"We Just Built It:" Code Enforcement, Local Politics, and the Informal Housing Market in Southeast Los Angeles County

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation is an exploration of the role of informality in the housing market in southeast Los Angeles County. While informality has long been the subject of scholarship in cases from the Global South, and increasingly in the United States, examinations of *housing* informality in the US thus far have largely been situated in rural and peri-urban areas. This work seeks to interrogate informality in housing processes unfolding within the very heart of northern North America's leading industrial metropolis.

After a brief preface, the dissertation's second chapter reviews literature on various aspects of informality and on *Accessory Dwelling Units*, or additions or conversions of living quarters on residential properties. Chapter 3 introduces the work's methodological pillars, and describes the four major, mixed methods relied upon. These are a survey of code enforcement officers; interviews and direct observation; and analyses of rental and property sales markets. Two other, minor, methods employed are an analysis of building footprints and the analysis of secondary data.

Chapter 4 introduces the single case used in the dissertation. This is a group of 14 communities, with a total population of 700,000, that are collectively referred to via the neologism *City of Gateway.* Next follows a historical overview of the area. Following a discussion of the 1965 Watts riots as a historical watershed, trends in the City of Gateway's economy and population that have driven a dramatic *informalization* of the housing stock since that time are examined.

Chapter 5 describes the physical expression of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway, in seven extralegal modes that involve either the *conversion* of existing space or the *addition* of new space, and the tactics used to effect them. Chapter 5 closes with a quantification and discussion of the consequences of the characteristic urban form produced by the informal housing market, *horizontal density,* which is the addition of density by more intensively covering lots with buildings rather than building upwards.

Chapter 6 describes the "nuts and bolts" of the informal housing market. It presents evidence that extralegal rentals are, on balance, generally (though not always) cheaper for their occupants than formal market alternatives. It examines *presale ordinances* that some cities have passed to try to disrupt the informal housing market by intervening in the sale of residential property. It discusses the important role of *appraisers* in providing or denying mortgage credit to current or would-be homeowners with extralegal space. An analysis of property sales transactions provides evidence that extralegal space does not appear to be capitalized in property values. Finally, the chapter discusses barriers imposed by the current US mortgage system to financing the construction of rentable space on residential properties.

Chapter 7 is an examination of the role played by *code enforcement* in shaping the informal housing market in the City of Gateway. Specifically, it examines how code enforcement departments allocate their time and effort given that there are far more potential enforcement actions than their capacity allows. The chapter presents arguments that code enforcement reshapes the informal housing market while failing to suppress it; that it is applied unevenly; and that it paradoxically helps maintain the informal order of the informal housing market.

Chapter 8 begins by arguing that issues related to informal housing, when they are discussed at all in the local political sphere, tend to be filtered through the reductive frame of *law and order.* The chapter presents reasons for this state of affairs, both ones specific to the City of Gateway and others that are more general and potentially applicable to other places in the US. Chapter 8 closes with a summary of high-profile local debates in which informal housing's influence is considerable but rarely acknowledged: fair share housing, water and sewer utility capacity, parking, and school crowding.

The conclusion, Chapter 9, begins by assessing the positive and negative attributes of the informal housing system. A normative judgment is made that the former outweigh the latter, although the drawbacks are considerable and in need of urgent attention. A multiscalar palette of policy interventions intended to usefully and justly intervene in the informal housing system is put forth. Many of these are within the ambit of local government, but action in other spheres—in state and even federal government, and within the housing NGO sector—is needed. Next, lessons for advocates, policymakers, and researchers drawn from the broader implications of this dissertation are presented. After that follows a speculative discussion about the role of culture in comparison with economic necessity in driving the informal housing market in the City of Gateway. Next, informed speculation about the future of the City of Gateway's housing market is presented. The dissertation closes with a discussion of these trends' implications for the City of Gateway's continued existence as that increasingly rare of type of place, a working class enclave in the heart of a vast global metropolis.

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Dedication

Los Angeles is a city full of people who come to the United States with nothing, and somehow find a way to build a new life for themselves and their families in an unfamiliar place. Their story resembles that of my own immigrant ancestors, who similarly struggled a century or more ago so that I might enjoy the fulfilling life I lead today. I am inspired by them, and I salute their courage, grit, and resourcefulness. This dissertation represents a small part of their story.

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Los Angeles has a vibrant network of intellectuals, professionals, and activists whose work touches on the lives of those in the region's working class communities. Many people from this network draw upon their own childhood experiences in such places; when added to their professional work as adults, the result is a rich, and in my opinion unusual, variety of perspectives. Perhaps this is why LA felt, to me, like such a stimulating place to work. Maybe, to paraphrase Ed Soja, it really does all come together in LA.

At every turn in my travels in Los Angeles I found people who were supportive of an outsider from Berkeley such as me pursuing a research topic such as mine, and who made introductions and opened doors for me. The planner James Rojas, for instance, has been supportive and helpful from the beginning. Manuel Pastor generously responded to my email out of the blue and made his book chapter manuscript, which was to become a key building block for the framing of my project, available to me ahead of its publication. The writer D.J. Waldie shared his deep knowledge of southeast LA County. Cecilia Estolano provided valuable advice as well. My PhD colleague, South Gate native Monica Villalobos, generously allowed me to post on a listserv on Latino planning issues in California, which yielded a number of key early interview contacts for me.

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July 8, 2013 was the happiest day of my life. It saw the birth of my beloved daughter, Adeline, who ever since has transported me into a new and unfamiliar realm of parenthood, with daily challenges, to be sure, but also joy of a kind I never could have imagined before. Addie's birthday for me is only equaled by my wedding day of September 25, 2010. My wife Lori has been there for me from the beginning of this dissertation and long before that. She has never been anything but supportive of me in my pursuit of the eccentric career path of academia. She is my true life partner and soul mate. Thank you, my love.

Chapter 1: Preface

Not long ago, a resident of Florence-Firestone[1], a community in greater Los Angeles, left a telephone message on an anonymous hotline maintained by the county. Her complaint was that it had become essentially impossible for her to find a curbside parking space on her street. In her message, she provided the addresses of no fewer than a dozen properties on her residential block that she identified as including one or more apartments in addition to the main houses visible from the street. The renters living in the apartments collectively owned so many cars that they spilled out of the street's driveways and clogged all of the other parking spaces on the block. Because the zoning regulations in effect in the area disallow the residential units hidden behind the main houses (Figure 1.1), the resident demanded that the county take action to compel the dozen homeowners to remove them.

Figure 1.1. A typical rear yard structure containing an unpermitted dwelling unit on a residential property. Unincorporated Florence-Firestone, southeast Los Angeles County. Photo by the author.

[1] Florence-Firestone is an unincorporated community that lies about seven miles south of Downtown Los Angeles. Though the US Census Bureau designates Florence-Graham as the community's official name, Florence-Firestone is the term long used by residents in everyday parlance and is therefore what I use throughout this dissertation.

What bears explanation is not that a resident was willing to anonymously report a dozen of her immediate neighbors to the authorities. To be certain, the consequences could include the demolition of low-rent housing units in a neighborhood and region in which they are scarce and the eviction of families with children with few other places to turn for housing, not to mention possible retribution to the resident by her neighbors if her anonymity were to be compromised. But the Los Angeles region, and the United States as a whole, are generally understood to be places where "the rule of law" is generally strong and consistently applied. Perhaps, then, what is more surprising is that incidents such as this one are in fact relatively rare. On thousands of residential blocks in Florence-Firestone and other communities throughout Los Angeles County, where housing units operating outside the law are ubiquitous, most residents, most of the time, opt to maintain peaceful relations with their neighbors, and refrain from reporting their garage apartments, back houses, or other unauthorized living spaces. They do so even at the cost of tolerating noise, difficulty with parking, and the other impacts associated with renters dwelling on what were originally designed to be, and regulated as, a streets exclusively made up of single-family houses

Collectively, the decision by untold thousands of homeowners to convert their garages to living quarters, to build additions onto the rear of their houses, to build separate houses in their rear yards, or to park inhabited recreational vehicles in their yards or driveways for years at a time, all without official sanction, has transformed the housing market in areas where these practices are common. What has happened in Florence-Firestone represents a perfect example of what the University of Illinois sociologist Asef Bayat has referred to as "the quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat 2000). *Informal housing,* or the provision of living space outside of official regulation and taxation, has long been associated in the academic literature with the cities of the developing world. After all, an analyst who proposed to summarize the state of the housing market of Rio de Janeiro while ignoring the hillside favelas and unauthorized subdivisions that housed an estimated 19% of the city's population in 2000 would be roundly, and rightfully, ridiculed (Xavier and Magalhães 2003).

In recent years, scholars have invoked the concept of informality to explain the functioning of housing markets in the United States in such disparate locations as the self-built "homestead subdivisions," also known as *colonias,* of Texas, and farmworker towns in California's Central Valley (Ward 1999; Buckley and Littmann 2010). But the scholarly literature has, with very few exceptions, treated informal housing as though it is a residual phenomenon within the metropolitan regions that overwhelmingly power the modern economy of the United States. This dissertation seeks to correct this oversight, with a focus on a portion of southeast Los Angeles County, a submetropolitan region with a concentration of informal housing that is extreme by the standards of the United States. In so doing, this dissertation begins with the question of what role informality plays in the housing market in this area. Given that the residuality of housing informality is an untenable assumption in a portion of at least one US metropolitan region—southeast Los Angeles—the details of how the housing market in this area functions are worth a fresh look. As will be argued in the conclusion (Chapter 9), the findings that emerge from this

investigation are relevant to other urbanized regions in California, the United States, and elsewhere in the Global North, even though in most cases—for the time being at least—informality is less palpable in those places.

A Note on Terminology

As is frequently noted, word choices matter. Two points should be made here about terminology I use throughout this dissertation:

1) I use both the overlapping (but not identical) terms "informal" and "extralegal" to describe economic processes (mostly housing) that occur outside the law. I use the terms somewhat interchangeably, although I sometimes use "informal" to emphasize the broader, more theoretical aspects of this mode of economic activity and "extralegal" when I am more narrowly and legalistically describing economic activity that does not comply with situationally specific laws.
2) I consciously eschew the term "illegal" as a substitute for "informal" or "extralegal."

I now explain each of these two choices. First, I use the noun "informality," and by extension the adjective "informal," in an expansive sense, to encompass what AlSayyad (2004) has described, consciously mirroring mid-20th century Chicago school writings about urbanization, as a "way of life." Thus, seen in this way, informality refers not simply to economic processes unfolding outside of governmental taxation and regulation, although it does include these, but more fundamentally a *physical structure*, a *system of social organization,* and a *set of attitudes of ideas* (ibid). When I am writing about the bigger picture of what has occurred with housing in southeast Los Angeles County in this dissertation, I tend to use the adjective "informal." Similarly, changes that have occurred to the housing market over time are characterized by the derivative noun "informalization."

However, I also sometimes use the narrower and more legalistic term "extralegal." When I write about *extralegal housing*, I am writing specifically about housing space or housing units that, legally speaking, are out of compliance with laws, usually local land use ordinances. In this dissertation, I switch frequently between the precision of the term extralegal and the theoretical expansiveness of the term informal. Both are useful and descriptive in different ways, and therefore I employ them both. The division between them is at times somewhat blurry. Their meaning should be interpreted to be interchangeable, but with different emphases.

Second, while I prefer to use colloquial terms in many cases, I have avoided labeling informal or extralegal housing as "illegal," despite many of my interview respondents using such terminology. I follow Castells and Portes (1989) in their distinction between activities, such as armed robbery, that are widely viewed as illegitimate, and for which the term "illegal" is best reserved, and those, such as housing, that are inherently legitimate processes that can be placed into an informal or extralegal state because they fall outside of the law, and which are therefore best

described as informal or extralegal.[2] There is plenty of room for debate about whether informal housing is harmful vis-à-vis legal housing, and indeed I explore such questions throughout this dissertation. But to use the term "illegal," which conflates incontestably predatory activities such as armed robbery with much more morally ambiguous ones such as non-legally compliant housing, is, to me, needlessly stigmatizing. For that reason, I avoid it.

Research Question and Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is built around an overarching research question. It is as follows:

What is the role of informality in the housing market in southeast Los Angeles?

This question contains several phrases that require further explanation. *Informality* was described above. Next, I intend for the term *housing market* to be interpreted in an expansive manner. It does not simply refer to the buying, selling, and rental of residential properties, although it certainly includes those activities. It also, as discussed in Chapter 3, includes the web of institutional arrangements, political dynamics and social relations that make its very existence possible. Finally, *southeast Los Angeles* refers to a particular geography in which the empirical investigation of this dissertation is situated, and which Chapter 4 is devoted to describing.[3]

This dissertation is organized in the following manner: the remainder of Chapter 1 is a description of the contribution that I expect this dissertation to make. Chapter 2 is an overview of scholarship on key theoretical concepts and empirical work relating to the research question. Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methodology that I use to tackle the research question introduced above. Chapter 4 defines the geography used in this dissertation, a portion of southeast Los Angeles that I dub "the City of Gateway" (Figure 1.2).[4] The chapter describes the recent history as well as the demographic and physical changes that have taken place within the City of

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[2] By contrast, I have no difficulty with using the term "legal" to describe housing processes that comply with the law, since it makes a matter-of-fact statement. It is the flipside of "legal" that I find freighted with stigmatizing language if terms are not carefully selected.

[3] In this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, "southeast Los Angeles" is shorthand for the southeastern portion of Los Angeles *County*, rather than the southeastern section of the *City* of Los Angeles. South and east are cardinal directions in Los Angeles County that have long been associated with racialized marginalization of their inhabitants, which is not incidental to the case selection for this dissertation.

[4] At the risk of confusing the reader, in this chapter, as well as Chapters 2 and 3, I will use the term "southeast Los Angeles" as a rough equivalent to my invented geography of the "City of Gateway," which is not fully explicated, justified, and defined until Chapter 4. While the City of Gateway does not occupy all of southeast Los Angeles County, it encompasses a large portion.

Gateway in recent decades, and its relationship to the larger megalopolis in which it is embedded.

