit of repairing participatory practice. Problems within knowledge validation and exchange lead to inequality between stakeholders:

“The Right to Know is relevant because knowledge about infrastructure projects and their prospective impacts is often lacking among local peoples. This right implies that

¹⁹⁷ University of Massachusetts Professor (Anonymous), “Something You Mentioned...,” July 13, 2020.

*conservation and development researchers and practitioners have a responsibility to return findings in an accessible format, to enable people to make informed decisions about their future. The Right to Participate is relevant because of the importance of public, transparent processes for planning in order to realise sustainable development.”*¹⁹⁸

The Right to Know and the Right to Participate are foundational in participation and engagement. However, much of participation stops at the Right to Know, offering information validated by researchers and practitioners, failing to provide opportunities for knowledge exchange.¹⁹⁹ The issue here becomes the dynamic between specialized, professional knowledge holders and those on the receiving end. The first step towards empowerment is education. Providing information in a collaborative format that values skills beyond specialists’ and technicians’ may be a means to disrupting Business As Usual approaches to engagement. These traditional models serve to deepen inequity and enact slow violence as I will describe below.

In the second iteration of my research, I was focused on social capital acting as a resilience builder in Springfield. All three types of social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking) are important in supporting community resilience building. Due to its isolating requirements, COVID poses a unique challenge to social capital-based support systems. I planned to survey Springfield residents about their social networks during the initial phase of the COVID-19 global pandemic. I designed a survey based on principles outlined in the close persons questionnaire (a survey derived to measure perceived levels of social support.)²⁰⁰ The basis of this approach was to understand what social networks and social connectors in Springfield acted as support systems for people who might be struggling with different aspects of COVID. This is based on the fact

¹⁹⁸Elsa R. H. Mendoza et al., “Revisiting the Knowledge Exchange Train: Scaling up Dialogue and Partnering for Participatory Regional Planning,” *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 57, no. 3 (March 1, 2014): 384–402, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2012.746936>.

¹⁹⁹ Mendoza et al.

²⁰⁰ Stephen Stansfeld and Michael Marmot, “Deriving a Survey Measure of Social Support: The Reliability and Validity of the Close Persons Questionnaire,” *Social Science & Medicine* 35, no. 8 (1992): 1027–1035.

that social resources are valuable resilience builders. I searched for bridging and bonding capital that might be providing emotional and community support. I looked at linking social capital and trust to understand access to municipal resources and information.

I sent the survey out to two thousand people in a newsletter published by Make-it Springfield. I used this contact method based on my understanding that Make-it Springfield was a powerful social connector, acting as a hub for social network development and reinforcement. This reasoning was informed by conversations with Michael DiPasquale (one of the founders of Make-it) and Marla Shelasky (outreach coordinator for Make-it). In my survey pitch, I mentioned that participation in the survey might help Make-it support participants better during these challenging times. This research design offered co-benefits for my own project, Make-it Springfield in understanding how to support social network development, and (theoretically) local planning efforts in supporting social networks that provide social resilience in times of crisis.

Unfortunately, the survey did not get a single response. While this initially felt devastating for my research, it was incredibly telling. An email asking community members of Make-it Springfield to partake in an online survey for mutual benefit went unopened. This shows us that the connection that we hoped and assumed those individuals felt to the organization was far more tenuous than we imagined. I learned through this particular failure that social networks that may have stood up during pre-pandemic times can easily evaporate when the physical hub for these networks is no longer available.

Community members may not have felt motivated to or interested in participating in a survey that suggested possible future benefit when there were urgent tangible concerns in the present. Lack of trust in researchers and institutions could have also produced the absence of survey responses. To this point, the planner I spoke to in Holyoke noted that residents of Holyoke hated being studied.

The issue of research fatigue in both Holyoke and Springfield is not to be disregarded. The same planner is one of many academics, professionals, and community members who have

expressed that residents of Holyoke and Springfield experience research fatigue. As evidenced by my survey attempt, we see that cycles of exploitative research have fostered an environment that does not lend itself to effective reciprocal engagement. This social phenomenon is not only a product of being studied, but also results from “lack of perceptible change attributable to engagement, increasing apathy and indifference toward engagement, and practical barriers.”²⁰¹ Participation without reciprocity is exploitation. Efforts at reciprocity that fail to provide true co-benefits contribute to degraded linking social capital.

All of this is to describe the destructive nature of *Business As Usual* engagement and participation methods. Normalcy represents exploitation and deteriorating trust. The slow violence of *Business As Usual* planning serves not only to silence diverse input, but also to feed resentment and distrust between vulnerable community members and powerholding institutions. The *Great Unraveling* is no wonder.

We must interrogate equity issues present in research, public participation, and community engagement efforts. Despite what planners are taught, equity in engagement must reach far beyond varied meeting times and providing childcare. Equity includes how we ask community members to share their time, energy, knowledge, and experiences with us. Public participation involves asking community members for open and honest labor. By making this request we must make a commitment to listen and honor the requests made. Equity must be centered on sustained reciprocity.

In concept, public participation for planned development is offered to the public as an opportunity to have a say in the future residents want to see. Public participation should be a

²⁰¹ Tom Clark, “‘We’re Over-Researched Here!’: Exploring Accounts of Research Fatigue within Qualitative Research Engagements,” *Sociology* 42, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 967, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508094573>.

means to an end, but unfortunately, all too often it is the end itself.²⁰² Isolated acts of participation without reliable reciprocity do not produce power redistribution. Empowerment begins with education and respect. Participants in engagement processes are often responsible for educating themselves. Initial opinions on issues presented are often rooted in implicit bias and misunderstanding, therefore garnering disrespect of present specialists and professionals. Engagement strategies are most often antagonistic and unproductive in practice.²⁰³ My empty survey is an excellent example of a highly thought out, well-meaning yet entirely unproductive method of community engagement.

Rarely, do we see diverse perspectives and insights through standard public participation measures. Thus, the likelihood that community members' visions get incorporated into a plan is low. The likelihood that a plan including those visions and input ever gets implemented is even lower. *Business As Usual* is failure to gather useful input, as well as insufficient implementation of plans produced through participatory and inclusive measures. This normative pattern wears away trust and faith in government and dismantles linking social capital. Cycles of lackluster engagement and deteriorating trust enact a slow violence that results in soliciting, then silencing community input.

In moments of crisis response within Springfield planning, responding quickly to changing restrictions from the State has often meant speeding past engagement or participation. Pandemic response in Massachusetts has been devised to be a series of phases. Governor Charlie Baker's office has offered a plan including four phases, from "Stay at Home" to "New Normal." Phase 2 calls for cautious re-opening, with a focus on outdoor service provision.²⁰⁴ With the

²⁰² Gordon and Baldwin-Philippi, "Playful Civic Learning."

²⁰³ Innes and Gruber, "Planning Styles in Conflict."

²⁰⁴ "Reopening Massachusetts," Mass.gov, accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>.

reopening of restaurants in Springfield as part of phase 2, equity issues have arisen as a result of lack of engagement. Springfield has participated in the movement happening globally to allow outdoor dining as part of reopening the economy during this global pandemic. Language that centers this shift is a “return to normal.”²⁰⁵ Part of this transition has been the closure of Worthington Street in the Metro Center neighborhood. Metro Center is one of the most socially vulnerable neighborhoods in the city. Members of the Black community associated with Make-it in Springfield have raised frustration that nobody asked them about this decision. Closing Worthington Street has had a negative impact on transportation and access to resources for residents of Metro Center. This was a blatant prioritization of economic needs over those of community members. In my conversation with EcoDev 2, he emphasized the flexibility that has been necessary to initiate outdoor dining and support businesses in that transition. This flexibility has been at the cost of community input opportunities. Whether it was deliberate or negligent I do not know.

In order to build linking social capital, planners must demonstrate commitment to the needs of those whose time, energy, knowledge, and experiences we ask for. Planners make a commitment to listen when we ask individuals to share with us their needs, hardships, wishes, and ideas. However, most public participation is not designed to create space for these conversations and knowledge sharing opportunities. The “empty ritual”²⁰⁶ of public participation and neglect to engage degrades linking social capital. This dynamic is also a product of the pattern between municipal and regional planning agencies. Planning agencies are the organizations making space for community members to discuss systems change, equity, and their trust in government.