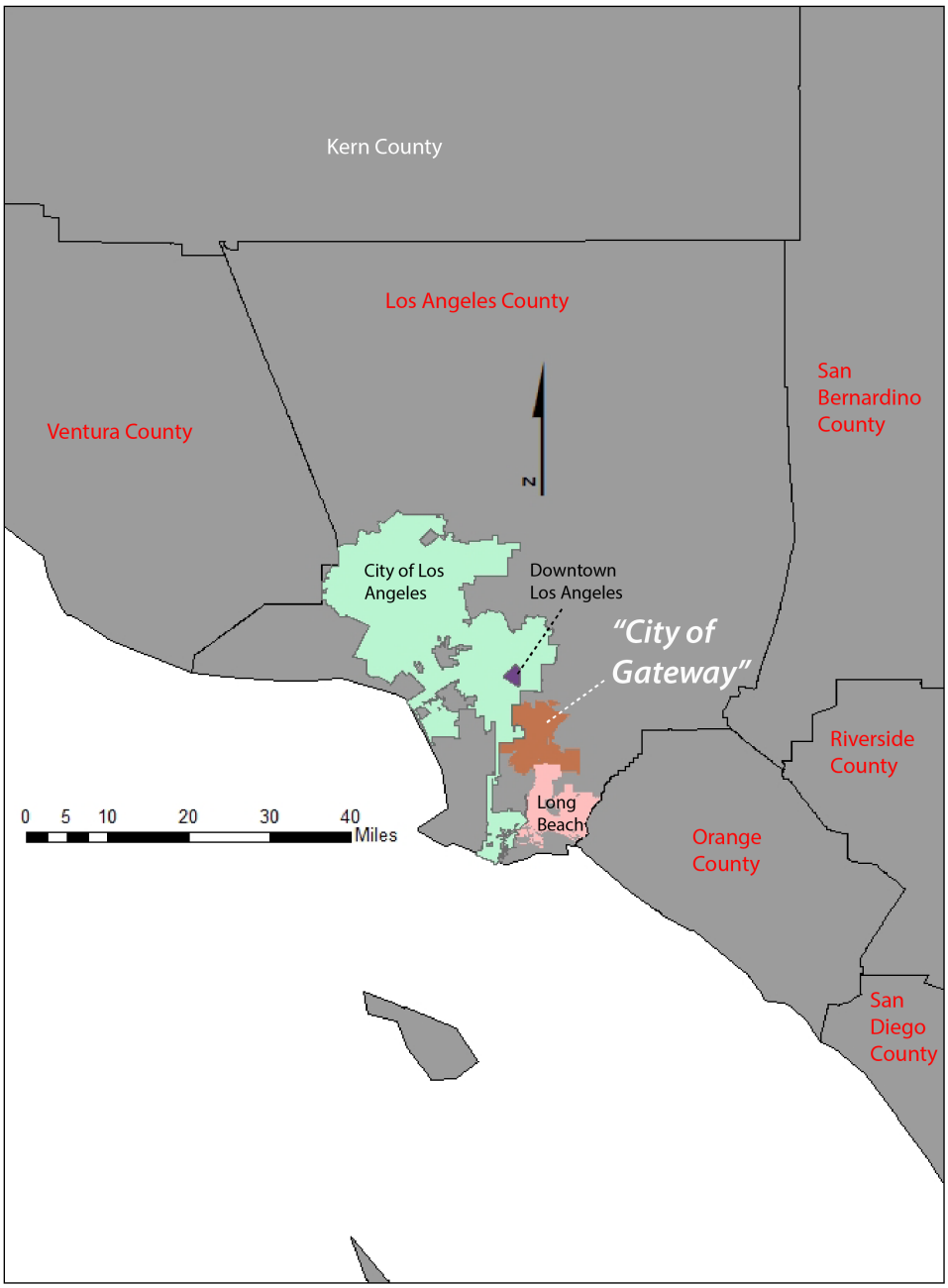

Figure 1.1. The City of Gateway (orange) in relation to coastal Southern California.

Each of Chapters 5 through 8 is organized around one of four research subquestions that are subsidiary to the main research question introduced at the beginning of this section. They are as follows:

- Chapter 5: *What is the physical expression and impact on residential neighborhoods of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway?* In other words, what form does the informal housing market take "on the ground," and what are the consequences?
- Chapter 6: *How does the informal housing market in the City of Gateway "work?"* That is, how are extralegal dwellings rented, bought, sold, and financed, and how do these processes overlap or intersect with their formal market equivalents?
- Chapter 7: *How do local code enforcement functions affect the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles?* This chapter focuses particular attention on one function of the local state[5], code enforcement, because of its critical role in shaping the informal housing market.
- Chapter 8: *How is the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles shaped and constrained by local politics?* Taking as a starting point Ananya Roy's argument that informal processes, including housing, cannot be seen as separate from the state (discussed in Chapter 2), the role of local democratic processes in shaping the relationship between the various city and county jurisdictions and the informal housing market are examined in Chapter 8.

Chapter 9 is the final chapter in this dissertation. It synthesizes the findings from the dissertation's core, Chapters 5 through 8, into an overall portrait of the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles. It speculates on cultural factors and their importance in this market; it normatively assesses the informal market; and provides a series of suggestions for governmental and civil society actors to intervene. The chapter, and the dissertation, close with some concluding thoughts about the broader implications of my findings for areas outside of Southern California, as well as some observations about likely near future trends for the City of Gateway and their implications for housing.

Expected Contributions

This dissertation makes at least three contributions to scholarship in the field of city planning:

[5] The use of the term "the state" can be confusing in a work such as this one that is set in the US, with its characteristically multi-tiered system of government. "The state" can either refer to "the government," broadly defined, or it can refer to the subnational governmental entity (for example, the State of California) that occupies the middle tier in the federal-state-local governmental system that exists in the United States. Generally speaking, the more abstract, expansive meaning of the term "the state" (sometimes particularized as "the local state" in discussions about local government) will be assumed in this dissertation; in cases where "the state" refers to "the State of California," this will be explicitly noted.

- **Description and quantification of an informal housing market in a large US metropolitan region.** To date, most research on informal housing in the United States has examined rural or peri-urban areas. This dissertation provides a detailed description of the workings of an informal housing market in operation within the nation's second largest metropolitan area. Its physical expression is described in a "field guide to informal housing," while its interactions with formal market processes that allow residential properties that include extralegal space to be financed, bought and sold, are detailed. Estimates of the size, characteristics, and development over time of the informal market allow for a quantification of a phenomenon where data is scarce. New methods for producing such estimates are presented, some of which may be useful in analyzing other informal housing markets elsewhere.
- **Emphasis on the importance of enforcement to planning processes and outcomes.** Starting from the theoretical insight that informality is constructed by the state, this dissertation closely examines a key and under-researched governmental apparatus whose operation affects the specific ways in which the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles operates: *code enforcement.* By examining a case in which informality thrives despite complete spatial coverage by code enforcement, this dissertation makes a case for the importance of paying attention to the details of how land use laws are enforced, and not simply debated and enacted as is more typically emphasized in US-focused planning scholarship.
- **Explains the absence of discourse on informal housing from the local political sphere in spite of the large size of the phenomenon.** This dissertation constructs an argument that the peculiar form that housing informality takes in southeast Los Angeles—a system built on top of incontestably legal property ownership—interacts with other phenomena such as widespread code enforcement and the suburban ideal and acts to suppress productive policy discourse within the local political sphere. The implications of this absence are considerable for southeast Los Angeles and similar communities elsewhere in the US and perhaps even in other countries of the Global North. What is not discussed does not get addressed, with very real consequences of concern to planners, such as environmental stresses, a characteristic and wholly unplanned urban form of "horizontal density," pressure on utility networks and other infrastructure, and others.

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Chapter 2: Overview of Previous Scholarship

This chapter contains an overview of several strands of scholarship that are important to this dissertation. In the discussion of each such strand, insights and concepts from previous work are critically discussed in the context of their overlaps with and divergences from the case examined in my research. I do not presume to call this section a "literature review," for I make no pretense of comprehensiveness or completeness. Rather, key works categorized according to five themes are summarized and discussed.

In what follows, I review five groupings of scholarship. First, I examine the economic, regulatory, and political underpinnings of *high cost housing markets* (also referred to as "tight" housing markets), such as what exist in Los Angeles. Next, I elaborate the theoretical concept of *informality,* an inevitable byproduct of tight housing market conditions, and a keystone for this dissertation. In addition, I briefly note changes in conceptualizations of informality over roughly the last half century. In the third section I introduce the important notion that informality is produced and maintained by the state, and does not reside apart from the state or arise in its absence, as has often been assumed. Fourth, I summarize recent scholarship that has begun to note the past and present existence of informal housing in the high-income countries of the Global North, and that has given us rich portraits of such processes through empirical work. Finally, in the fifth section I discuss a body of literature—one mostly, though not exclusively, grounded in the United States—on "Accessory Dwelling Units," or ADUs, which are living quarters carved from or grafted onto otherwise low-scale residential properties. ADUs encompass many, though not all, of the characteristics of the informal housing arrangements that will be discussed throughout this dissertation, and tend to arise in regions with tight housing market conditions.

The Economic and Regulatory Underpinnings of High-Cost Housing Markets

A *high-cost metropolitan area* is an urbanized region in which housing costs are elevated as a result of a constrained supply of some combination of land and regulatory approvals for the addition of new housing stock. Following Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks (2005), a useful metric, which I will refer to here as a *housing market tightness index*, is the difference between unity and the ratio of the construction cost of new housing to the price of existing housing of identical quality.[1] The higher this difference, the higher the portion of housing costs attributable to land and entitlement costs.

Of the metropolitan areas in the United States, the proportion that can be classified as high-cost with respect to housing prices has greatly increased in recent

[1] I am naming this index for the sake of nomenclatural convenience, but the concept itself and the calculations cited here are entirely the work of Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks (2005) and not mine.

decades. The housing market tightness index increased, at the 90th percentile of metropolitan areas in the United States, from 0.11 in 1970 to 0.46 in 2000 (ibid). Thus, given that widespread housing unaffordability within metropolitan regions was a highly limited phenomenon by this definition until the mid 1970s (ibid), a housing market tightness index of 0.11 might be usefully said to constitute an approximate minimum threshold for high-cost regions.[2]

Not only are there many more high-cost metropolitan areas than in the recent past, the ones that are most high-cost of all, a group that includes the Los Angeles region, appear to be diverging still further from nationwide median indices of affordability. From 1970 to 2000, the standard deviation in real house prices across metropolitan areas grew by 247 percent even as house prices themselves grew by only 72 percent in real terms (Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks 2005). Housing markets in metropolitan areas that are high cost appear to be behaving in ways that are different in kind, not just degree, from those that are not. High housing prices in certain areas no longer appear to lead to concomitant housing stock additions as they once did.[3]

These trends are troubling for members of households in the bottom half of the income spectrum. Such households, in many locations, must pay ever-growing shares of their incomes towards housing, which usually comprises the single largest portion of their budgets, during an era in which income growth for working class households in inflation-adjusted terms has been at best stagnant. Even the recent Great Recession, along with its accompanying collapse in housing prices in many metropolitan areas, has not fundamentally altered these conditions (NLIHC 2012).

The high cost of housing therefore appears to be increasing in geographic reach and intensity as a result of long-run structural, rather than short-term cyclical, factors. Modest upticks in inflation-adjusted construction labor and material costs over the past four decades are nowhere close to sufficient for explaining these housing cost increases (Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks 2005). Instead, evidence suggests that the vast majority of this increase is attributable to rises in land costs and jumps in the costs of obtaining regulatory permission to build, with the latter seemingly having risen fastest of all (ibid).

Increasingly stringent land use regulation has not fallen on all types of housing developers to an equal degree. Siegan (1995) uses Houston, the quintessential counterfactual exemplar of lax land use regulation, to bolster his case that tightened land use restrictions fall more heavily on small developers than on large ones. Schleicher (2012) argues that this pronounced, and increasing, bias towards large-scale developers and housing developments in high-cost metropolitan areas has arisen as a consequence of the characteristically *seriatim*[4]

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[2] In 2000, the housing market tightness index for the Los Angeles region was approximately 0.5 (Glaeser, Gyourko and Saks 2005).

[3] For example, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, multifamily housing construction in southeast Los Angeles collapsed in the early 1990s and has yet to recover even in the face of ongoing demand.

[4] *Seriatim* refers to the "one by one" sequence by which local governmental officials consider land use decisions before them. Because, in many jurisdictions, a request by a

and increasingly stringent nature of land use controls in American cities, along with the nonpartisan character of their municipal politics. Urban political regimes, in this view, no longer reliably function as "growth machines" as they once did, at least not for developers small as well as large (Molotch and Logan 1987). Whittemore (2012) chronicled just such a regime transition in the City of Los Angeles, from a powerful growth machine in the 1950s to one where, by the 1980s, anti-growth homeowner groups wielded great influence in City Hall.

An extensive body of literature has examined the specific mechanisms by which localities exclude housing designed to be rented or sold at a price affordable by working class or middle income households. Only a sampling of these works is cited here. Levine (2005) penned one of the landmark accounts of the exclusion of dense housing, and particularly low- to moderately-priced dense rental housing, by municipalities via land use controls. Pendall (2000) demonstrated that such exclusionary policies lead to a "chain of exclusion" that particularly impinges on the ability of low-income black and Latino renters to find affordable housing in desirable locations, a process that he found to be especially acute in California metropolitan regions. Boarnet and Crane (1998) wrote about the "fiscalization of land use," especially acute in California, stemming from that state's adoption of Proposition 13, an anti-property tax measure that set off a nationwide property tax revolt after its passage by voters in 1978. One of Proposition 13's many far-reaching consequences has been to make new housing selling or renting below high levels a net fiscal loser, thus providing an animating motivation for housing exclusion in California that extends beyond run-of-the-mill racial and class prejudice. These dynamics help to explain why California is likely to produce infill housing to only 40% of its potential by 2025 (Landis 2006).

Exclusionary land use policies and the high housing costs that are their handmaidens appear to conspire to suppress some of the very solutions that might alleviate them. For instance, while housing economists such as Rothenberg, Galster, Butler and Pitkin (1991) and Quigley (2008) have found demand-side, rather than supply-side, subsidies to be generally more cost efficient in alleviating shortages of affordable housing for low-income households, their findings presume that the production of housing stock can be effectively stimulated by the introduction of demand-side subsidies such as Housing Choice Vouchers. Indeed, Deng (2005) found that the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the most important supply side rental housing subsidy today, has become more effective than vouchers in certain supply-constrained markets. Even "filtering," the classic laissez-faire mechanism for delivering affordable, if run-down, housing to families of modest means (Lowry 1960), appeared to be barely operative amidst extremely tight market conditions in the San Francisco and Los Angeles regions during the boom of the past decade (Glaeser and Gyourko 2005).

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homeowner for a zoning variance to allow her to build a patio is considered by the same body that is petitioned for a rezoning needed to build a 30-story residential tower, Schleicher (2012) argues that the burden of increasingly stringent procedures for land use decisions falls proportionately more heavily on small landowners and developers than on large ones.

Decreased effectiveness of policy solutions for escalating housing unaffordability in high-cost regions is aggravated by a decline in public support for such efforts. Vale (2007) argued that the historical orientation of US federal housing policy towards efforts to foster homeownership, far from resulting from some ineffable tendency for Americans to gravitate towards this form of tenure, was in fact produced by deliberate political action as far back as the 1920s, with consequences that remain with us still. The invisibility of the vast subsidies that homeowners receive, most importantly though certainly not exclusively via taxation mechanisms, has fueled the widespread perception that homeownership "stands on its own two feet" economically, while only the recipients of subsidies for rental housing benefit, ostensibly, from government largesse (Radford 1996). This state of affairs has had enormous political consequences in recent decades, including support for the neoliberal programs of relentless efforts to expand homeownership (even with declining results) and the gradual dismantling of public housing developments left over from the New Deal/Fair Deal eras (Hackworth 2006). Obscurity has become perhaps the most important characteristic for a rental housing subsidy regime to continue to function under such conditions (Erickson 2009).

In summary, even as the housing affordability crisis in high-cost regions such as Los Angeles has steadily worsened for low- and middle-income residents, and even as solutions have grown more difficult to pursue, the public support for them has diminished. In Los Angeles at least, a pressure release valve in the form of *informal* housing has arisen as a consequence. Informality, generally constituted, is the subject of the next section.

Informality: an Evolving Concept

Informality is a keystone concept in this dissertation because it demarcates the portion of the housing market that is this work's unit of analysis. As noted in Chapter 1, AlSayyad (2004) has described informality as a broad-scale process, typically associated with (but certainly not limited to) the Global South, and a "way of life" that can be analyzed with respect to its physical manifestations, implied social relationships, and associated set of beliefs. More narrowly, and also as noted in Chapter 1, in addition to distinguishing the formal from the informal, Castells and Portes make a further distinction between informal, or extralegal, economic activity and *illegal* activity: the former "is a process of income generation … that is unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated" (Castells and Portes 1989, p. 12). Throughout this dissertation, I will rely on this definition of the distinction between informal activity and criminal, or illegal, actions.

While the definition of informal economic activity above is relatively straightforward, the historical trajectory of the concept of informality over the past half century has been anything but. As AlSayyad's (2004) description of informality as a "way of life" suggested, the way that scholars have conceptualized the term over the decades has affected the conclusions they have drawn while using it. For that

reason, a brief review of the evolution of the concept of informality over roughly the last fifty years follows.

As rural migrants poured into burgeoning Third World cities in the mid 20th century, these newcomers came to be seen as "peasants in cities," or out-of-sorts rural people maladapted to the city life into which they had suddenly been thrust. To some scholars of the time, this explained their propensity to engage in "rural" practices and to hold worldviews and preferences ill-suited for their new urban lives, including seeking housing via *auto-construction*[5] and clinging to an attachment to an individualized plot of land (cf. Hauser 1961). A subsequent, but related, notion was that the migrants embodied a "culture of poverty" following their arrival in self-built settlements, meaning that their isolation in informally-built communities of uncertain tenure on the metropolitan periphery had prevented them from adopting the mainstream norms of middle-class urbanites (cf. Lewis 1966). This thesis represented an update and redeployment of ideas incubated decades earlier by the members of the Chicago School of urban theory (AlSayyad 2004).

But subsequent scholarly work served to discredit the "peasants in cities" and "culture of poverty" theses. Perlman (1975) conducted in-depth research in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro showing that slum-dwellers held mainstream values, and tended to aspire to and work towards improving their homes and building stable livelihoods, rather than succumbing to fatalistic lassitude or, indeed, plotting the overthrow of capitalism. Other influential ideas took hold during this time that also helped to undo the "myth of marginality" (ibid): for instance, Turner's depiction of self-builders as empowered individuals invoking their agency to seize hold of opportunities denied them by "pyramidal" (i.e., hierarchical) organizations, whether public housing bureaucracies or profit-minded housing developers (Turner 1977). While deliberately formulated as a provocation to existing orthodoxy, Turner's ideas were so influential that they soon became codified as official policy at the United Nations and other transnational institutions seeking to promote development in the Third World (Davis 2006). What became known as the "support paradigm" informed the design of "site and services" programs, which aimed to make plots of land with secure tenure and serviced by adequate infrastructure available to members of the urban subaltern seeking to build or upgrade their own homes (Hamdi 1991).

Later, in the 1980s, De Soto's depiction of the same self-builders as "heroic entrepreneurs" ran in much the same vein, although allied more with a neoliberal than with a neo-anarchic ideological framework, as had been the case with Turner (De Soto 1989; De Soto 2000). De Soto saw self-builders and informal merchants as the real proponents, through their actions, of true entrepreneurship, and castigated the local elites for being part of a "mercantilist" regime conspiring to deny them the formal rights to their extra-legal property (ibid). A crucial additional element of his argument was that informality trapped property—homes, businesses, etc. —in the state of "dead capital." Only legalization, or titling, of such dead capital could link it

[5] *Auto-construction* refers to the process of people building their own housing, or orchestrating its construction via labor from some combination of friends, family, paid contractors, and themselves.

to mainstream financial services and the potential for economic growth that they could enable. DeSoto's ideas about informality became enshrined as official policy in many mainstream developmentalist circles, much as Turner's had, but updated for an era that coincided with the Washington Consensus, the rise of globalized finance, and the shift toward neoliberal economic policies within the major multilateral institutions.

But lately, the pendulum of views on marginality and informality has begun to (partially) swing back. One of the leading exponents of this stance has been Perlman (2009) herself, who conducted a rare follow-up study of her own work in Rio de Janeiro from a quarter century earlier. She found that the support paradigm—the enactment of the policies sought by those seeking to undo the "myth of marginality" —had not entirely delivered for *favelados*. To be sure, infrastructural and housing upgrading programs had left them with higher material standards of living, along with increased levels of education. But the explosion of the drug trade and its accompanying violence, along with chronic underemployment, in the intervening decades had drastically increased the stigmatization of the favelas, a process that appeared to affect the non-poor who lived in such areas while sparing the poor who lived in the *asfalto,* or formal city. To Perlman, these developments could not be examined in isolation from the structural economic changes that had taken place globally, and from their local expression in Brazil. For the local state, Rio's self-built communities afforded a convenient, out-of-sight, out-of-mind spatial location in which the social consequences of neoliberal/globalization-driven income polarization (foremost amongst them the rise of a violent drug trade) could be sequestered. Even if no one believed any longer that the *favelados* were marginalized because of their rural origins or attitudes, they were now marginalized for the mere fact of living in communities that had been auto-constructed under conditions of insecure tenure decades earlier (ibid).

Another line of critique attacking the De Soto-led consensus about informality disputes the notion that there is such a thing as an informal "sector" or, perhaps more to the point, informal *people*. Roy (2005) argues for a recasting of informality as a *mode*, or a tactic that a given person might employ even while simultaneously participating in formal economic activities. AlSayyad and Roy (2004) also disputed the notion that informality is an aberration that could be reasonably expected to be ended soon (via, for instance, De Soto's proposals to grant formal titles to informal property). They noted that when one zooms out to a longer-term perspective, the rise of informality in the late 20th century seems like a reversion to economic and social relations that existed in medieval times (ibid). What is more—in a final rejection of the lingering remnants of the "peasants in cities" and "culture of poverty" theses—Roy (2009a) argued that informality is a fully modern phenomenon that grows because of, not in spite of, the rise of contemporary, globalized capitalism under conditions of neoliberalism. The appropriate question therefore shifts from "formal or informal?" to "which kind of informality?" (Roy 2005).

As will become clear in later chapters, the emergent reframed notion of informality summarized above is well-suited to the case of southeast Los Angeles. Unlike the prototypical Turnerian auto-constructed settlement built on land at, for

example, the outskirts of Mexico City seized by bands of owner-builders, legal ownership of residential land in southeast Los Angeles is generally unambiguous, and has been since these areas were originally subdivided in the early 20th century. Tens of thousands of landowners simultaneously keep one foot in the formal property market through their legal title to their property, and another foot in the informal housing market by operating unpermitted living space. What is more, the informalization of housing in southeast Los Angeles has rapidly progressed over recent decades within the main industrial belt of the leading industrial metropolis of North America. If the proponents of the Los Angeles School of urban theory were right that LA represents the prototype of the contemporary capitalist city (Scott and Soja 1996; Dear 2001), then the informalized housing in southeast Los Angeles must be a complement to, not a departure from, the industrial growth that occurred there in the late 20th century. Finally, while southeast Los Angeles in no way resembles the favelas around Rio de Janeiro, Perlman's recent (2009) work is a helpful reminder that informality contributes to an ongoing process of stigmatization. As we will see in Chapter 8, this lesson applies in southeast Los Angeles County as well.

Informality and the State

One of the most important spinoffs of the emerging conceptualizations of informality is a growing recognition of the relationship between informal economic activity and the state. In some of the theoretical frameworks described in the previous section, the role of the state was ignored or, at most, downplayed. For example, in Turner's (1977) description, the state was effectively absent as a significant force within self-built settlements as a consequence of its failure to meet the needs of the urban subaltern. To De Soto (1989), the role of the state was more pernicious; elites occupying the upper echelons of the business and governmental sectors actively conspired to design legal mechanisms so as to make it effectively impossible for the people of the urban subaltern to gain legal title to their property. Thus, to De Soto, the government not only failed to prevent informality; its capture by "mercantilists" engaging in rent-seeking behavior actively prevented what he labeled the "informal sector" from being incorporated into the formal economy. To him, a well-functioning, competently-run government ought to be able to accomplish exactly that, as happened historically, for example, in the original American settlement of what is now the western United States in the 19th century (De Soto 2000). The implication is that a state apparatus that competently administers a modern capitalist economy ought to bring about the gradual disappearance of the informal economy.

To a more recent group of theorists, this conventional understanding is flawed. To them, informality does not result from the absence of the state, and it is not the object of regulation by the state. Instead, informality is *produced* by the state (Roy 2009b). Drawing from Agamben's (1998) concept of the "state of exception," Roy observes that "the state has the power … to determine what is informal and what is not, and to determine which forms of informality will thrive and which will disappear. State power is reproduced through the capacity to construct and

reconstruct categories of legitimacy and illegitimacy" (Roy 2005, pg. 149). How does the state accomplish such a thing? One means is via the use of what Ong (2006) has referred to as "zoning technologies," or the intentionally differential application and suspension of laws in various demarcated territories within the state's ambit, as with, for example, the designation of Shenzhen as a Special Economic Zone in the 1980s and Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Zone in 1997 by China.[6] Whereas in his original formulation Agamben (1998) theorized that a state of exception results from a state declaring that its laws have been suspended at a particular point in time in order to deny rights to particular groups under its control, Ong (2006) extended the concept of the state of exception to include the suspension of laws for the purpose of *benefiting* certain favored groups, as in her China examples.

Given that southeast Los Angeles is balkanized to an almost absurd extent into a patchwork of small incorporated cities and scattered unincorporated county jurisdictions (as is discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 8), it might be possible to see this spatial-governance arrangement as an example of an Ongian "zoning technology." As I will argue in Chapters 4, 7 and 8, there is a relationship between this fragmentation and the informalization of the housing stock that has occurred in recent decades, much to the great benefit of some powerful local business interests. Where Ong's concept is perhaps less applicable is in the lack of observable action on the part of its beneficiaries to bring this arrangement into being. As shown in Chapter 4, the decisions that created the fragmented governance structure of southeast Los Angeles long predate the explosive rise in informalized housing stock that is the subject of this dissertation. In addition, it is difficult to find, in the case of southeast Los Angeles, evidence that an informalization of the housing stock was a strategy deliberately conceived by the people who might most benefit from it. But it is nevertheless conceivable that an Ongian "zoning technology" need not have been deliberately created to be effectively deployed; perhaps it is enough that members of the local business-governmental elite were able to use the fragmentation of urban territory into small jurisdictions that had already been set up long before to provide them with an outcome that was, from their point of view, salutary.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, another theoretical treatment of the relationship between the state and informalization emphasizes the effect that individuals reliant on informal modes of action have on the state, rather than the state's role in producing informality (Bayat 2000). (Both sides of the coin are crucial to this dissertation.) Bayat's concept of the *quiet encroachment of the ordinary* is highly applicable to the case of the housing market in southeast Los Angeles. It explains accommodations that the state must make to the cumulative effects of informal activities undertaken by large numbers of separate actors, even in the absence of deliberate efforts to organize them politically. In the case of southeast Los Angeles County, the creation of tens of thousands of unpermitted dwelling units grafted onto formally-titled residential properties by property owners, with little to no coordination or political organizing among them, constitutes a "quiet

[6] The meaning of "zoning technology" as used by Ong should not be conflated with the term "zoning," or the regulation of land use within US cities, which will discussed throughout this dissertation.

encroachment" into the sphere of the local state's regulatory control over the urban environment. In Bayat's framework, the gains made by those doing the encroaching tend to be quiet and incremental, while efforts by the state to reclaim them are often met with energetic and organized resistance. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, organized resistance against sporadic crackdowns on unpermitted housing has been scarce to nonexistent in southeast Los Angeles. But Bayat's concept is flexible enough to account for such a scenario: "[instead of active resistance] the [encroaching] actors may retain their gains through quiet non-compliance without necessarily engaging in collective resistance" (Bayat 2000, p. 549).