²⁰⁵ “Springfield-Area Restaurants Reopen for Outdoor Dining: Here’s a Running List of Those Opening under Phase 2 - Masslive.Com,” accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.masslive.com/massforward/2020/06/which-springfield-area-restaurants-are-open-for-patio-outdoor-dining-a-look-at-coronavirus-phase-2-re-opening.html>.

²⁰⁶ Arnstein, “A Ladder Of Citizen Participation.”

Municipal departments hold implementation power. Ironically, the SHJ plan published by PVPC names this distrust of city government from the public and proposes solutions but did not have the power to implement. Engagement that does not produce perceptible change leads to research fatigue and degrades trust. *Business As Usual* facilitates this extractive framework.

Planning values and validates almost exclusively specialist professional knowledge that accompanies accredited training and expertise resulting from similar traditional training and certification. Public participation is a hot topic in the planning field. I have found that largely, in practice, typical processes subtly undermine equity and power re-distribution within planning and community development.

For a time, I worked as a researcher for a large affordable housing organization based out of Springfield called Wayfinders. I worked with them through the zoning board of appeals (ZBA) process on a Massachusetts General Law 40B (MGL 40B) affordable housing project in Agawam just over the river from Springfield. MGL 40B is designed to facilitate the private development of affordable housing options within a municipality by allowing for case-by-case zoning changes. This process is a housing approach designed to fit well into neoliberal frameworks for social service provision. My experience assisting Wayfinders, the developer, in this process revealed a glaring barrier to producing equitable, open, collaborative community engagement.

Within this micro-scale manifestation of housing provision, inequality emerges in who holds knowledge validated by participating systems, and thus who holds power. Because community members are responsible for educating themselves, their opinions on issues presented are often rooted in implicit bias and misunderstanding. This leads the ZBA and outside developers to disregard their input. Wayfinders ZBA meetings were filled with palpable distrust of professionalism and expertise. Participatory practice has an enormous range of knowledge amongst stakeholders. Holding the least expertise is the public, the very people the process is supposed to serve.

According to a 2016 report, Agawam has just over 4% subsidized housing inventory (well below the 10% Massachusetts minimum), with almost half of those units set to expire in 2019.²⁰⁷ In this report, “Agawam has no planned affordable housing developments at this point in time.”²⁰⁸ Because of Agawam’s extremely low subsidized housing inventory (SHI), the town and community had very little power to stop developers interested in building projects that incorporate affordable units. The required 10% minimum for affordability acts as a channel for developers to easily utilize 40B for zone changes and subsequent development.

40B projects in Massachusetts have a reputation for forcing change on communities through high density development in low-density areas. There have been a series of contentious projects proposed by Wayfinders in Western Massachusetts that have been met with severe hostility and even legal action.²⁰⁹ Much of this hostility is due to stigmas against affordable and subsidized housing, as well as overwhelming resistance to change. Stigmas and resistance to affordable housing add a layer of complexity that I will not delve into in this thesis, but is not to be ignored. This bitter history has made Wayfinders jaded towards the public.

Different 40B projects, depending on their percentage of affordable units and the relationship between the developer and the community, are qualified as “friendly” or “unfriendly” 40Bs. The friendliness of the project also represents how flexible and collaborative the community and committee members perceive the developer to be. Typically, private for-profit

²⁰⁷JK Goldson community preservation +planning, RKG Associates, Inc., and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Town of Agawam Housing Needs Assessment” (Agawam Community Preservation Act, May 4, 2016), <https://www.agawam.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/840/Agawam-Housing-Needs-Assessment-Final-PDF>.

²⁰⁸ JK Goldson community preservation +planning, RKG Associates, Inc., and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 61.

²⁰⁹ “Tenants Finally Able to Move in to New Amherst Housing Project - Masslive.Com,” accessed July 23, 2020, https://www.masslive.com/news/2011/08/tenants_finally_able_to_move_i.html; “‘You People Are Disgusting,’ Ludlow Selectman Brian Mannix Says to Builder of Low-Income Housing - Masslive.Com,” accessed July 23, 2020, https://www.masslive.com/news/2017/06/ludlow_zba_holds_3-hour_hearin.html.

developers are recognized as unfriendly because their goal is profit driven versus mission driven non-profits. Non-profit developers, like Wayfinders, are typically understood to be friendly 40Bs because their goal is to improve and increase the affordable housing stock in a community. When a municipality has an SHI as low as Agawam, the level of need means that the developer is unlikely to be denied. Whether the proposal is friendly or unfriendly, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has little ground to stand on in denying any affordable housing when the need is so great, this also deprives community members of power. The deficit in affordable units in Agawam is where power imbalance starts. Circumstances such as these already put the developer, Wayfinders, in a powerful position that weakens the ZBA and the community.

Pre-existing distrust of developers from community members and ZBA is crucial to understanding the dynamic of power in this situation. Linking capital is absent from developer-public relationships. In public hearings it was easy to hear community members muttering “are you kidding me?” and “yeah right” under their breath as developers, traffic engineers and other experts made their presentation to the ZBA. This, as well as statements made in front of the ZBA disputing this project, is an example of people “caring loudly.”²¹⁰ Because of the distrust and resentment between stakeholders involved in this process, it became hard to separate out how much community resistance was justified distrust and how much was bias, classism, and fear of change. Regardless, the animosity is indicative of degraded linking capital.

The inequality that makes this process such a nightmare and supports the growth of such intense resentment is one of knowledge and power. In theory, participatory practice is meant to give power to community members because they should be able to have some control over their community.

²¹⁰ Lyles and White, “Who Cares?”

Just above the public in the professional knowledge hierarchy is the ZBA. Although the board are not professionals, they have been in this realm of land-use regulation long enough to hold some specific, experiential knowledge. The ZBA is powerful in that they (supposedly) make the ultimate decision. Because of the 10% minimum, the developers are the most powerful group in the room.

Accessibility of the information provided to the public for their independent edification poses an additional barrier. Although meeting minutes and information about 40B are available to the public as well as site plans and engineering information, it is often not easy to understand to those without training. The process of applying for 40B is supposedly transparent, giving community members the opportunity to educate themselves and thus contribute to the conversation. While access to professional knowledge is theoretically available, in practice, participants are responsible for educating themselves. Because of this challenge, developers assume that participant opinions are invalid and uneducated. This leads to boards and outside developers disregarding community input. The production of this type of ‘participation’ is unequal and misrepresents the mission behind the design.

Community members misunderstand their role to be presenting valid arguments in support of or against development, while in reality their comments typically have little to no impact on the decision-making process. Agawam’s ZBA hearings and subsequent development process well illustrate degraded social capital through hierarchical public participation. As the public cared more loudly they were effectively silenced by relevant professional and expert knowledge. This cycle present in conventional public participation feeds the pattern of degraded social capital and power disparity.²¹¹

²¹¹Peter M. Senge, “The Fifth Discipline, the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization,” *Performance + Instruction* 30, no. 5 (1991): 37–37, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.4170300510>.

There are several reasons why community input holds little to no power, the first is the type of project. While project specific reasons pertain to this project, generally, developers enter these negotiations with a team of specialists trained to push proposals and plans through the ZBA or parallel governing body. Hearings also do not happen until a significant amount of time and money has been invested in plan development, moving through bureaucracy, and the purchase of land. For this reason, developers are not open to input, and thus aim to move through hearings as quickly and quietly as possible. Engagement is structurally resistant to open knowledge exchange. Interpretation of knowledge and evidence that is provided in accordance with the public's Right to Know²¹² also causes inequalities. In this context, the public hearing is the stage for knowledge and evidence exchange.²¹³

In advocacy planning, Davidoff saw the role of planner as an intermediary, someone to inform and educate the public and solicit feedback.²¹⁴ The knowledge exchange between stakeholders becomes the responsibility of each individual stakeholder in this context. Variance in interpretation of evidence and knowledge is “impacted by the extent to which the issue area is polarized and contains multiple – sometimes divergent – conceptions of problems and solutions.”²¹⁵ As demonstrated in Agawam, this polarization and resistance to expertise can cause extreme tension and further inhibit productive exchanges of knowledge and evidence. Inequality between stakeholders and the invalidating of non-professional knowledge reinforces the inequality that inhibits knowledge use.

²¹² Mendoza et al., “Revisiting the Knowledge Exchange Train.”

²¹³William L. Allen, “Factors That Impact How Civil Society Intermediaries Perceive Evidence,” Text, May 2017, <https://doi.org/info:doi/10.1332/17442646X14538259555968>.