In summary, the understanding of the relationship between the state and informality as a way of life has progressed greatly in the last decade and a half with new scholarly insights. The relatively new theoretical concepts of state-produced informality, the use of "zoning technologies" to foster informality, and the quiet encroachment of the ordinary, while all inspired by places and events in the Global South, are highly applicable to the case of informal housing in southeast Los Angeles and will be referenced throughout this dissertation.

Informality and Housing in the Global North

It will be obvious from the previous two sections that most of the theoretical advances on informality have originated from scholars based on their professional and personal experiences in the Global South. While this is perhaps understandable—after all, the *chawls* of Mumbai and the *favelas* of Rio leave an indelible visual impact in a way that suburban Los Angeles neighborhoods full of garage apartments and back houses do not—it feeds the mistaken belief that informality is a phenomenon of the South only. Recent empirical work, much of it inspired by some of the theoretical insights described in the previous two sections, has begun to uncover and describe a wide variety of informal practices in the Global North. In this section, I briefly summarize the breadth of some of these studies, and then I focus on instances of informality that pertain specifically to housing in the United States and in some of the world's other high-income countries.

A quarter century of empirical scholarship on informality in the Global North

A wave of scholarship from a quarter century ago highlighted the connection between informality and globalization processes. They found this link to be particularly visible in the most globally-connected cities. For instance, Sassen-Koob (1989), noted for her pioneering work on global cities, observed that informalized business activities arose in such quintessentially global cities as New York for several reasons. First, businesses in these locations were exposed to global competition. Second, these enormous metropolitan economies generated myriad highly idiosyncratic niches for products and services that only informal businesses had the dexterity and the speed to fulfill. Finally, income polarization — at its most extreme in these types of cities—generated needs among its subaltern population that the formal economy could not provide. (New York's famous gypsy cabs are one example.) As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Sassen-Koob's account also applies to the vast contemporary capitalist industrial economy of Los Angeles.

Other work from this period described informalization within ethnic enclaves in the United States. For instance, Stepick (1989) postulated the existence of an *enclave economy* in and around Miami, created by the Cubans who poured into the region in the aftermath of the Mariel Boatlift in 1980. In this arrangement, wealthier and more well-established Cubans hired their more recently-arrived and less well-off compatriots for off-the-books work, trading lower wages and a lack of formal workplace entitlements (such as pensions, workmen's compensation, etc.) for a measure of job security and loyalty. Stepick (ibid) emphasized the eventual successful link of enclave economies to the broader formal economy.

By contrast, Fong (1994), in his description of the formation of perhaps the Western world's first suburban Chinatown in the City of Monterey Park in Los Angeles County's San Gabriel Valley, also described the use of informal practices such as "key fees," or the unpermitted subdivision of retail properties to create densely-packed small shops. He departed from the findings of proponents of the enclave economy in his observation that the budding Chinese "ethnoburb" of Monterey Park was rife with internal class and nationality divisions, even while appearing to outsiders as a unified community. As will become apparent later in this dissertation, this view hews closer to the reality of the overwhelmingly Latino City of Gateway.

More recent scholarship has examined informal economic processes occurring at far more modest scales than industrial production or ethnic enclave formation. A considerable portion of this work has a decided Southern California flavor, including studies on *camionetas*, or informal jitneys for transporting workers (Valenzuela, Schweitzer, and Robles 2005); day labor markets (Valenzuela 2003); street vendors evading police harassment in the MacArthur Park district of Los Angeles (Millar 1999); and immigrant gardeners in Los Angeles (Huerta 2011). Venkatesh (2006), in an extensive study of what he called the "shady world" of the economy of a Southside Chicago low-income African American neighborhood, noted the blurry edges between the informal and outright illegal economies. For example, securing access to any space, whether an alley, abandoned building, or park, for the purpose of running an informal business *always* required getting permission from some entity that claimed ownership over it, often a street gang. Duneier (2001), in a landmark study of African American printed matter street vendors in Manhattan, also noted an extensive system of informal property rights that controlled access to coveted street corners with high sales potential. Both Duneier and Venkatesh noted that the "shady world," however forbidding to outsiders, is not anarchic, but highly structured according to broadly understood behavioral practices and moral codes. This insight is relevant to the underground housing economy in southeast Los Angeles.

New insights into informal housing in the Global North

Recognition of informal *housing* as a phenomenon worthy of study within the high-income world has been, for the most part, even more recent than studies on informality in general in these countries. A particularly important branch of this scholarship has worked to reorient perceptions about working class suburbs of the early and mid 20th century in the United States. The strong and enduring image of

the contrast between a blighted, semi-abandoned, and heavily African American urban core and comprehensively-planned, upwardly mobile, and racially exclusionary suburbs that arose during the era of the urban crisis in the mid 20th century (cf. Jackson 1987; Self 2003) has made it difficult for the complicating narrative of the self-built working class suburb to gain a toehold.

Recently, scholars have begun to unearth historical examples that show that not all suburbs built during this period were "bourgeois utopias" (Fishman 1989). An early argument along these lines came from Barnett (1978), who applied the memorable term "libertarian suburbs" to communities developed on the outskirts of Stockton, California. He described the residents of these places as people with an ethos of prickly individualism, who cherished their freedom to practice livelihood activities, such as auto repair and animal husbandry, on their properties, even if prohibited by the zoning codes favored by those inhabiting "orderly suburbs." Above all, the libertarian suburbanites disdained the tax increases occasionally proposed to upgrade the minimal or nonexistent infrastructure (lacking sidewalks, for example) that had accompanied the original subdivision of their parcels. In Nicolaides' (2002) magnificent history of daily life—including auto-construction—and politics in the area that I call the City of Gateway (a study about much more will be said in Chapter 4), the author noted a similar ethos that she terms *plain-folk Americanism*. In the case of Stockton, the new supply of lots suitable for the libertarian suburban way of life ceased with the vertical integration of real estate development beginning in the 1940s, although the lifestyles that Barnett describes persisted for decades hence.

Harris (1999) described his historical exploration of early 20th century "shacktown" settlements on the outskirts of Toronto as an "American tragedy," for he argued that similar processes were underway on the peripheries of cities throughout North America during the period. Unlike the Stockton example reviewed above, Harris noted a culture of mutual aid, in which shacktown newcomers who had recently purchased a cheap vacant lot would accept assistance from their more established neighbors in the construction of their houses in return for the obligation to provide similar assistance to their neighbors in the future. He attributed some of the explanation for these practices to a sense of ethnic and class-based kinship, given that the shacktown builders were overwhelmingly men who had recently immigrated to Canada from the British Isles to work in blue-collar occupations. The question of community spirit versus individualism is also an important one in the context of southeast Los Angeles.

In contemporary southeast Los Angeles, the informal auto-construction processes differ from those in mid-20th century Stockton and early 20th-century Toronto, and from those described in the era chronicled by Nicolaides (2002), in that they occur within residential neighborhoods that were first built up long ago, usually a half-century or more. Using archaeological, rather than archival, techniques, Groth (2004) documented the practices that homeowners in West Oakland, then a working class "cottage" district situated within walking distance of a large number of industrial jobs, used in the early 20th century to modify their homes over time to meet their changing needs. He drew attention to the contrast between the orderly public face, or front façade, of such cottages, and the shack-like rear

sides of the property, which were often festooned with accreted, improvised additions such as toilet rooms, extra living space, and the like. In Chapter 5, I will illustrate how this basic dichotomy between the orderly, spacious, front public face and the improvised, crowded, rear private side persists within the residential properties of southeast Los Angeles.

Other scholarship has explored informality in residential settings in the United States that has arisen in the last half century. For instance, Ward (1999) wrote one of the landmark works on *colonias* in border areas of Texas. Colonias are subdivisions in which landowners have formal title to their property, but where light subdivision regulation owing to their location in "Extra-Territorial Jurisdictions" just outside of small cities allowed them to be legally built without paved roads or water and sewer service. In his cross-border comparison of Texas colonias with their counterparts on the Mexican side, Ward noticed a distinct lack of political organizing and community cohesion that led him to characterize US colonias as *settlements* rather than communities. He attributed this to their low physical density; the formal title that their residents households have, which eliminates the organizing needed for regularization of deeds on informally occupied land in Mexico; and the Contract for Deed, which is an exploitative mortgage-like debt instrument in which the colonia's developer wields ongoing power over its residents.

Importantly, colonia residents are depicted in the popular press as though they are all unauthorized immigrants, even though a majority of them are not, further diminishing colonias' political influence (ibid). Scholarship by Mukhija and Monkonnen (2006) on informal settlements in southern California showed, in any case, that such places arise in a variety of regulatory and demographic contexts. Furthermore, by demonstrating that dozens of colonias in California and elsewhere have been unable to access funding from three federal programs designed to upgrade infrastructure in border-adjacent colonias, the authors showed that stigmatization and political invisibility of such communities carries all-too-real consequences for their residents (ibid).

Informal housing in the California Central Valley town of Parlier arises from the extreme seasonal nature of demand for farmworker housing coupled with the steady disappearance of housing for migratory laborers on the farms themselves (Buckley and Littmann 2010). Something of a "Parlier literature" has developed, which has allowed a deeper look at the informal housing market that allows homeowners to rent out, for instance, bunks in "back houses" on the rear of their properties during the times of peak labor demand from growers. Kissam (1998) contrasted Parlier with Immokalee, Florida, a town with a similar economic function of providing housing and other services for farmworkers, but with an informal economy dominated by exploitative middleman figures, such as labor contractors and owners of bunkhouses. Kissam labels this type of informal economy an *artificial support network* (ibid).

While Parlier researchers are not blind to the exploitation that occurs within its housing economy, and certainly not to the disadvantaged structural position of farmworkers within the Central Valley economy, Kissam and others posit that the Parlier model, which is based on *village and kinship networks*, offers more of a buffer

from the brutal realities of the agricultural economy than Immokalee's artificial support networks (ibid). A farmworker finding seasonal accommodation in a backhouse in Parlier owned by a relative or by a person referred by an acquaintance from his home village, in other words, is less likely to encounter extreme exploitation than if he were arranging housing with a middleman, a complete stranger, in Immokalee (ibid). Buckley and Littman (2010) emphasized the importance of politics in bringing about this contrast: in the 1970s, a dramatic, sudden, and total takeover of the Parlier City Council by Chicanos, many of them allied with the farmworker labor movement of the time, led to a far more sympathetic engagement of the city's bureaucratic and enforcement machinery with the informal housing economy than had been the case previously, when the City Council was entirely dominated by representatives of the town's Anglo elite minority. Runsten et al. (1995) provided a caution about the limitations of the Parlier model, if such a thing can be said to exist: people arriving there from, for example, the southern Mexican states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, without ties to the kinship networks that predominate in Parlier, can be excluded from sympathetic treatment. In general, the Parlier literature serves as an important example of Roy's reminder that "which kind of informality?" is as crucial of a question, if not more so, than "informal or formal?" when it comes to analyzing a housing market such as that of southeast Los Angeles.

As mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, while informal housing is beginning to be taken seriously in the United States and elsewhere in the Global North, there is a relative dearth of scholarship in this vein situated within the quintessential core locations of the contemporary capitalist economy: large metropolitan regions in the US. The work of Mukhija (2014), described in the next chapter, is one welcome exception. Another important work comes from Mahler's (1995) sweeping ethnographic study, trans-national in scale, of the lives of Central and South American immigrants living on Long Island. One chapter of Mahler's book is a vivid, in-depth description of what she labels the *encargado* system of informal housing. It hinges on the actions of well-established immigrants, who lease (or occasionally manage to purchase) apartments or houses, located within Long Island's small and dispersed Latino enclaves, and then sublease them to immigrants at high enough densities that they are able to subsidize their own living costs or even clear a profit. To use Kissam's (1998) terminology, Mahler (1995) portrays the *encargardo* housing economy on Long Island as a quintessential artificial support network.

In her book, Mahler (ibid) reported a number of important findings about the participants in the *encargado* system. First, the "people in charge"—the immigrants who serve as the intermediaries between the usually white, native-born and absentee property owners and the tenants—view themselves as entrepreneurs rather than as people providing a service to their countrymen and countrywomen.[7] Second, the ethos of reciprocal hospitality that is widespread in the immigrants' home countries in Latin America is largely absent.

[7] *Encargado* is the Spanish word for "the person in charge."

Mahler (ibid) offered several reasons for the breakdown in hospitality (even among and between members of the same family), and the resulting shortfall in community spirit and political organization. One is the extreme economic pressures on housing, which was often not in short supply in the immigrants' home communities, especially for those who originated from rural areas. Another is the unrelenting pressure to send money home. Ironically, the supremely self-sacrificing act, typical among immigrants to Long Island, of sending almost all of their surplus earnings to their families in their home countries, even while living a difficult, austere life in the United States, inhibits the formation of tighter community bonds in their new homes. Perhaps partly as a result, the immigrants individualize their successes and failures, and do not critique the larger structural forces, or even the higher-level individual people, that have driven their need to immigrate in the first place, or that preserve their low status and poor living conditions in the United States. Their resentment is almost exclusively directed towards their co-ethnics, including those occupying the role of the *encargado*. While the *encargados* occupy only a middle, not an upper, rung in the ladder of the local housing economy, they are its sole representatives with whom overworked and financially stressed recent immigrants come into contact. The results, unsurprisingly, are a dearth of community spirit, ethnic solidarity, and the political organizing that might otherwise be expected to flow from them. Mahler's results point to the importance of being attentive to the distinction between the presence of artificial support networks versus family and kinship networks in the informal housing economy within a metropolitan region.