²¹⁴Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning.”

²¹⁵Allen, “Factors That Impact How Civil Society Intermediaries Perceive Evidence,” 185.

Distrust of professional knowledge poses one of the greatest challenges to this process for the developer. In this particular case in Agawam, a tremendous amount of time during public hearings was dominated by debate about effects on traffic despite a comprehensive study completed by a transportation engineer explained in great detail to the public. Community members, referring to their experiences, were adamant that traffic would be dramatically worsened by the new development. The developer commissioned a study showing that there would be no significant impact on traffic during rush hour. Community members and abutters, speaking from their situated knowledge, were trying to express their perception and experience of traffic having lived nearby. While the issue of traffic congestion seems trivial, it is a reflection of a more complicated dynamic. The ZBA was in the position of having to hear out the public but was bound to the word of specialized professionals. In essence, community resistance was loud but ineffective because of the power of expertise held by Wayfinders. This dynamic silences the public and takes from them the power that participatory processes intend to give them. Reproducing marginalization and widening power disparity is a slow violence.

Public hearings are held to mitigate liability, appeasing the public because of their rights as abutters and community members. The development team entered the process with an assumption that community resistance was due only to implicit bias and resentment towards residents of low-income housing. The position of private developers in areas with a high housing need is divergent to the position of community members and to those that regulate land-use. These circumstances mirror power dynamics between community members and economic development agents. On this scale, participation has done more harm than good. Instead of allowing for community members to contribute to a conversation wherein they express their concerns and enter into dialogue with the developer, stakeholders wrestle over the inevitable development of a housing project that is already in motion.

Repercussions of this failure are pervasive. If a relationship could be built between stakeholders before the hearings themselves, tension and resentment might be less potent. Within

the organization of participatory processes, there is great disparity in income, professional knowledge, education, and material power. Planning and municipal decision-making values technical and professional knowledge almost exclusively. Positioning planners in the role of the translator between the public and the technical experts is counterproductive. Beginning with the Right to Know we must prioritize empowerment through the exchange of knowledge. We must find ways to speak the language of our communities by validating and valuing different knowledges and knowledge types instead of toning community voices down and translating perspectives. The way that we receive overt expressions of care and concern from stakeholders, if not handled carefully, can reinforce the “emotional paradox.”²¹⁶ Situational, social, and emotional knowledges, in particular, are extremely important to the development of healthy community relationships.²¹⁷ Resentments illustrated by this particular process are not special. They are mirrored in many municipal-community relationships.

This is not a disaster or public health specific participation process. However, this speaks to dominant linking social capital dynamics. Formative in planning literature, Sherry Arnstein’s *Ladder Of Citizen Participation* theorizes that if we want equity, we want to empower residents.²¹⁸ Discussions about affordable housing in Agawam are an excellent example of disempowering residents. The decision was made long before the public was even notified of the meetings. Like many other public participation processes, this ZBA process was “legally required, even though legislative, budgetary, scheduling, or technical parameters of the decision sharply confine the range of choices that are available to be made in conjunction with the

²¹⁶ Lyles and White, “Who Cares?”

²¹⁷ Lyles and White.

²¹⁸ Arnstein, “A Ladder Of Citizen Participation.”

public.”²¹⁹ All stakeholders present at these meetings arrived at this conversation with different purposes, which inevitably led to the sense of having been misled among the less powerful.²²⁰ Although collaborative public participation processes do exist, the overwhelming majority of municipal-public interfaces are open meeting style, like this.

Business As Usual public participation, antagonistic by nature, is disempowering and erodes linking social capital. This deterioration can produce negative consequences for disaster resilience and the construction of collaborative dynamics within communities. Reduced linking capital can result in greater slow violence exacted upon vulnerable and already marginalized populations in general and during crisis. Attritional distrust and disappointment that individuals who attempt to engage in platforms like this feel is devastating to sustained engagement and future resilience. Developers and private entities met with this hostility do everything in their power to move through the process with as little public input as possible. The SHJ report illustrates tenuous confidence in government that results from overpromising and under sustaining engagement. This ties back to reciprocity, and our responsibilities as planners.

Business As Usual public participation is bureaucratic, non-iterative, and under sustained. Situational, social, emotional, and experiential knowledges are valuable, but undervalued in traditional planning. Professionalism and expertise are often used to silence the experiences of vulnerable individuals and communities. Silencing and disregarding community input is an act of slow violence that robs power from those already disadvantaged in hierarchies. Processes such as the one illustrated above are representative of engagement void of care. Structures of traditional engagement such as this offer no opportunity or incentive to powerholders to challenge them. This is no magnificent moment of injustice, but a form of slow disempowerment and degradation

²¹⁹ John M. Bryson et al., “Designing Public Participation Processes,” *Public Administration Review* 73, no. 1 (2013): 26–27.

²²⁰ Bryson et al., “Designing Public Participation Processes.”

of trust. When disaster strikes it is too late to build new trust, therefore inhibiting pathways for care and engagement in crisis response. Without those pathways, the slow violence of inequitable crisis response void of care continues to deepen disparity and enact harm. Common public participation frameworks facilitate this slow violence. To change these processes and outcomes would require defying *Business As Usual* practices by engaging the public earlier, practicing transparency, committing to redistributing power, and validating situated knowledges.

5.6 Illusions of Objectivity in Planning

Planning theory reckons with antagonism within public participation, coded bias, and knowledge co-production. My observations and conversations are not particularly unique. Based on my level of experience, I understand that I have not tapped into some secret. However, as a recent graduate of a planning Master's program, I am poised to enter a field that is complicit in destructive and violent patterns. What I seek to underscore is that every day planning can undermine efforts to lift up equity and inspire change. In the white imaginary, racism is "a series of similar, visible, and immediately recognizable acts."²²¹ In this perception, insidious forms of racism, violence, and disempowerment do not garner intervention or response. *Business As Usual*, which requires the maintenance of violent and oppressive systems, may not seem racist under this framework. Advocacy, Equity, and Antisubordination planning theories begin to address mundane violence enacted through *Business As Usual* without actively naming that violence.

Although theories including and derived from Equity and Advocacy planning challenge systems and the role of the planner, these concepts live mostly in the theoretical realm. For this reason, they cannot affect significant change in practice. Much of these theories is based in challenging positivist frameworks for planning. For this section, I will draw upon my experience

²²¹ Lamiyah Bahrainwala, "The Web of White Disengagement," *Women & Language* 43, no. 1 (2020): 135.

standing on the fence between student and practitioner, directly observing the disconnect between theory and practice.

The very justification for Davidoff's Advocacy Planning was the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The UMass school of planning has been around for over half a century, and yet, again "The massing of voices protesting racial discrimination have roused the nation."²²² Racial and social injustice that Davidoff called out still exists, though it may look slightly different. Davidoff was right about the deeply political nature of planning and the need for it to empower the public in responding to the calls of social movements and inequities.

Planning education and practice are founded on positivist frameworks.²²³ Searching for objectivity, we remove people from their socio-economic locations as well as their "situated and embodied knowledges."²²⁴ This removal is violent; "planning is thus critiqued for distilling objective 'truths' within a framework boiled down to the dominant worldview of the white, male gaze."²²⁵ Rooted in objectivity, planners are complicit in western, colonial, oppressive agendas while flattening the multi-dimensionality of socio-cultural life. Erasure of diverse knowledges through silencing and translation is violent. Planners see themselves, as Davidoff rejected, in the role of technician. We see this in public participation with the presence of an emotional paradox, as planners cling to ideals of professionalism and expertise. As described by literary theorist Stanley Fish, "The choice is never between objectivity and interpretation but between an interpretation that is unacknowledged as such and an interpretation that is at least aware of

²²²Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning."

²²³ Victoria Ho, "Planning for Food Justice: Addressing Conflict and Community Farm Governance through Participatory Action Video," 2018; Ivis García, "Adaptive Leadership and Social Innovation: Overcoming Critical Theory, Positivism, and Postmodernism in Planning Education," *EJournal of Public Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2018): 19–35.

²²⁴ Ho, "Planning for Food Justice"; Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.

²²⁵ Ho, "Planning for Food Justice," 22.

itself.”²²⁶ Professing to practice objectivity actually distances us from self-awareness of our complicity in biased systems or practices.