A non-US region of the Global North is another case with intriguing parallels to Southeast Los Angeles: southern Europe. Allen, Barlow, Léal, Maloutas, and Padovani (2004) made a case for considering the housing markets of Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece as part of a distinctive analytical category, in contradistinction to the traditional view that these countries merely represent underdeveloped versions of northern European housing economies. This is in large part due to the importance in Southern Europe of family and kinship networks, in contrast to the northern European notion of the nuclear household. The *extended family*, to Allen and her coauthors, is typically much larger than a nuclear household, and can encompass multiple generations in addition to people included via horizontal kinship links. Families in southern Europe tend to be much larger and more cohesive than in the north, in part due to lower divorce rates, the practice of adult children living with their parents until marriage, and cultural traditions of patrimonial inheritance (ibid).

In southern Europe, in part because of late industrialization and the corresponding lack of formal jobs, and in part because of housing shortages brought about by a comparative dearth of social housing, families cooperate to provide housing for their members. They mobilize the resources at their disposal, such as the construction skills common among many male family members who often took construction jobs during the period when the family originally moved to an urban area from its ancestral rural village. Strategies include what the authors called *self-promotion*, a type of auto-construction that is the self-directed construction of family

compounds, often including separate apartments for family members such as elderly parents, and often in violation of land use regulations.

The southern European housing literature offers some useful parallels to the housing market in southeast Los Angeles. First, the notion of the family as an important unit of analysis is germane in southeast Los Angeles, where extended kinship networks and chain migrations are also common. Second, there are parallels in some of the underlying economic drivers, including late industrialization.[8] The common experience of migrants being just as much *pushed* to the city—in Los Angeles by wars and economic hardship in immigrants' home countries, in southern Europe by the labor-saving mechanization of agriculture—as *pulled* by its jobs exhibits some commonalities. These conditions help explain a third parallel, that of the centrality of informality to the housing market, in which new arrivals turn to improvised housing solutions wherever they can be found (and with social housing largely out of the question as a solution in both settings). This informality can take highly divergent forms. For example, De Leo (2011) has written about entire unpermitted subdivisions on the outskirts of Naples, a product of weak local governance and its partial seizure by organized crime. In Los Angeles, no analogue exists to the off-the-books subdivisions that exist throughout southern Europe. Nevertheless, the southern European case offers an intriguing counterexample with which the Los Angeles example can be usefully interrogated.

Accessory Dwellings Units

Since the early 1980s, a body of literature has arisen on what are sometimes known as "Accessory Dwelling Units," "secondary units," and by other names. (The term "ADU" will be used here for brevity.) For our purposes here, an ADU can be defined as a dwelling unit, located on a residential parcel, that is subordinate in terms of both size and architectural prominence to the main house or houses, and that has an independent exterior entrance, cooking facilities, and at least one bathroom. An ADU can take a variety of physical forms, including a converted garage; a flat located above a garage; an apartment partitioned from the main house; an addition to the main house; or a separate, freestanding structure.

Perhaps ADUs have captured the attention of researchers, despite their diminutive physical footprint, because they serve as both a focus for and a symbol of public hopes and fears concerning the future of the residential neighborhood. Especially in the United States, where the "myth of single-family ownership" is perhaps more entrenched than anywhere else (De Neufville and Barton 1987), ADUs embody the possibility of the evolution of the quintessentially quiet, residential street, or perhaps its undoing. Because ADU-like housing arrangements

[8] Los Angeles industrialized much earlier than most of southern Europe, with the exception of northern Spain and northern Italy. But LA's *reindustrialization* of recent decades (discussed in Chapter 4) can be seen as a new, distinct episode of industrial growth that has occurred within the physical, jurisdictional and social shell of the earlier, classically Fordist period of industrial growth that occupied roughly the middle third of the 20th century.

represent a substantial portion, though by no means all, of the extralegal housing processes in southeast Los Angeles County that are the subject of this dissertation (as discussed extensively in Chapter 5), the "ADU literature" is briefly summarized here.[9]

Schafran (2012) has presented a useful framework for understanding and categorizing the various strands of the ADU literature. The discussion below is organized according to a slightly modified version in order to summarize the insights of each of seven categories, and to evaluate its relevance—or lack thereof — to this dissertation. As might be expected, there is some overlap between the various categories. The last strand discussed, ADUs as informal housing, is the most relevant to this dissertation. But it is also the newest, and the most underdeveloped.

ADUs as elder housing

Some of the earliest works on ADUs, in the 1980s, noted the confluence of two trends in the United States: the aging of the population and declining household sizes. Because of the increasing needs for both income and assistance by elderly homeowners, and the simultaneous availability of surplus living space in houses occupied by "empty nester" households, the ADU, usually seen as the "conversion" of existing surplus space rather than the construction of needed new space, seemed to offer a solution (cf. Varady 1990; Hare 1989). Later retrospective studies tended to find disappointing results from policy initiatives that sought to encourage elderly homeowners to carve ADUs out of their houses (Retsinas and Retsinas 1991; Chapman and Howe 2001; Antoninetti 2008). A related set of proposals sought to encourage homeowners, not necessarily elderly ones, to install easily removable cottages in the backyards of their houses specifically for the purpose of housing elderly relatives or tenants. The results, in the United States at least, were if anything more disappointing (Hare 1991; Antoninetti 2008).

The common finding of the retrospective studies focusing on ADUs and the elderly was that seniors, whether homeowners or renters, had difficulty either taking on the expense and burden of making major physical modifications to the properties that they owned, or of uprooting themselves to a new location to dwell in an "elder cottage." In any case, the perspective of ADUs as elder housing is not terribly relevant to the case of southeast Los Angeles for several reasons. Household sizes in southeast Los Angeles County have grown, not shrunk in recent decades; living space is in short supply, not in surplus; and the population has gotten younger, not older.

[9] Not all of the extralegal housing processes described in this dissertation fit the commonly-recognized definition of ADUs. For instance, recreational vehicles (RVs), serving as permanent housing, and parked on residential lots; houses converted into dormitories and group homes; and inhabited rear lot sheds lacking bathrooms are all examples of non-ADU housing arrangements seen in southeast LA. The spectrum of these practices is described in Chapter 5.

ADUs as infill

A separate strand of ADU research focuses on the possibility of ADUs creating new housing in already-built up areas, a process that is frequently today referred to as "infill." This perspective has suggested that ADUs have an applicability beyond simply housing provision by and for the elderly. Gellen (1985), in what remains to this day the only book-length treatment of ADUs, noted that the ADU renter population mirrored renters as a whole, thus critiquing the common use of "granny flat" as a synonym for ADUs, and suggesting the potential for ADUs to add rental housing serving a broad audience to already established suburban neighborhoods. This would help such areas offset their gradual depopulation due to declining household sizes and the drop in the number of children living in them. Howe (1990) wrote an early study that examined, using her architect's eye, the design modifications and physical challenges of inserting ADUs into existing houses.

One common theme of the ADU as infill literature has been that existing land use regulations, particularly zoning, serve as a barrier to the creation of permitted ADUs. For example, Gellen (1985) highlighted a distinction between single-family houses and duplexes, expressed in the majority opinion of the seminal *Euclid v. Ambler* Supreme Court decision of 1926, that is reflected in zoning codes throughout the nation, much to the detriment of ADUs. Antoninetti (2008) reviewed recent efforts in a small number of cities, notably Santa Cruz, California, to dismantle such barriers. In this more contemporary incarnation of the ADUs as infill literature, ADUs are not simply seen as a means to allow suburbs to remain socially and economically viable, as they were in 1985 when Gellen wrote his book, but also as one approach among several for addressing regional-scale problems such as traffic congestion, automobile emissions, lack of demand for viable public transit service, and others.

The ADUs as infill literature is generally more applicable to the case in this dissertation than the ADUs as elder housing strand, although key differences remain. For example, in southeast Los Angeles the tight zoning restrictions on ADUs have simply shifted ADU-like housing arrangements to extralegal modes rather than thwarting them altogether. Neighborhoods in the area that have drastically increased their density through infill via ADUs are an unplanned reality, rather than the hoped-for, eventual outcome of deliberate planning initiatives of the sort proposed by many scholars writing in the genre of ADUs as infill.

ADUs as affordable housing

Still another branch of ADU scholarship focuses on the possibilities for ADUs to provide unsubsidized affordable housing for their tenants. In this regard, ADUs exist in strong contrast to typical multifamily housing, which tends to be either too expensive for low- to moderate-income tenants, or else either dilapidated or heavily subsidized if not, particularly in high-cost markets. ADUs tend to be much cheaper for their tenants than the otherwise comparable rental apartments in larger multifamily buildings that would be their most obvious substitutes. Early studies by Sternlieb (1966) and Krohn, Fleming, and Manzer (1977) noted this characteristic of housing with ADU-like characteristics, i.e. small owner-occupied buildings with small apartments rented on the open market, in Newark and Montreal, respectively.

Subsequent work remarked upon the affordability of ADUs on Long Island (1984), in Edmonton (Gratton 2011), and Daly City in the San Francisco Bay Area (Cabansagan 2011).

Many of the studies above note that the rental market for ADUs differs in its fundamental operation from the standard apartment rental market in ways that may favor particular tenants or would-be tenants and disfavor others. Sternlieb (1966) and Krohn et al. (1977), in what might be thought of as precursor studies to the ADU literature, found that mixed-tenure housing arrangements have a stabilizing effect on neighborhoods, and that non-professional management and operation of the rental units reduces tenant-landlord tensions. On the other hand, Rudel (1984) found evidence that the very non-professionalism, and perhaps the lack of applicability of anti-discrimination laws, in the renting of ADUs in Babylon, Long Island led to African Americans being systematically excluded from realizing the affordability benefits promised by ADUs.

The picture painted by the ADUs as affordable housing literature is entirely applicable to the case of southeast Los Angeles presented in this dissertation. Informal housing practices, including ADU-like ones, provide affordable housing in an overall housing economy in which such opportunities are otherwise scarce to nonexistent. In addition, the informal housing in southeast Los Angeles, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, is not open nor transparent to all would-be renters. Instead, much of it is mediated by pre-existing social networks, personal connections, and familial ties on the part of property owners and (informal) managers. This has profound impacts on the lived experience of non-homeowners living in informal housing in southeast Los Angeles.

ADUs as enablers of choice

The ADUs as enablers of choice segment of the ADU literature emphasizes how this type of housing is one of the few with the potential to fill the "missing middle" between the prototypical "American Dream" housing package of the single-family house occupied by a nuclear family, on the one hand, and professionally-managed, large-scale multifamily housing, on the other. Writers in this vein note that the current bifurcated housing market limits choices that home seekers, particularly renters, have, and that it is increasingly out of step with an ever-more diverse America with its profusion of non-traditional (i.e. non-nuclear) household arrangements (cf. 1996).

Hemmens et al (1996) defined the concept of *sharing* in housing, or the collective usage of various aspects of the housing package, such as backyards, laundry machines, or even interior kitchens and bathrooms by members of different households. Sharing can also include the pooling of labor as well as the mutual occupation of physical spaces; for example, ADU homeowners and tenants can exchange useful labor such as household chores, child care, and other important tasks.

It would be a mistake to be blind to the pitfalls of sharing arrangements. Marris (1996) noted "the trouble with sharing," highlighting the need to make distinctions between sharing of different types and intensities. Overall, Hemmens et al. (1996) categorized ADU-like arrangements as one of the most private forms of

sharing, and thus one of the least problematic in comparison to other sharing arrangements such as boardinghouses, group homes, and the like. This is because ADUs realize efficiency in the sharing of certain housing resources, such as backyards and laundry machines, while maintaining privacy among households for the most sensitive and private spaces, particularly kitchens and bathrooms.

Scholarship in the vein of ADUs as enablers of choice has also demonstrated that ADUs increase choices for ADU homeowners as well as renters. Perhaps the best example is Ruud and Nordvik's (Ruud 1999) study demonstrating that in Norway, ADUs are a common mechanism for allowing homeowners to cope with heavy debt loads. Another is a book-length treatment advocating architectural design that facilitates modifications of Montreal's "plex" housing stock, which has ADU-like characteristics, over time in order to accommodate changes in the composition and needs of a given family (Friedman 2001)

Is the "choice" framework applicable to this dissertation? The answer to this question is debatable. On the one hand, the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles, including the subset that consists of ADU-like housing arrangements, for many of its participants looks more like a means of coping with a total lack of other viable housing options than an expansion in the level of choice. In addition, Mahler's (1995) study of informal housing on Long Island suggests that the households whose housing needs are most difficult to accommodate are nuclear families, not "non-traditional" households. Seen this way, the informal housing market in southeast LA may be not so much an enabler of choice as a last resort, or at best an acceptable option where no others exist. On the other hand, aspects of the physical expression of the informal housing market are congruent with cultural preferences of some property owners, an argument that falls under the emergent notions of "Latino New Urbanism" and "ethnurbanisms" (Mendez 2005; Irazábal 2012).

ADUs as avant-garde design

While some researchers, including Howe (1990), and more recently including Duff (2011), have examined aspects of ADUs from a design perspective for quite some time, there has been a very recent trend of ADUs seen as chic, avant-garde design. By and large, this latter sensibility has not found its way into the academic literature. It includes linkages to the so-called "tiny house" movement, which idealizes living in small spaces for ecological reasons, but also for the purpose of symbolically displaying anti-materialist values. Strikingly designed tiny houses, of which ADUs can be perfect exemplars, can be found in various magazines, blogs and other parts of the popular press.[10]

Virtually no trace of the ADU as avant-garde design is apparent in southeast Los Angeles. ADU-like constructions tend to be improvised and utilitarian, as was the case a century and a half ago in cottage districts (Groth 2004), rather than self-consciously aesthetically designed. They are typically designed to be unobtrusive and imperceptible, rather than eye-catching and symbolic. Whereas promoters of the ADU as avant-garde design emphasize future possibilities and deliberately direct

[10] For a book-length treatment, see Litchfield 2011.

their creative energies towards their chosen form of housing, in southeast Los Angeles ADU-like arrangements have long been in existence simply as a result of thousands of people doing their best to eke out a place to find shelter.