Positivism and objectivity in planning often advances a political agenda. Examples of this false neutrality include the increase in police presence in public space and prioritization of economic growth in Springfield. These are political acts. Seemingly technical in practice, if we step back and take a larger look, planners are facilitating a political agenda that is intertwined with slow violence.

Helen Caulton-Harris, Director of Health and Human Services for the City of Springfield, recently pointed out in an op-ed that “that racism thrives because of the silence of the majority and their reluctance to stand up and be counted, quietly condones it.”²²⁷ Caulton-Harris speaks to the harm caused by silence. Illusions of objectivity in planning lead to complacency and an inability for planners to take responsibility for our role. Unless one is being actively anti-racist, an individual is perpetuating racism.²²⁸ Similarly, unless planners are centering equity, they are participating in the violent reproduction of inequity.

While the first step of acknowledging our political role is still not widely happening, it may be challenging to imagine pursuing the more active Equity or Antisubordination Planning. Resisting inequitable development processes and power redistribution feels outside the realm of possibility. These systematic approaches to actively undoing injustice within our communities are neither widely happening nor unfolding in my case study of Springfield.

²²⁶ Stanley Eugene Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Harvard University Press, 1980), 167.

²²⁷ “Springfield Office on Racial Equity to Tackle Policies on Health, Workforce Development,” *masslive*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.masslive.com/news/2020/06/new-springfield-office-on-racial-equity-to-tackle-policies-on-health-workforce-development-and-opportunities-for-all.html>.

²²⁸ Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (One world, 2019).

By refusing to acknowledge the political role of the planner, we weaken ourselves and become part of the problem. Moreover, we reduce pathways for racially, socially, culturally, politically or otherwise diverse individuals to pursue planning as a profession. My experience in professional training to become a planner was disillusioning for a number of reasons. First of all, my classmates were majority men, majority white, and often passively apolitical. Apoliticism held by those in power is slowly violent by continuing to allow the attritional effects of the *Great Unraveling* to harm vulnerable people. I was drawn to planning through my passion for affordable housing. I hoped I would be surrounded by individuals passionate about searching for equitable approaches to change and social transformation. Yet, for whatever reason, I was one of only two individuals in my program consistently bringing up issues of equity and justice and asking my classmates to think critically. Acknowledging our political role and thinking critically means a commitment to engaging with complex injustices that may make us uncomfortable.

Our planning program offers three concentrations, plus an additional student designed option. Options are Community and Equity Planning, Land Use and Environmental Planning, and Economic and Regional Development Planning. This framework lends itself to an understanding that equity is a specialization rather than a framework to approach all planning efforts. Equity as a specialization poses problems for several reasons. First of all, if equity is explored separately from other "concentrations" in planning, applying equity across other focus areas will be a difficult afterthought. Unique issues of inequity exist and must be explored in land use, environmental, economic, and regional development planning. Beyond this, if planners are learning about the aforementioned topics without discussing related equity considerations, they may participate in the production of injustice within those fields. Consequentially, specialized graduates assume planning positions and leave equity to someone else. Equity is a framework, not a specialty, it must be integrated into all facets of professional programs.

The dearth of preparedness for effectively incorporating equity into planning education arises in other settings as well. For instance, for a final group project in one of my classes, I

joined the Equity and Empowerment group. I was one of three members; the other two members of my group were older men. I initially proposed we base our project on a contentious education budgeting process happening in Holyoke. This topic dealt with complex power dynamics within Holyoke relating to ethnic and racial segregation, historical bias, and owner-renter tension regarding taxes. Education in Holyoke is an equity, access, and service issue. My groupmates were averse to pursuing this topic, as they were made uncomfortable by it. One of my group members expressed that he did not know much about it and thus would rather do something else. We ended up designing an abysmal public participation process more focused on conservation than equity. I am frustrated that rather than educate or challenge himself, he asked us to change the topic to accommodate his comfort level. In order to begin a dialogue about racialized oppression in our field, we must get comfortable with being uncomfortable.²²⁹ Discomfort is necessary in creating change.²³⁰

An interaction with another classmate who followed a non-equity specialization struck me as indicative of the problems with specializing equity. In a presentation, I shared the history and theory of carceral geographies and the surveillance state, rooted in violence and racism. Following presentations, a classmate turned to me and one other classmate (who had also presented on injustices in planning) to say something along the lines of: someday when I am the planner for some town, I am going to call you guys, and have you check me on my bias. In the moment, I was flattered, glad to feel as though I was being recognized for my equitable thought process. However, upon further reflection, I became discouraged and frustrated. That individual is

²²⁹Jacob S. Bennett, "Fostering Relational Trust to Engage White Teachers and Researchers on Reflections of Race, Power, and Oppression," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 86 (November 2019): 102896, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102896>.

²³⁰Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*.

responsible for checking his own bias. In planner education, it should not be possible to avoid engaging with equity, race, and justice.

Treating equity like a specialization suggests that one individual can and should resolve the issues perpetuating inequity and hold collective accountability. The burden of undoing embedded implicit and systemic bias cannot be shouldered by one individual. Referring back to my previous point, equity frameworks must be applied in context-specific ways across topics and fields. An equity specialist may struggle to apply those principles to specific issues of transportation planning or a unique issue in a land-use decision. Specializing equity leads to the belief that *someone else* is responsible for equity considerations. This dynamic produces the silence of the majority that Caulton-Harris pointed out and allows systemic racism to thrive. Silence is a violence. It often operates apolitically unless challenged by an equity specialist, which is an unacceptable approach to planning. We must interrupt this *Business As Usual* practice by tackling implicit bias and looking to increase equitable processes and outcomes in all dimensions of planning. We can increase capacity for equity by adding equity dimensions to all planning specializations in professional degree programs.

Equity specialization poses one more additional challenge. Being an equity advocate in a sea of technicians who are attached to conceptions of objectivity is exhausting. This issue touches on two problems I identify, 1) lack of collective accountability, and 2) tokenism. In the case of Springfield, white cisgender men dominate municipal government. Vulnerable groups are underrepresented in local government relative to white and affluent residents. As an extension, underrepresented groups are often less likely to have their needs and preferences reflected in and met by local government.²³¹ My own graduate program was no different, dominated by white

²³¹ Brian F. Schaffner, Jesse H. Rhodes, and Raymond J. La Raja, *Hometown Inequality: Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

men. Other students in my program representing marginalized identities frequently expressed frustration about representation. Lack of representative diversity in combination with specializing equity leads to a sea of homogenous planners with no understanding of, responsibility for, or interest in equity.

Despite the importance of representation, improving representative diversity does not excuse white planners from addressing equity issues. Stopping at representation is a form of tokenization. Tokens are “symbolic gestures that result in presence without genuine inclusion.”²³² In the planning context, this manifests as improving departmental diversity but neglecting to require anti-racism from non-Black planners. It is tokenism to hire Black planners and economic development officers and expect them to be equity specialists. A tactic for maintaining *Business As Usual* practice is improving diversity and claiming equity, while avoiding challenging systems. Prison abolitionist scholar Angela Davis uncouples representation and anti-racism: “We [Black people] can be included within an institution that remains as racist and as patriarchal as it was before we were included.”²³³ We must go beyond inclusion and specialization towards comprehensive equity frameworks. If equity is a specialization, it is a burden on one individual or department; if equity is a framework, the load is shared. *Business As Usual* planning lends itself to the equity-specialist framework wherein we see lack of collective accountability and tokenism. With this most insufficient approach to equity, institutions can remain, just as discriminatory as ever and reproduce slow violence.

I observed some of this tokenism in Springfield. Upon bringing up recent uprisings, white interviewees directed me towards people of color within the departments. To close, I asked

²³² Ruthie-Marie Beckwith, Mark G. Friedman, and James W. Conroy, “Beyond Tokenism: People With Complex Needs in Leadership Roles: A Review of the Literature,” *Inclusion* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 137–55, <https://doi.org/10.1352/2326-6988-4.3.137>.

²³³ “‘What about Justice?’ Angela Davis Talks beyond Inclusion - The Panther Online,” accessed July 25, 2020, <https://www.thepantheronline.com/news/justice-angela-davis-talks-beyond-inclusion>.

interviewees: What have the conversations regarding the recent uprisings looked like in your work environment? My intent was to get a sense of the professional discourse surrounding individual and systemic racism in these departments. This question is important because of the political role of the planner cited by Davidoff. To avoid discussing these issues in a professional context is a denial of responsibility, embodying the violence of silence. Obligations to act objectively or apolitically may be motivations for avoiding this topic in professional settings.

Overwhelmingly, planners and EcoDev staff responded that the topic had not been addressed in a professional or policy context in any capacity. Planner 1 told me that uprisings have not been addressed from a policy perspective, although he has had “serious in-depth conversations ‘off-line’ with several of my closer coworkers.”²³⁴ In fact, municipal staff all told me similar stories of individual side conversations. Planner 2 told me that issues related to uprisings have not really been discussed in the office. EcoDev 1 told me that the Mayor’s office has made space for self-care for staff of color, prioritizing resources for support. Planner 3 actually framed his response through public safety. He told me that the mayor and police commissioner were trying to get out in front and that Springfield has been mostly peaceful. These responses display an absence of professional engagement with causality of uprisings, including racism, justice, and violence. Processing this movement unfolded on the individual level rather than through professional planning settings. Diverting topics such as these to the individual level takes power for change from them. Mentions of individual conversations allude to engagement with these topics, but structures of professional planning do not lend themselves to departmental conversations on these topics.

After this question, several interviewees recommended I speak to Planner 2, a Black planner in the department. When I spoke to Planner 2, he described his role as specializing in

²³⁴ Planner 1 (Anonymous), “Thank You!,” June 24, 2020, 1.

historic preservation, as the number two person on maps (GIS), and in collaboration with the office of housing. It was not Planner 2's responsibility to discuss race with me. It was, however, troubling that his colleagues passed the topic of race onto him rather than discuss it with me directly. This is known as "Tokenism or being utilized as an exemplar to speak and act on behalf of your entire group, a proving culture, being othered, and being put on the periphery."²³⁵

Tokenism is not only burdensome and exhausting but is often also dehumanizing and silencing. Asking colleagues to think about equity is labor that makes people necessarily uncomfortable.²³⁶ This responsibility is challenging, alienating, and can result in fatigue. While departmental diversity is important for representation reasons, diversity is not a valid approach to equity planning.²³⁷ Objective planning frameworks allow for tokenism by flattening equity to an issue of representation. This allows and even encourages apoliticism from those planners who do not hold marginalized identities.

EcoDev 1, a person of color in Economic Development, told me that she felt very supported by her coworkers, and that Mayor Sarno had been expressing a great deal of support for city staff to take time to care for themselves. This is important and valuable on an individual level. However, systematically isolating political issues to the level of the individual keeps conversations from challenging systems, procedures, or practices of oppression. Public servants such as municipal staff are held to relatively high standards of objectivity.²³⁸ Obligations to maintain objectivity stand as a barrier to open conversation regarding what may seem to be

²³⁵ Dian D. Squire, "'It's Pretty Essential': A Critical Race Counter-Narrative of Faculty of Color Understandings of Diversity and Equity in Doctoral Admissions," *The Urban Review* 52, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 173–97, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00523-4>.

²³⁶ Walsh, "White Fragility as an Obstacle to Anti-Racist Resilience Planning."

²³⁷ J. Shim, "Token Fatigue: Tolls of Marginalization in White Male Spaces," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 0, no. 0 (June 16, 2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1779947>.

²³⁸ Richard Mulgan, "Truth in Government and the Politicization of Public Service Advice," *Public Administration* 85, no. 3 (2007): 569–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00663.x>.

political topics. I was struck by the professional silence surrounding racial tensions and racialized violence interviewees expressed.

This silence harkens back to Dr. Annalise Fonza's dissertation findings of Springfield during urban renewal. Fonza noted the absence of acknowledgement of the nationwide civil rights movement in planning documents in Springfield. Based on my interviews, repetition of this kind of public departmental silence on racial injustice appears again. Illusions of objectivity in *Business As Usual* facilitate apoliticism and the absence of professional conversations regarding issues of violent racial inequity. Three of my interviewees, none of whom were planners, introduced questions of equity into the conversation. Importantly, such quietness within municipal planning produces slow violence and allows deepening systemic inequities.

The American Institute of Certified Planners' (AICP) code of ethics, revised in 2016, offers both aspirations as well as rules of conduct, followed by disciplinary measures regarding violating rules of misconduct. The code clearly states that there is no system of accountability for planners surrounding aspirational principles. Aspirational principle number one is planners' "Overall Responsibility To The Public." Social justice is mentioned as an aspect of this aspiration, as well as being conscious of the rights of others. This section also calls for working to improve choice, which is a nod to Krumholz's Equity planning principles.²³⁹ Importantly, in the final aspirational principle regarding planners' responsibility to our colleagues and our profession, planners are called to "systematically and critically analyze ethical issues in the practice of planning."²⁴⁰ In this framework, planners are called to abstractly aspire to justice and equity, but guidelines of practice provide no rigorous frameworks to accomplish this goal. Disconnects like

²³⁹ Krumholz, "A Retrospective View of Equity Planning Cleveland 1969–1979."

²⁴⁰ "AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct," 3.

this beg equity considerations of planners but offer no accountability measures to ensure responsibility for justice-oriented practice.²⁴¹

Planners are trained to and tasked with thinking across disciplines about complex systems. Right now, planners are operating in a space of global crisis and yet, they are operating within the *Business As Usual* paradigm, situated within objectivity. Throughout my planning education, and in my research and external conversations, the political role of the planner has become clear. Parallel to this understanding, I have observed an active rejection of that political responsibility. The illusion of objectivity and neutrality has been challenged by academics for over half a century. Yet, equity and justice through political reckoning in planning remain overwhelmingly in the aspirational abstract, driven by specialists, rather than widely integrated into practice.

5.7 Violence & Inaction

Absence of care frameworks in disaster response planning due to over-reliance on economic development, disconnect between research and implementation and antagonistic public participation causing lacking linking social capital, and illusions of objectivity in planning compounded with one another paint a worrisome picture. Standing alone, each one of these trends may seem unremarkable. However, altogether these factors constitute and maintain *Business As Usual* practice in planning. Individual care may be present, however if that care is not legible to a variety of individual stakeholders and does not affect process or decision making, it appears absent. Aforementioned trends, present in Springfield, are important elements in the violent history of planning. While overt elements of racism may not be modern mandates of the

²⁴¹ Wes Grooms, "The 'Just City' or Just a City? : Evaluating Social Justice and Equity in Planning Education.," *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, August 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/3052>.

profession, *Business As Usual* practices as outlined above enable dispossession and breakage of social contracts regarding reciprocal rights.

*“We don’t own anything...There’s a social contract that we all have, that if you steal, or if I steal, then the person who is the authority comes in, and they fix the situation. But the person who fixes the situation is killing us. So, the social contract is broken.... You broke the contract when you killed us in the streets and didn’t give a f***. You broke the contract when for 400 years we played your game and built your wealth, you broke the contract when we built our wealth again on our own by our bootstraps in Tulsa and you dropped bombs on us, when we built it in Rosewood and you came in and slaughtered us.”*²⁴² -Kimberly Latrice Jones, regarding Black Lives Matter Uprisings

A social contract, like the one purported by Jones, delineates reciprocal rights, responsibilities, and accountability between citizens and their state.²⁴³ Planners, acting on behalf of the state, have broken this social contract over and over again in this country. We broke the contract by using zoning to reproduce lawful segregation.²⁴⁴ We broke the contract when we disinvested in public housing and redirected funds towards private homeownership and wealth building for white Americans.²⁴⁵ We broke the contract when we deemed communities of color blighted and built highways through them.²⁴⁶ We have broken the social contract for over a century by ignoring and neglecting calls for racial justice, while continuing to build wealth around and on the backs and bodies of communities and individuals of color.²⁴⁷ We have

²⁴²*How Can We Win?*

²⁴³Karen O’Brien, Bronwyn Hayward, and Fikret Berkes, “Rethinking Social Contracts: Building Resilience in a Changing Climate,” *Ecology and Society* 14, no. 2 (2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26268331>.

²⁴⁴Jonathan Zasloff, “The Price of Equality: Fair Housing, Land Use, and Disparate Impact,” *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, no. 3 (2017): 98; Steve Babson, David Elsila, and Dave Riddle, *Color of Law: Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights* (Detroit, UNITED STATES: Wayne State University Press, 2010), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=3416462>.

²⁴⁵Katharine G. Bristol, “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 44, no. 3 (1991): 163–171.