ADUs as illegal structures

A side effect of the strict zoning that typically impinges on the legal installation of ADUs, noted above in the description of the "ADUs as infill" literature, is the construction of unpermitted ADUs. In what could be called the "ADUs as illegal structures" sub-genre, the large numbers of non-permitted ADUs are noted, and these dwellings are generally described as *illegal.* Generally speaking, the distinction between *illegal* and *informal* or *extralegal,* as noted in the definition of informality reviewed at the beginning of this chapter (Castells and Portes 1989), is not made. Most such examples are from the popular press or are gray literature. Some demonstrate the large numbers of unpermitted ADUs (cf. Chavez and Quinn 1987; SPUR 2001), while others review attempts to create amnesty programs that allow for the retrospective permitting of unpermitted units (cf. HUD 2008).

Much popular media coverage has emphasized the purported illegality of ADUs, particularly garage conversions, within southeast Los Angeles (examples are discussed in detail in Chapter 8). While such accounts provide valuable historical accounts and data on the issue in southeast Los Angeles, they seldom deviate from a rigid construction of illegal status as the sole counterpart to legal, or formal, status for housing units. As seen in the final strand of ADU literature, this conceptualization has only begun to be challenged very recently.

ADUs as informal housing

Perhaps the most recent strand of ADU literature deploys a theoretical concept, informality, incubated in the Global South and uses it to interrogate the functioning of informal housing markets in the United States. While the subject matter has been heavily trodden for the past few decades, the theoretical lens through which it is viewed is new.

Researchers operating in this vein are accustomed to the limitations of traditional data sets, particularly US Census and American Housing Survey data, in terms of their usefulness for informal housing markets. They therefore turn to novel techniques to study extralegal housing. A notable recent example is the work of Mukhija, who has used his longstanding personal and professional engagement with informality to interrogate the functioning of housing markets in rural California (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2006). In a recent study, he pioneers the usage of a popular online real estate website to quantify the prevalence of unpermitted ADUs among single family houses in Los Angeles (Mukhija 2014). This technique will be built upon in an analysis presented in Chapter 6. Cabansagan (2011) also explicitly engages with informality as a driving mechanism of the market for ADUs in her comparative examination of the informal housing markets in Daly City in the San Francisco Bay Area and Pacoima in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles.

At the present time, the subset of ADU studies that view the ADU as informal housing is fledgling and barely developed. This dissertation is intended to fit into this new genre, and to make a contribution to it. At the same time, it is informed by

insights that previous studies in the other branches of ADU literature have contributed over the past three decades.

Chapter 2 References

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Chapter 3: Methodology

> Beyond Ghor there was a city. All its inhabitants were blind. A king with his entourage arrived nearby; he brought his army and camped in the desert. He had a mighty elephant, which he used in attack and to increase the people's awe.
>
> The populace became anxious to see the elephant, and some sightless from among this blind community ran like fools to find it.
>
> As they did not know the form or shape of the elephant they groped sightlessly, gathering information by touching some part of it.
>
> Each thought that he knew something, because he could feel a part.
>
> …
>
> The man whose hand had reached an ear was asked about the elephant's nature. He said: "It is a large, rough thing, wide and broad, like a rug."
>
> And the one who had felt the trunk said: "I have the real facts about it. It is like a straight and hollow pipe, awful and destructive."
>
> The one who had felt its feet and legs said: "It is mighty and firm, like a pillar."
>
> Each had felt one part out of many. Each had perceived it wrongly. No mind knew all.
> — "The Blind Ones and the Matter of the Elephant," ancient Sufi fable.[1]

This chapter details the methodology used for this dissertation. Sections describe the general approach used; the rationale for using a single case; and the four major and two minor methods employed.

General Approach: Three Methodological Pillars of the Dissertation

The conceptualization of this dissertation rests on three basic pillars. Each of them affects how the research question and subquestions are formulated, and therefore how the project itself has been designed. In addition, each of these pillars has influenced the methods that I have used to go about answering the questions.

First, following Peter Ward's influential study of Texas and Mexican colonias (Ward 1999), this dissertation is designed to use an *institutional-process* research design for the purpose of uncovering the inner workings of a housing market about which little is known. Ward describes an institutional-process approach as one in

[1] From *Tales of the Dervishes* (Shah 1967).

which the housing market that is the unit of analysis is construed as something embedded within a larger context of public and private institutions. In this view, politics and social relations are not seen as separate from the housing market, but rather as forces that influence and shape it. In addition, the fine details about how actors operating within the market relate to the relevant institutions, and interact with each other, matter a great deal. For this reason, these details need to be closely examined, rather than simply assumed to unfold in a particular manner.

Ward contrasts the institutional-process approach with neoclassical economics, which he views as the other major tradition in research studies that analyze how housing markets function (ibid). While neoclassical economics has taught us a great deal, and has much to teach us still, it makes simplifying assumptions that are particularly untenable in a place such as southeast Los Angeles. The emphasis on local politics and governance in this dissertation, with the particular focus on code enforcement, are inspired by Ward's approach, but would typically be downplayed in a neoclassical economics treatment of the same housing market.

The second methodological inspiration for this dissertation is AlSayyad and Roy's (2004) *transnational method.* This epistemological framework resists the worldwide application of one-size-fits-all models that originate from particular geographies. Instead, it advocates using experiences grounded in particular places to interrogate housing processes in other regions, and in so doing to reveal dynamics in other parts of the world that are so deeply rooted in their place as to be invisible to scholars steeped in their home contexts. It does not require a research design that compares cases from different nations (although this can be useful). Instead, it entails using theoretical *ideas* originating from particular contexts and using them to ask new questions in faraway places.

AlSayyad (2004) points out that some of the earliest proto-informality scholarship from a half century ago adapted for the Third World concepts that had been hatched decades earlier in the Chicago School of sociology and urban theory (cf. Lewis 1966). This pattern of adapting theoretical ideas originating in the Global North, typically by scholars whose life and personal experiences had primarily resided there, to the Global South persisted for decades (AlSayyad 2004). A subsequent wave of scholarship by the likes of Turner (1977), Perlman (1975) and others sought to intensively study Latin America on its own terms. But eventually, this welcome upending of North-to-South knowledge transmission itself yielded to reductionist thinking; much later, for example, Bayat (2000) noted a mismatch between Latin America-bred ideas about urban informality and development that had become widespread in developmentalist circles with the on-the-ground realities of other parts of the world such as South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Roy (2009) argues that Third World cities, in various regions of the world, are today the true testing grounds for new urbanisms.

Given the everywhere-to-everywhere pattern of knowledge transmission that is possible in today's world, the time is therefore right for "transnational trespassings" (Roy 2004) . This is especially true in the United States, which perhaps because of the enormous size of its population and economy, and its position as the world's leading economic and political power, has a distinctively inward-looking

tradition of housing research. Thus, AlSayyad and Roy's (2004) invitation to use the transnational method seems particularly apropos in the US, and maybe nowhere more so than in southeast Los Angeles, where typical understandings derived from most US-based housing research seem so ill-suited.

Last, this dissertation incorporates a thoroughly *mixed-methods* research design. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used, and each type is essential to the whole. Quantitative methods are needed to establish the size and the prominence of the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles, while allowing for patterns within it to be systematically detected and reported. At the same time, only qualitative methods can uncover the daily practices and institutional linkages that undergird the functioning of the informal housing market. The qualitative methods also buttress the quantitative aspect of the dissertation; there is no substitute for on-the-ground knowledge for the purpose of interpreting what quantified data is revealing. Without it, the potential for misconstruing its apparent results is high. Meanwhile, quantitative data helps with the assessment of the frequency and prevalence of findings that emerge qualitiatively. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the dissertation do not merely yield complementary information that separately contribute to an overall whole; they strengthen and support each other.

Single Case Research Design

This dissertation uses a *single-case research design.* The unit of analysis is the housing market, and it is studied in one location, i.e. southeast Los Angeles, which constitutes the single case. Yin (2008) identifies five circumstances under which a single-case research design is justifiable for social science research. These are where a case is *critical* for testing a well-formulated theory; where it is *unique;* where it offers the opportunity for a *longitudinal* study; where it is *typical* or *representative*; and where it is *extreme*. Ideas related to informality have been debated for decades with little or no reference to southeast Los Angeles. In addition, southeast Los Angeles is not unique, even within the US, in the influence of informal processes on its housing market; as noted in previous sections, those processes have long been observed in other parts of Los Angeles and in other parts of the nation. Conducting a longitudinal study for this dissertation is not feasible. And as will be discussed at length in Chapter 4, southeast Los Angeles is subject to a constellation of structural forces, including reindustrialization, jurisdictional fragmentation remarkable even by US standards, and breathtakingly rapid ethno-racial turnover, that make it anything but a typical US housing market.

But southeast Los Angeles does meet Yin's criterion of being an *extreme* single case with respect to housing informality. Since the mid 20th century, Los Angeles has stood out for the housing market pressures it has experienced when compared against the rest of the nation's largest cities in 1950 (Ryan 2012). A great deal of these pressures have been the result of massive immigration inflows, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, leading to a 30% foreign-born population share for the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2000, higher than in any other metropolitan area of 5 million or

more in the US, and far above that year's national average of 10%.[2] And perhaps because these already extreme regionwide pressures have been particularly operative within the southeast portion of LA County, the City of Gateway has among the greatest prevalence of extralegal housing within the region. By focusing on a single case in which housing informality is widespread and widely known, and where many people living and working in the area are likely to have vivid opinions, impressions, and beliefs about it, this dissertation strives to answer the primary research question (introduced in Chapter 1): *What is the role of informality in the housing market in southeast Los Angeles?*

Methods Employed

The resemblance of the informal housing market of southeast Los Angeles to an elephant, as suggested in the quote that opened this chapter, is perhaps not immediately apparent. But there is wisdom in the ancient tale about a group of blind men each trying to discover the nature of an enormous trunked mammal through the sense of touch alone. It reminds us that something with as overwhelming and dominating of a presence as an elephant can be paradoxically difficult to grasp in its entirety. In this spirit, and in keeping with the mixed methods approach discussed in the previous section, this dissertation employs four major and two minor methods. While no one of them can, on its own, provide a comprehensive picture of something as simultaneously omnipresent and recondite as an informal housing market, it is perhaps possible for this collection of methods to begin to bring it to light when their results are taken together. The four major methods, which unearth new data, and the two minor methods, which analyze existing data to generate new insights, are described below.

Major method: code enforcement survey

The Code Enforcement Officer Survey (whose results are detailed in Chapter 7) is a survey of code enforcement officers working in communities, both incorporated and unincorporated, throughout Los Angeles County and five nearby counties. Its spatial scope allows extralegal housing conditions within southeast Los Angeles jurisdictions to be contextualized within the larger setting of the metropolitan region that contains them. The survey is intended to help address one of the three research sub-questions: How do local code enforcement functions affect the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles?

The Code Enforcement Officer Survey asks respondents to estimate the prevalence of extralegal housing conditions in the jurisdictions where they are employed, to answer questions about their workload, and to assess whether political interference, bureaucratic obstacles or other factors hinder their work. The results allow several questions about code enforcement in the Los Angeles region to be addressed, including:

i) What is the spatial variation in and pattern of informal market processes in greater Los Angeles?

[2] See Table 5-1, page 17, in US Census (2001).

ii) What is the staffing capacity of code enforcement in relation to what would be theoretically needed to attain widespread compliance with zoning and other codes that apply to residential properties?; and
iii) What factors, if any, aside from staffing constraints, are affecting enforcement?

The survey was administered via the Internet using the Survey Monkey website. See Appendix 3-1 for a representation of the online survey instrument. The sample frame included all municipal employees (of whatever exact title and rank, and housed within whatever department provides such functions) performing code enforcement work in the field. The sample frame included code enforcement personnel from all incorporated cities and county governments (with two exceptions) within six Southern California urban counties: Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino.[3] To make contact with the potential survey respondents, I used three methods in sequence:

i) On February 4, 2013, I emailed a survey response request to the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO) listserv. I had obtained prior approval from the moderator of the listserv to do so. Only responses that originated from within the six counties of the sample frame were included in the response set.

ii) I sent emails, in two waves, to all code enforcement officer email addresses publicly listed online for the jurisdictions within the sample frame. Emails were only sent to addresses listed for jurisdictions from which I had not already received at least one response. The first wave, on February 12, 2013, was sent to 338 email addresses. The second wave, on February 19, 2013, was sent to 209 email addresses. Not all of the email addresses proved to be valid (i.e., some of them "bounced back").

iii) I arranged to send postcards via US Mail, in two waves, to all jurisdictions from which I had not received at least one response. In the case of counties from which I had not yet received at least one response, I had the postcards sent to all field offices with code enforcement functions, and not only the central offices. I mailed the postcards to the address listed on each jurisdiction's website as the central mailing address for the municipal department where its code enforcement functions were housed. I initiated the order (implemented by a mailing company) to print and mail 160 postcards on February 25, 2013, followed by an order to print and mail 153 more postcards on March 18, 2013.

[3] The two exceptions were the City of Industry in Los Angeles County, which has a miniscule residential population and no code enforcement functions decscribed on its website, and the City of Perris, whose code enforcement functions are performed by Riverside County. Various jurisdictions are "contract cities" that engage with third-party private entities to provide code enfocement functions; in these cases, I attempted to contact the municipal officials listed as responsible for overseeing these contracts.

The email and postcard solicitations used to source survey responses via these three methods are reproduced in Appendix 3-2. Out of 205 jurisdictions contacted, 114 responses were obtained from people employed by 79 distinct cities and counties. Because I do not know either how many code enforcement officers exist in the six Southern California counties included in the sample frame, or how many of them received an invitation to participate in the survey, it is not possible to calculate a precise response rate. However, it can be said that code enforcement officers representing 38.5% of the contacted jurisdictions responded to the survey.

Major method: rental market analysis

To create an Open Market Rental Data set, I collected, analyzed, and recorded 158 online advertisements for both extralegal and permitted rented living arrangements (as described in detail in Chapter 6). This information was supplemented by rents reported by interview informants for various types of informal rental arrangements that would be unlikely to be advertised online. Combining these data allows for the full spectrum of rental options in southeast Los Angeles, ranging from an extralegal backyard shack barely large enough to accommodate a bed to a permitted detached single-family house, to be summarized while accounting for geographic and dwelling characteristic variations. This makes it possible to present a portrait of the rental housing market in southeast Los Angeles in its entirety, rather than simply a truncated portion that only includes formal dwellings. This, in turn, facilitates quantification of some of the answers to the research sub-question, *How does the informal housing market southeast Los Angeles function?*

Major method: residential sales market analysis

Building on methodology pioneered by Mukhija (2014), online listings for completed sales of 1-4 unit properties are scrutinized for language characteristically associated with the presence of unpermitted space, including garage conversions, unpermitted "bonus rooms," and other configurations. The result is a Property Sales Data Set of 6,717 sales of 1-4 unit properties that both likely included and lacked unpermitted space. This method is described in detail in Chapter 6. The residential sales market data allows for i) a test of the claim that municipal "presale" inspection requirements (described in Chapter 6) impinge on the arms-length sale of residential properties with unpermitted space; and ii) an evaluation, using a hedonic price model, of the hypothesis that unpermitted space boosts a residential property's sales price in the southeast Los Angeles market. It also facilitates addressing the research sub-question of *How does the informal housing market southeast Los Angeles function?*

Major method: interviews and direct observation

The foundation of the qualitative component of this dissertation is a series of 27 interviews that were conducted between the winter of 2013 and the spring of 2014. These interviews have bearing on the main research question as a whole, and on all three research sub-questions. The interview respondents occupy a wide variety of roles within the housing market of southeast Los Angeles, ranging from

everyday citizens to housing market professionals to public servants and policymakers.[4] While telephone interviews were typically from half an hour to an hour in length, in-person interviews tended to range from an hour to sometimes as long as half a day in the case of "ride alongs" (discussed below).

A summary of the interviews by respondent type is provided in Table 3.1. Note that some interviews were with more than one person at once; these are counted once. In addition, follow-up interviews with the same respondent are not counted in the tallies shown in Table 3.1. Interview findings are reported throughout the various chapters in this dissertation.

Table 3.1. A summary of the interviews conducted for this dissertation by type of respondent. Note that some of the interviews included in the tallies were with more than one person at once; those interviews are only counted once despite having multiple participants. In addition, follow-up interviews are not separately counted.

Interviewee type	Count
Homeowner household member	4
Renter household member	1
Code enforcement officer	6
Real estate agent	2
Real estate lender	1
Building contractor	1
Housing or community activist	2
Attorney	1
Private Appraiser	2
City councilperson	2
City staff	2
Housing expert	2
County appraiser staff	1
Total	**27**

Interviewees were identified in several ways. These included an invitation sent over an online discussion group for Latino planners in California; an e-mailed invitation sent to all city council members and city managers in every jurisdiction within the scope of this study; interviewees identified through my personal contacts within southern California planning circles; and interviewees referred by previous respondents ("snowball sampling"). In some instances, interviewees in this dissertation are listed according to fictional names in order to hide their identities, because of possible repercussions to them if they were to be identified, or their decision to remain anonymous. Fictionalized identities are noted where they are used.

Interviews were conducted in person, via telephone, and via online Skype technology. Some of the in-person interviews with code enforcement officers occurred as direct observation, or "ride-along" tours in which I accompanied officers

[4] Two of the interviews were with people whose specific expertise was based in north Orange County rather than southeast Los Angeles. These were included because of the relevance and similarity of extralegal housing market processes in north Orange County to those investigated in this dissertation. In addition, three of the interviews were with respondents who have knowledge that is general to the greater Los Angeles region rather than specific to southeast Los Angeles.

as they drove through the communities in which they work, in some cases while on duty and in other cases during their free time.[5]

Finally, some direct observation occurred from driving and walking tours of southeast Los Angeles that I took unaccompanied. Photos and findings from my field notes from this direct observation are reported throughout this dissertation. In some cases, I show Google Maps or Streetview aerial or street photography to depict certain places, even though I visited them. This is because in those cases I could not have taken a picture without attracting unfavorable attention to my presence as an interloper in the neighborhood.

Minor method: secondary data source analysis

As one of my minor methods, I relied on existing secondary source data to perform analyses on changes in demographics, employment trends, and housing stock characteristics and (formal) housing production over time within southeast Los Angeles. The data sources that I used include the Decennial Census, the American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, and building permit data from the Manufacturing and Construction Division of the US Census Bureau. The trends that are revealed through these data are important in painting an accurate picture in southeast Los Angeles, and in providing important background conditions for informal housing market processes and local politics described throughout the dissertation. The findings from the analyses derived from these secondary data sources are reported in Chapter 4.

Minor method: building footprint analysis

In order to help visualize the change in urban form over several decades due to extralegal infilling processes at the spatial scale of several city blocks, I analyzed the change in building footprints in two locations in southeast Los Angeles. The building footprints are analyzed at two points in time in each case. The building footprints from the early period are inferred via the use of historical Sanborn fire insurance maps, and from Los Angeles County-maintained GIS data from the year 2008 for the recent point in time.

I consider the building footprint analysis to be a minor rather than a major method, because it is confined to only 2 cases, from which it is not possible to extrapolate to the entirety of southeast Los Angeles. This minor method is, however, useful and informative in that it allows for an illustration of the visual pattern of extralegal modifications to the urban form over time, and for rooftop coverage in certain locations to be quantified and compared against requirements in the applicable zoning ordinances. A detailed description of the building footprint analysis technique and its results is provided in Chapter 5.

[5] Prior to one such "ride along" tour, I also accompanied a code enforcement officer to a community meeting that he attended on a weekend as part of his official duties.

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Chapter 4: The City of Gateway: Its History, Economy, Population, and Housing

Consider the following scene from South Gate Park, the flagship public open space in the city of the same name in southeast Los Angeles County, about nine miles from Los Angeles City Hall. It is 6:30 pm on a warm spring evening in 2013. Even to someone who has spent the majority of his life living in medium to large cities, as I have, the crowds in the park are remarkable. Children and their accompanying parents are everywhere, engaged in an almost bewildering variety of sporting activities. It is difficult for me to find a place to stand and take a picture on the wide sidewalk on the edge of the park, since the sidewalks are clogged with hundreds of joggers running two or three abreast. And yet, by all appearances the area surrounding the park is a picture of modest Southern California suburbia: the tree-lined streets are almost exclusively lined with single-family houses, few of them more than one and a half stories tall, and most of them are fronted by green lawns. By all appearances, the scene in the park is an incongruous combination of big city crowding amidst a quintessentially suburban setting.

Or consider the Long Beach Boulevard Station in the City of Lynwood, located some four miles to the southeast. It is a stop on the Green Line light rail, which links the City of Redondo Beach to the west with Norwalk to the east. The Green Line, opened in 1995, seems to almost willfully violate every cardinal rule of transportation planning. For starters, it runs mostly down the center of the right-of-way of Interstate 105, which does not make for a particularly inviting or safe environment for arriving at a transit stop on foot, and forces passengers to breathe in fumes and endure noise from cars and trucks traveling at freeway speeds while they wait for trains. Although the bustling Plaza Mexico mall is conceivably within walking distance of the Long Beach Boulevard stop, it is over half a mile away, and reaching it from the station requires braving crossings of wide, treeless boulevards filled with high-speed traffic. Few other major shopping areas, and no major downtowns, are served by the Green Line. It stops three miles short of connecting to both the region's commuter rail system, on the east, and most egregiously, Los Angeles International Airport on the west. The Green Line was originally conceived as an environmental mitigation for the construction of I-105, the most recent freeway in a region virtually synonymous with them. Before it even opened, it lost its most compelling *raison d'etre* of connecting workers living in the east with industrial jobs in the west when the regional aerospace industry, traditionally centered in the South Bay cities of southwest LA County, sharply contracted in the late 1980s in the wake of defense contract cutbacks following the end of the Cold War (LAEDC 2012).

Just one stop west of Lynwood's Long Beach Boulevard station, at the Willowbrook stop, the north-south Blue Line has a transfer point with the Green Line. The Blue Line is the busiest modern light rail line in the United States, which is perhaps not surprising given that it connects the downtowns of the two largest

cities, Los Angeles and Long Beach, in the nation's second largest metropolitan area. But the surprise is that the Green Line is also, despite all of its shortcomings, remarkably successful in a famously car-dependent metropolis. As of October 2013 the Green Line's ridership exceeded 43,000 passengers per weekday,[1] putting it ahead of entire multi-line light rail systems serving Baltimore and Pittsburgh (APTA 2013). How can a transit line widely derided upon its opening as a ride "from nowhere to nowhere" achieve such results?

The common link in the vignettes from South Gate and from the Long Beach Boulevard Green Line station recounted above is population density. A swath of the southeastern portion of Los Angeles County that includes both of these places exceeds the City of Boston, one of America's iconic exemplars of pre-automobile, tight-knit urbanism, both in absolute population and in population density. This area is what I call *the City of Gateway,* the geographic area that this dissertation focuses upon.

Despite its density, a perception of the City of Gateway as typical postwar American suburbia persists in the minds of both residents and outsiders. As this dissertation argues throughout, much of this paradox in the City of Gateway is explained by the rise of the informal housing market over the past half century or so. To begin to explain how this came to be, this chapter provides a broad overview of the City of Gateway, setting the stage for explorations of the informal housing market's physical expression and inner workings, code enforcement, and local politics in the four subsequent chapters.

The rest of this chapter proceeds in the following way. First, I present my definition, and rationale for the selection and naming, of the City of Gateway. A second section provides a brief, thumbnail history of the area dating back to its origins as a constellation of suburban communities in the early 20th century, relying heavily on the work of the urban historian Becky Nicolaides. The next three sections use a combination of previous scholarship and one of my two minor methods (discussed in Chapter 3), an analysis of census and other secondary data sources, to paint portraits of the drastic changes to the economy, population, and housing stock of the City of Gateway in the half century that has followed the critical historical turning point of the 1965 Watts Riots. The last of these three sections includes results from my other minor method, a housing stock model. The chapter closes with a brief summary of the historical forces that have given rise to the large informal housing market in the City of Gateway, whose rise over the past half century tracks the economic, social, and physical dislocations experienced in the area.

The "City of Gateway" Defined

The City of Gateway: what and where it is

The *City of Gateway*, as I have defined it, is a collection of 10 incorporated cities and four unincorporated communities, all lying in the portion of Los Angeles County that lies to the southeast of downtown Los Angeles (Figure 4.1). This area is

[1] http://www.metro.net/news/ridership-statistics/

part of a larger region known as the Gateway Cities, a collection of 28 incorporated cities and 13 unincorporated communities whose mutual interests are formally represented by the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG).[2]

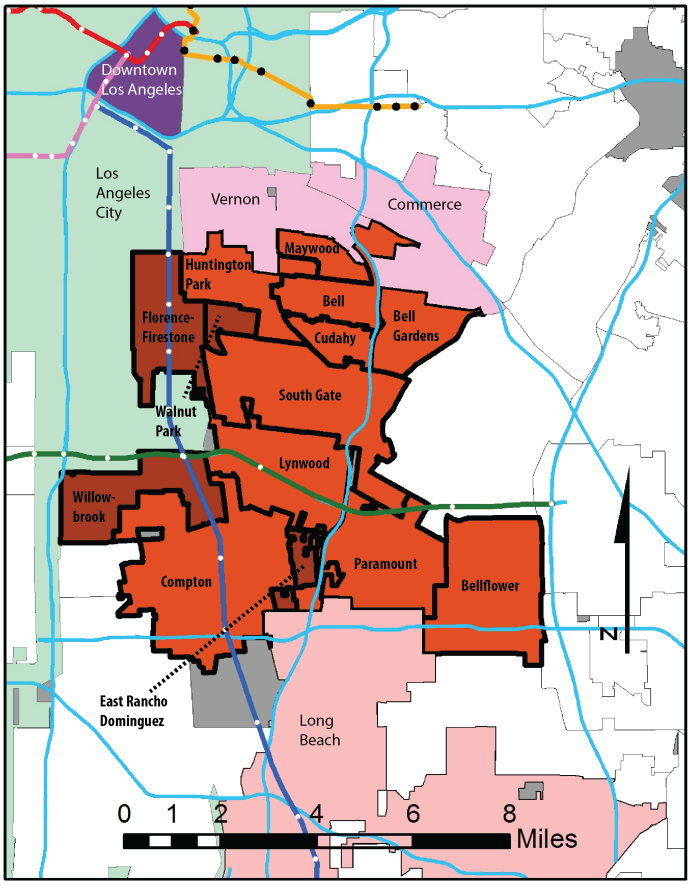

Figure 4.1. The City of Gateway. Incorporated cities are shown in orange, and unincorporated communities in maroon. The freeway network is in light blue, and metro rail (Red Line) and light rail (Gold, Green, and Blue Lines) are shown in the colors for which their individual lines are named. The Exposition Line light rail route (running southwest from downtown Los Angeles) is in pink.

The term "Gateway" in the name for this area is a reference to its strategic location just to the north of the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which together form the largest port complex in the Western Hemisphere,[3] and just to the southeast

[2] See http://www.gatewaycog.org. The Gateway Cities COG is itself a subregional grouping of the Southland region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

[3] In terms of the annual volume of shipping measured in Twenty foot Equivalent Units (TEUs), the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach combined ranked ninth among world container ports in 2012 (after ports in China, Singapore, and South Korea), and first in the Americas. Source: World Shipping Council website, http://www.worldshipping.org/about-the-industry/global-trade/top-50-world-container-ports.

of downtown Los Angeles, the first Spanish colonial settlement in the region, dating back to 1781.