²⁴⁶Jeffrey Brown, “A Tale of Two Visions: Harland Bartholomew, Robert Moses, and the Development of the American Freeway,” *Journal of Planning History* 4, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 3–32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538513204272856>.

²⁴⁷Triece, “Constructing the Antiracial City”; “Fifty Years Later, What the Kerner Report Tells Us about Race in Chicago Today.”

participated in the construction of deep socio-economic, specifically racial inequity in the United States.

We are breaking this contract based on mutual care and accountability now by continuing *Business As Usual*, perpetuating mundane patriarchy and white supremacy. We are breaking this social contract now by allowing decision making to happen within our departments, our cities, and our communities without deliberately and constantly fighting to correct injustices and dismantle the systems of oppression that we participate in.²⁴⁸ We break the contract by supporting the construction of carceral geographies, we break the contract by allowing the design and implementation of defensible space.²⁴⁹ We break the contract by focusing on economic development and state sponsored gentrification instead of equitable access to public and green space, housing, education, and much more. We break the contract by tokenizing people of color rather than charging ourselves and our colleagues with the responsibility of all becoming advocates for equity.

Planners hold authority positions in municipal governments and materially shape experiences through place and policy.²⁵⁰ Despite acknowledging race, we have done little to address or disrupt the injustice and inequities within our field.²⁵¹ Urban landscapes are battlegrounds for a very specific and systemic form of violence against Black people and people of color. All crises, environmental, economic, public health, or social, are disproportionately violent against communities of color as a result of the racism underpinning these systems.²⁵² As

²⁴⁸ Edward G. Goetz, Rashad A. Williams, and Anthony Damiano, “Whiteness and Urban Planning,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 86, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 142–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1693907>.

²⁴⁹ Anne Bonds, “Race and Ethnicity I: Property, Race, and the Carceral State,” *Progress in Human Geography* 43, no. 3 (June 1, 2019): 574–83, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517751297>.

²⁵⁰ “American Planning Association.”

²⁵¹ Triece, “Constructing the Antiracial City.”

²⁵² C. S. Ponder and Mikael Omstedt, “The Violence of Municipal Debt: From Interest Rate Swaps to Racialized Harm in the Detroit Water Crisis,” *Geoforum*, July 26, 2019,

planners, we need to hold our practices up for review and search for meaningful change. As my research demonstrates, our legacy of inaction is unacceptable.

Beyond the inaction described above, planning actively collaborates with institutions that represent and produce racialized violence. Planning relies heavily on police for the enforcement of land-use law and the surveillance of public space. Protect and serve framing is built into municipal institutions by nature of affiliation with police and judicial systems. To extend the aphorism, public safety frameworks in the United States are designed “to protect and serve whiteness.”²⁵³ Surveillance and police power are complex themes that exist firmly with *Business As Usual* as systems of social control that benefit some and enact violence upon others. Rendered in color-blind rhetoric, these methods are acts of violence that further histories of anti-Black violence and contribute to the *Great Unraveling*. I understand that references to embedded social control and violence may not have been intended to be destructive. However, this language is representative of membership in structures that disproportionately prosecute and harm people of color and Black people in this country. How we reckon with our deployment of surveillance and police power in planning requires the critical systems thinking and pursuit of social justice called for in the AICP code of ethics.

In Springfield and greater Western Massachusetts, I found *Business As Usual* planning and subsequent implementation to be bound to economic development, antagonistic to knowledge co-production, and inflexible within the confines of bureaucracy. There is little space for reciprocity, mutual benefit, and equity in planning happening at the local level. For these reasons, communities are paralyzed, harboring and reproducing deep spatial and socio-economic inequity. Planner 1 told me that the department spends most of their time “helping people through the red

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.07.009>; Warren et al., “Letter to HHS Re Racial Disparities in COVID Response,” March 27, 2020.

²⁵³ Burton, “To Protect and Serve Whiteness.”

tape of government/permitting.”²⁵⁴ This understanding of the planners’ role is that of technicians or translators.²⁵⁵ This speaks to a capacity and structure issue that gives planners little flexibility. Despite calls from community organizers, faith groups, and non-profit organizations for equity considerations and systems change, planners are siloed into reactive responsibilities, inhibiting their ability to enact change within their communities.

It may feel uncomfortable to hold up the planning field and name our complicity in violence, but we have to begin looking at the field as an actor in larger *Business As Usual* systems. Redistributive justice is a process, and planning practice is upholding structures that prevent empowerment and change. *Business As Usual* planning depends on the maintenance of systems that produce the aforementioned slow violence. Womanist civil rights activist and author Audre Lorde recognized the need to abandon the systems that created our current situation, “For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”²⁵⁶ In our *Great Turning* we must turn away from the systems that have created the violent inequity we see around us today. The *Turning* must begin with an active undoing of systems binding planners to bureaucracy and objectivity.

In line with many of the public facing municipal efforts around the country to acknowledge uprisings, Springfield has made some changes. For example, on June 16th, 2020, Mayor of Springfield Domenic Sarno announced his plans to form an office of Racial Equity to address issues of health, workforce development, and opportunity for the city of Springfield. According to his announcement, the office is to consist of one person who will be responsible for

²⁵⁴ Planner 1 (Anonymous), “Thank You!,” June 24, 2020.

²⁵⁵ Davidoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning.”

²⁵⁶ Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* 1 (1984): 10–14.

connecting with community organizations, gathering data and information on inequity and discrimination, and evaluating racism training within city departments. This approach is specializing equity instead of charging the entire municipality with prioritizing equity. The announcement article published by MassLive closed by naming all of the minority department heads within the city. This conclusion implies that representation and diversity is equity, ringing of tokenism.²⁵⁷ The office is still in the development stage and may bring positive change to Springfield. Yet, it is important to note that small, symbolic gestures, if ineffective, can do more harm than good by encouraging complacency moving forward.

There is not one solution to racialized slow violence in our communities. The very nature of this thesis is meant to illustrate the diverse manifestations of *Business As Usual* as the framework within Springfield operates. I have presented my research, experiences and observations alongside wider studies that show the larger resonance of these issues. My research has only reinforced the need to examine complicity in planning practice and to challenge planners to act as facilitators of equity rather than aides of oppressive structures. This moment, amidst a global pandemic, in the wake of nationwide uprisings and collective consciousness raising, is a window of opportunity. Some cities in the United States have made radical moves, such as reparations, to begin undoing the injustice embedded in our nation by racist policies.²⁵⁸ “Embracing change is at the heart of resiliency.”²⁵⁹ This *Great Unraveling* compels us to reimagine and rebuild planning education and practices to meet our aspirations and augment equity and justice in our communities. Indeed, this is an opportunity to embrace change, mitigate racist practices, and adopt comprehensive equity frameworks.

²⁵⁷“Springfield Office on Racial Equity to Tackle Policies on Health, Workforce Development.”

²⁵⁸ Neil Vigdor, “North Carolina City Approves Reparations for Black Residents,” *The New York Times*, July 16, 2020, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/us/reparations-asheville-nc.html>.

²⁵⁹ Bergstrand et al., “Assessing the Relationship Between Social Vulnerability and Community Resilience to Hazards.”

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In order to stop the destructive processes in planning, it is important to understand what those processes are in the first place. My research suggests that processes at the core of planning may themselves be undermining the planning profession's aspirations to be socially progressive and just. These destructive processes in planning can be understood as the five themes that I discovered in my field research in local planning departments. In essence, I argue that the planning processes in the departments that I studied suffered from 1) Absence of Care, 2) Over-reliance On Economic Development, 3) Disconnect Between Research and Implementation, 4) Degraded Linking Social Capital and Top-Down Public Participation and 5) Illusions of Objectivity in Planning, which contributed to slow violence. These themes show that much planning as it happens in practice is *Business As Usual* where old traditions persist and change is very difficult. These themes perpetuate and sustain one another.

In her article, *The Slow Violence of Climate Change*, Sara Nelson asks: "If justice requires the capacity to judge, to allocate responsibility for wrongdoing, how is climate justice to be achieved in an institution that requires the consent of those who bear the lion's share of that responsibility?"²⁶⁰ I beg the same question of racial justice in planning in the United States at this moment. Our planning systems are not holding themselves accountable for wrongdoing and enabling wrongdoing so they must change. If we are to challenge the systems of oppression in which planners are complicit, we must look beyond dispersed symbolic actions towards, to borrow from Drs. Macy and Johnstone, a *Great Turning* along three dimensions.

First, we must engage in holding actions. These center on stopping destructive processes and raising awareness about them by drawing connections between their diverse elements.

²⁶⁰ Nelson, "The Slow Violence of Climate Change."

Speaking out through protest and stopping our complicity in oppression are holding actions. Participating in dynamic research and writing, such as this thesis, represents another kind of holding action.

Second, we must focus on and support life-sustaining systems and practices. This entails a shift in wherein we reallocate our resources on a systemic level. Actions that are life-sustaining include re-directing investment and energy into processes directed by ethical considerations that offer social co-benefits. In the case of Springfield, an example of this would be reaching out to small, vulnerable businesses to offer support, instead of requiring businesses to seek out help in times of need. Such a change in process centers aspirational principles of justice, equity, and paying special attention to the interrelatedness of issues.²⁶¹

Third, we must shift our collective consciousness. This requires us to imagine alternatives that do not yet exist, to imagine *radically just* realities, and to engage with the people around us on how to get there.²⁶² Shifting consciousness towards imagining radically just alternatives requires us to have difficult conversations to acknowledge the injustice in which we are embedded. This dimension of change calls for the undoing of *Business As Usual* through care frameworks.

There are, of course, no simple solutions to overcoming the *Business As Usual* practice currently sustaining social injustices in planning. Rather, a *Turning* calls for acknowledging and undoing systems of oppression. Given the aspirations of AICP and the need for change I propose a processual approach to challenging these dynamics with five elements: 1) Acknowledge Our Past, 2) Reject Illusions Of Objectivity, 3) Collectively Identify Injustices And Define Resilience, 4) Center Care Frameworks, and 5) Invest In Implementation Of Research Findings.

²⁶¹ “AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.”

²⁶² Macy and Johnstone, *Active Hope*.

Just as the slow violence that I have brought attention to in this thesis is not explicitly in your face but persistent, so are the injustices embedded in *Business As Usual* planning practice. Correspondingly, the solution to slow injustices is addressing the ordinary. Through these actions, planning as a profession can begin to participate in the *Great Turning*.

The first step in bringing about positive change is acknowledging our past and understanding where we are today. As such, part of planner education must offer an in-depth history and understanding of the inequality in our country today and the forces that led us here. We must discuss the power of space and place. Planners need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. It is unacceptable for a planner to not understand or feel able to speak publicly about the power dynamics that exist within their workplace and field. Critical thinking is a crucial skill when it comes to human services. Accordingly, planners must learn to interrogate their own perceptions of the world around them, understand their own positionalities, and challenge the status quo. *Business As Usual* is built upon the understanding of the world as “just the way things are,”²⁶³ and thus responding by finding a place within the world rather than imagining it any differently. Acknowledging and thinking critically about our world is the only way to enter it hoping to have any real impact.

Rejecting illusions of objectivity is a result of interrogating our positionalities. Once planners have examined the history of the profession with a critical eye, it is impossible to see planners as anything other than political actors. Along with understanding this role comes accountability. Great responsibility stems from understanding our actions as furthering or inhibiting a political agenda. Antisubordination planning calls upon planners to see the social stratification that exists across the United States and commit ourselves to pursuing equal protection for all people, which is dependent on addressing social stratification. In practice, this

²⁶³ Macy and Johnstone, 15.

means acting to stop practices that worsen existing inequality while prioritizing actions that directly focus on remedying disparities.²⁶⁴ As a framework, this requires that we hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable for their practices. This burden cannot fall on one equity specialist or on individuals within our departments that represent marginalized populations. Rather, this is a framework to be applied by each and every individual working in a planning field. Distancing ourselves from our political role is a move away from justice.

The next step, in tandem with the previous two, is to collectively identify present and persistent injustices and define resilience. Compounding injustices in our world erode the wellbeing of us all. Climate, social, racial, and environmental justices are intertwined. The *Great Unraveling* is the violent result of the combination of these intertwined injustices. Without common understandings of these injustices, we cannot hope to combat them. Importantly, this requires clarifying what resilience means in the context of intersecting injustices. Resilience can mean the preservation of systems and landscapes the way they are, thereby maintaining the injustices that persist. The idea of “Building Back Better”²⁶⁵ that exists within planning often overlooks the key question: better for whom? *Better* must be for those that are oppressed and immobilized by injustice. Implementation of policies by planning and similar institutions are disproportionately violent upon those who are already facing compounding hardships. In order to begin the move towards equity, we must collectively name the inequities we wish to address. Ambiguity surrounding language of justice and resilience allows for dispersed interpretations and altogether avoidance of the topics. Along with acknowledging the past comes a reckoning with the present.

²⁶⁴ Steil, “Antisubordination Planning.”

²⁶⁵ Chaeri Kim, “Richards: Regreening the Built Environment: Nature, Green Space, and Sustainability,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 380–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1601966>.

Centering care and compassion is a necessary shift needed in the planning profession. Valuing the quality of relationships and care, understanding and valuing relational logics, and searching for social transformation instead of pathways to normalcy can facilitate such changes. Violence and injustice are not just technical, they are situational, social, emotional and experiential. In order to humanize our communities, we must validate multiple forms of knowledge and center an ethic of care in our work and our understanding of the world. It is particularly important to foreground care and compassion when we are asking for labor from vulnerable populations who are often the targets of institutional silencing. Planners are frequently the recipients of community resistance, however, if we meet this with harsh, rational professionalism, we produce the very antagonism we suffer from.

Samaria Rice, bereaved mother of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy murdered by police, articulated this in a public meeting about community policing in Cleveland. After Ms. Rice stated that police departments need a culture shift, a police officer asked her “how can you help us do that [fix the way that police think]?” Ms. Rice laughed and responded in disbelief “how can I help y'all do that?”²⁶⁶ At this moment, a police officer, a weapon of a violent institution, has asked a Black woman directly harmed by his institution to do the work for him. It was and is not Ms. Rice’s job to fix the institution that took her son from her.

It is not marginalized communities’ job to fix the systems that have robbed them of generational wealth, education, nutrition, freedom and more. While elevating voices of those individuals and communities experiencing violence and oppression is crucial, we must simultaneously evolve the way we think and learn to listen to the calls of people most negatively impacted by the *Business As Usual* planning paradigm. Approaching our work from an ethics of

²⁶⁶“Episode 03: Misdemeanor, Meet Mr. Lawsuit - Transcript,” Serial, accessed July 27, 2020, <https://serialpodcast.org/season-three/3/transcript>.

care, we can move in the direction of hearing diverse voices and understanding how to make real difference. This is a call to change the way we work and think.

Disaster and crisis response is typically centered on reducing destruction, suffering, and death. Planning also focuses on resiliency and the ability to recover from the suffering and loss that communities and individuals incur. Yet, without talking openly about how disasters frequently deepen inequities, planners are not having holistic conversations about disaster and recovery. Planning cannot stop at symbolic gestures regarding equity. On the contrary, actions within our departments must evolve alongside our processes for collaborating with marginalized populations within our communities in pursuit of radical care.

Finally, investing in and prioritizing implementation is a concrete, crucial re-prioritization that must happen within planning. Not just overall implementation, but improving implementation directed at action items that are aimed at tackling inequity within cities and systems. By centering care in implementation, alongside a greater investment in producing equitable results, we can work on restoring trust between communities and their government. At this moment, we are in the position of having to earn back trust from our communities that we have degraded. Direct, concrete displays of our commitment to earning that trust back can take the form of meeting community needs that are voiced in municipal and regional planning processes.

With a combination of these five actions and shifts in practice, we can begin a culture shift within our field. All of these shifts are in pursuit of undoing oppressive systems, building linking social capital, and reducing the inequity that leads to racialized violence. I did not directly address over-reliance on economic development, because that pattern is a product of *Business As Usual* practices. When disaster strikes, it is too late to build reciprocal, trusting relationships between municipal actors and their communities. It is also, in the midst of crisis, too late to address the systemized inequity that has brought us to where we are today. Norman Krumholz

called the planner “too timid.”²⁶⁷ It is time to begin a culture shift towards resistance in planning. *Business As Usual* planning is safe and comfortable for those who hold power. In order to pursue redistributive justice, we must be bold and welcome discomfort. The *Great Turning* is just beginning; planning would do well to be on the just side of this transformation.

6.1 Implications for Future Research

Because of the real-time aspect of this research, future research and retrospective research are both necessary. Between the defense and submission of this thesis, new information will emerge that will not necessarily be included in the final product. For example, cities across the United States are taking steps to acknowledge and theoretically address racism and COVID. How those steps play out will be very important to track and understand. I offer a single case study contextualized by larger topics and issues. It would be useful to conduct a larger survey of these themes in more cities in the United States, including, but not limited to, other Legacy Cities. A larger survey examining rhetoric in planning documents surrounding equity and disparities in public health impacts would help to reinforce the findings presented here.

Overall, further real time research and analysis on the unfolding of these and future crises in the context of equity and violence within the planning field would greatly benefit planning practice. It would be valuable to conduct more in-depth research on the dynamics of grant program-centered crisis response, success of equity scoring systems, and success of minority-owned businesses in Springfield during and post-COVID. Incorporating understandings of intersecting social sciences is valuable and important to the field unless we wish to abandon AICP aspirations.

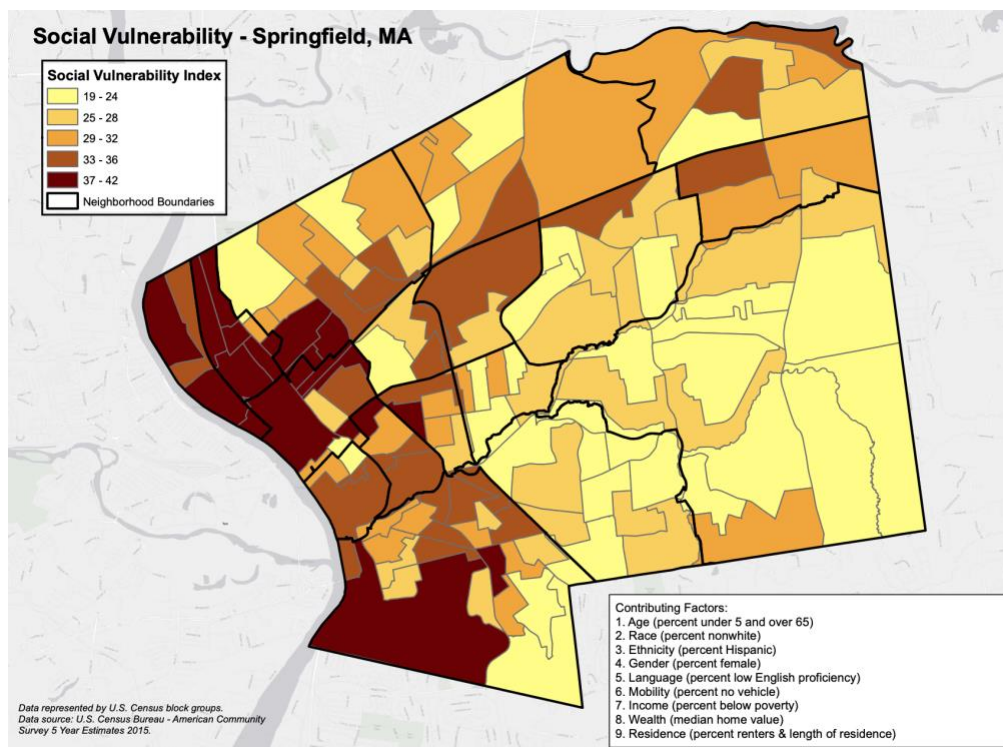
²⁶⁷ Krumholz, “A Retrospective View of Equity Planning Cleveland 1969–1979,” 173.

I must stress the importance of avoiding extractive research practices and centering reciprocity in soliciting labor from marginalized populations. AICP aspirational principles that center on equity, social justice, and ethics are listed under our professional responsibility to the public. Ethically, I struggle with capacity arguments against planning reformation and equity applications. In order to fulfill our responsibilities, we must hold ourselves and our colleagues responsible for the undoing of violent systems. Further research into the intentions and self-perceived role of planners in Springfield would help to develop a deeper understanding of the tension between aspirations and bureaucracy.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

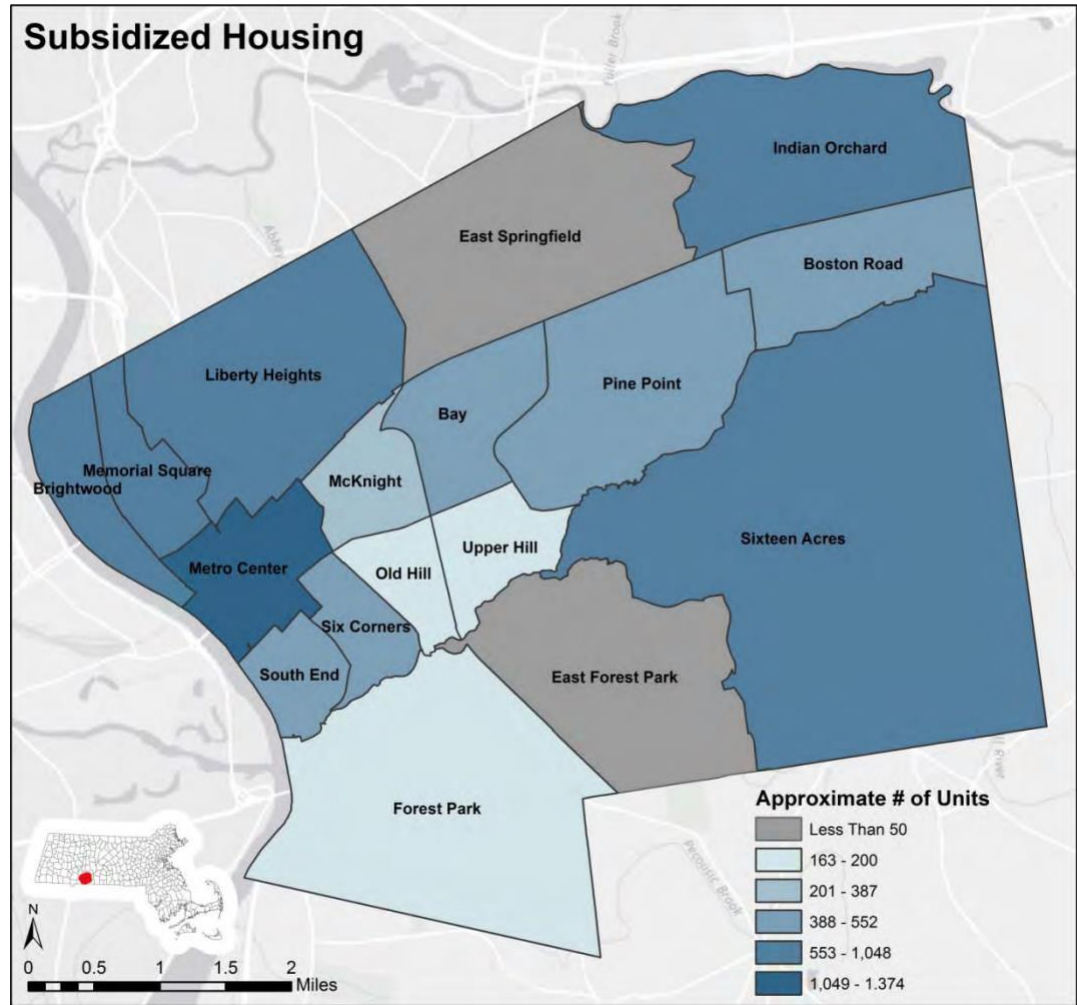
1. Would you tell me a little about your role and responsibilities as *JOB TITLE*?
 - a. How long have you been in this position?
2. Who do you typically collaborate with, interdepartmentally or outside of municipal government?
3. How has your work changed since the beginning of COVID?
4. Do you see any similarities in challenges between this crisis and past weather events in Springfield?
5. What does the community engagement in your department look like, pre and during COVID?
6. What have the conversations regarding the recent uprisings looked like in your work environment?

APPENDIX B: SOCIAL VULNERABILITY MAP, SPRINGFIELD, MA²⁶⁸



²⁶⁸ Hamin, Williams-Eynon, and Ratte, “Springfield Climate Action & Resiliency Plan.”

APPENDIX C: SUBSIDIZED HOUSING MAP, SPRINGFIELD, MA²⁶⁹



²⁶⁹ Hamin, Williams-Eynon, and Ratte.

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