The City of Gateway includes a portion of the northwestern quadrant of the officially designated Gateway Cities. Subregional boundaries within the LA Basin—or the "Plains of Id," as Reyner Banham famously labeled the area—can be vague, owing to the general lack of topographical and surviving natural features in the area, and the density of infrastructure and buildings that covers it (Banham 2001). Expressed in terms of the local geographical vernacular, the City of Gateway spans from a large portion of the Eastside of South LA into an adjacent section of Southeast Los Angeles (County) (Brightwell 2011).[4]

Case selection rationale for the City of Gateway

One indicator for identifying an area with a maximal concentration of extralegal housing is a low proportion of unused rooms within housing units. Presumably the housing market pressures that lead property owners to create additional, unpermitted living spaces are associated with an overall lack of extra available living space within a particular area. Figure 4.2 uses PUMS data to map the Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) within Los Angeles County according to a "surplus living space ratio", or how many housing units are i) occupied by only one person and ii) have two or more bedrooms. Of the 67 PUMAs in LA County that were defined in the 2000 Census, the one with the lowest such ratio is located within what I have defined as the City of Gateway, mostly coinciding with Florence-Firestone, Walnut Park, and the City of Huntington Park. This led me to the northwestern portion of the Gateway Cities region as a fruitful starting point for defining a study area for this dissertation. (Most of the rest of the City of Gateway is included within four other PUMAs that rank 4th, 6th, 21st, and 27th countywide in terms of the indicator of crowding described above.[5])

The question then became how to bound the area of study for this dissertation using the area identified above as a starting point. Municipal boundaries, rather than PUMA boundaries, which do not necessarily coincide with jurisdictional lines, are appropriate for demarcating the geographical limits for an area that is part of a study, such as this one, where municipal politics are a critical element. In addition, for the purposes of this dissertation it is important to include a

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[4] Confusingly, the "Eastside" of Los Angeles has traditionally referred to a different region than the Eastside of South LA, extending eastward from the LA River adjacent to downtown Los Angeles to East Los Angeles and beyond. In recent years, scholars such as Valle and Torres (2000) have used the term "Greater Eastside" to encompass the Latino-dominant eastern half of the entire Los Angeles metropolitan region to highlight the historical east/west, working class/affluent, inland/coastal, Latino/white dualism that, in this simplified form, is widely-recognized in LA. The City of Gateway is part of the Greater Eastside under Valle and Torres' expansive definition.

[5] The five PUMAs omit small slivers of the cities of Compton and Paramount. The only areas included within the five PUMAs that are not part of the City of Gateway are lightly populated, predominantly industrial and warehouse districts in Rancho Dominguez, West Rancho Dominguez, Vernon, and Commerce. Thus, from a population and housing stock standpoint, the five PUMAs are a close approximation of the City of Gateway.

sufficient number of jurisdictions so that differences, as well as similarities, in municipal politics become apparent.

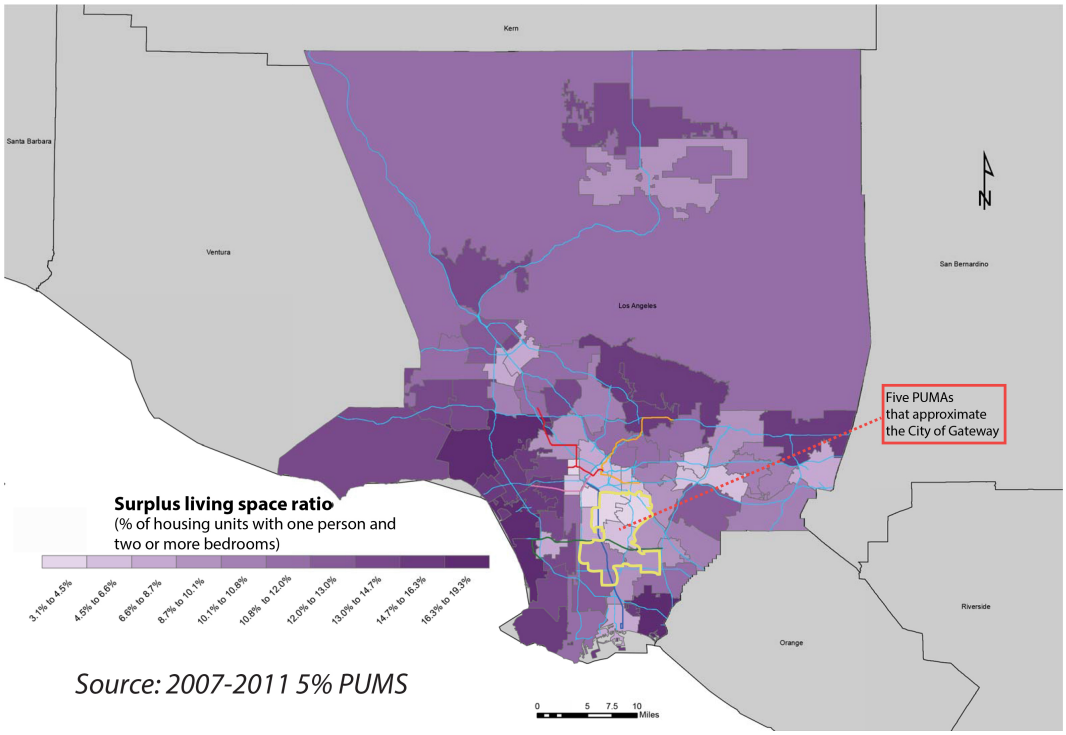

Figure 4.2. A proxy for surplus living space mapped in Los Angeles County. The "surplus living space ratio" is defined as the percentage of units occupied by one person that have two or more bedrooms, and is shown by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA, 2000 Census definition), based on PUMS (Public Use Microdata Sample) data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey. The five PUMAs that approximate the City of Gateway are outlined in yellow. Surplus living space ratios are low in this area, suggesting high levels of crowding in the housing stock in the City of Gateway.

In addition, I preferred to focus on relatively small, geographically compact jurisdictions, so that the influence of informal housing market processes on local politics might be easy to discern. By contrast, in large, more economically and geographically diverse jurisdictions, particularly the City of Los Angeles, housing market issues compete for political oxygen with myriad hot-button big city topics, such as port development, downtown redevelopment, professional sports team recruitment and retention, and countless others. This is not to say that the informal housing market issue is not salient in the City of LA; far from it.[6] But I expected housing market processes to be obscured by all of the other topics that clamor for attention in the cockpit of big city politics. For that reason, I excluded the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach from my analysis, even though they border my area of concern. In addition, I left out the single-purpose, overwhelmingly industrial cities of Commerce and Vernon (nonetheless highly important to my analysis of the area,

[6] For a brief time in the 1990s, extralegal housing was a high-profile issue in Los Angeles city politics; see Chapter 8 for a discussion of this episode.

as discussed later in this chapter), because in these two jurisdictions residential areas form either a small part of the city (Commerce) or are essentially nonexistent (Vernon).

Within those constraints, to select the jurisdictions that make up the City of Gateway, I relied on Pastor's (Pastor 2013) concept of *Latino suburbs*, or suburban cities in LA County whose Latino population shares exceed that of the central city of Los Angeles. While it is important to avoid the essentialization trap of associating informality with inherent characteristics of particular racial or ethnic groups, the key argument elaborated through the rest of this chapter is that *there is a connection between low-wage job growth, a surge of unauthorized immigrants from Latin America, and the rise of the informal housing market in southeast LA County*.

In this area, the rise of these interlinked phenomena coincided with a dramatic demographic transformation (discussed below) that swept out the existing, overwhelmingly white population and replaced it with Latinos arriving both from abroad and elsewhere within the region, eventually turning local politics upside down in the process. Thus, Pastor's concept of Latino suburbs is useful to my project, and I rely on it heavily here.

Pastor uses average incomes, linguistic isolation rates, and other indicators to categorize Latino suburbs into three types: *struggling, working-class, and middle class.* He notes the markedly different political dynamics that exist between them. For my definition of the City of Gateway, I included struggling and working-class Latino suburbs, but omitted middle class ones, such as Downey and Norwalk, that border my area of study. In middle class Latino suburbs, Pastor observes that local politics "often resemble[s] the rest of suburban America, with fights confined to issues of protecting one's own turf against encroachment—in short, a Latino version of the NIMBY agenda" (Pastor 2013, p. 130). Struggling and working-class Latino suburbs, by contrast, are where I would both expect the informal housing markets to be the "thickest," as well as the most salient in local political discourse. This, along with a requirement I imposed that the City of Gateway be geographically contiguous, further helped define the limits of this area.

The criteria listed above translated to a City of Gateway comprised of ten incorporated cities. The final pieces of the puzzle are four unincorporated Los Angeles County communities: Walnut Park, Florence-Firestone, Willowbrook, and East Rancho Dominguez. As I quickly learned in my initial interviews with code enforcement officers, informal housing market processes are particularly widespread in certain unincorporated jurisdictions, especially Florence-Firestone and Willowbrook. (Some of the structural reasons for this are explored in Chapters 7 and 8.) For this reason, I included them in the City of Gateway. East Rancho Dominguez and Walnut Park, had I omitted them, would have formed "holes" in the geometry of the City of Gateway; thus, I included them too. With these additions, my definition of the City of Gateway became complete: ten incorporated cities and four unincorporated communities (Figure).

City of Gateway: A quick note on terminology

That my nomenclature suggests that a unified (fictional) "City" of Gateway should refer to an area that in reality is carved into no fewer than fourteen separate

jurisdictions is not coincidental. Indeed, it is intended as a provocation. As will become particularly clear later in this chapter, and with consequences discussed at length in Chapter 8, the jurisdictional fragmentation of local government for which the United States is known reaches a particular apogee of rococo extravagance in the Gateway Cities. Calling a portion of the Gateway Cities the "City of Gateway" is intended to encourage the reader to simultaneously ignore the internal boundary lines, by thinking of the area as a unified economy and housing market; and to be reminded of these boundary lines, and how they affect the governance, delivery of municipal services, socioeconomic divisions, and other determinants of the life outcomes of local residents in profound ways.

The Early City of Gateway: a Historical Overview

A semiproletarian way of life in the early City of Gateway

The urban historian Becky Nicolaides wrote the definitive historical account of an area centered on today's City of South Gate, starting from its first suburban settlement during World War I up until the watershed moment of the Watts riots in 1965 (Nicolaides 2002). Her work identifies particularities of South Gate and other nearby communities, including Bell, Bell Gardens, Maywood, and Lynwood, dating back to their origins a century ago. These continue to shape the current trajectory of these areas, including their informal housing market, despite an almost total demographic turnover in the past half century.

South Gate and surrounding City of Gateway communities developed in a manner strikingly divergent from the prevailing view of US suburbs as predominantly "bourgeois utopias" (Fishman 1989; Jackson 1987). Nicolaides' work adds to an emerging literature on the historical development of homeowner-built working-class suburbs as a phenomenon distinct from comprehensively-planned, developer-built subdivisions targeted at the affluent upper middle-class.[7] Harris (1999), for example, situated his study on working class suburbanization in the interwar period in the periphery of Toronto but argued that it was representative of similar communities throughout North America. Wiese (2005), by documenting African American suburban owner-building outside of Cleveland, has helped demonstrate that this mode of suburbanization was not simply limited to white people (although, as we will see below, it was within certain geographies, including large portions of the City of Gateway).

But even as Nicolaides' study contributes to an emergent body of work, she also notes the peculiarities of her particular case study:

> What stands out in Los Angeles is the timing [of working-class suburbanization], for the process began later there than in the older eastern cities. While Los Angeles was developing as a cutting-edge, decentralized metropolis, a paradigm of the new twentieth-century city, the persistence of working-class suburbs and the political

[7] See Nicolaides (1999) for a review of the literature challenging middle-class suburbanization as the dominant driver of suburban expansion in the early and mid-20th century in the US.

> mentalities they fostered resembled a holdover of working-class communities from an earlier time and place – transplanted into a thoroughly modern (some might say postmodern) urban setting. (Nicolaides 2002, p. 28).

One aspect of the "political mentalities" held by the almost uniformly native-born white population of South Gate and surrounding communities in the first two thirds of the 20th century is *semiproletarianism* as a "way of life" (AlSayyad 2004). As Nicolaides explains, this was a class of people that relied partly on wage work but, unlike in the traditional Marxist conception of the urban working-class, also derived a large portion of their livelihood through labor on their own land and property. Normally associated with rural areas, this way of life, as Nicolaides explains, was persistent in the City of Gateway well into the 1950s. As a point of contrast, Groth (2004) noted an evolution in working-class neighborhoods flanking industrial districts in Berkeley and Oakland from the improvised, individualistic *cottage* districts of the 1880s to the orderly *bungalow* neighborhoods of the 1920s.

What explains the persistence of semiproletarianism in the City of Gateway into the mid 20th century?[8] Part of the answer comes from the origins of the founders of these communities that arrived starting in the 1920s. In this period, and during the traumatic migrations of the Dust Bowl era in the 1930s immediately thereafter, the overwhelming majority of new arrivals came from Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, a region that Nicolaides labels the Upper South. They carried with them a worldview that Nicolaides labels *plain-folk Americanism,* prizing above all else self-reliance, toughness, and independence, and a profound aversion to debt occasioned by the notorious history of tenancy (such as sharecropping) in their states of origin.

In contrast to the early economic failure of Torrance (located about 14 miles to the southwest of South Gate) as a comprehensively planned suburban community, land developers of such subdivisions as Southgate Gardens (later folded into the new City of South Gate) met their market by keeping the cost of lots low and restrictions on their use to a minimum (Nicolaides 1999). "Homeseekers," as they were called, arrived from the Upper South and found plots that they could afford to buy, living on them cheaply in tents, shacks made of boxes or tar paper, or trailers, while gradually building their houses, sometimes over many years, without debt. Foreshadowing the explosion in conversions of garages to apartments that would take place decades hence, many buyers of home sites in the City of Gateway built a permanent garage, which they used as temporary living quarters while they built their houses (Nicolaides 2002). But self-building was only one way in which they exercised their semiproletarian thrift: homeowners also took in boarders, grew and sold produce, husbanded animals in their back yards, ran home-based businesses, and subdivided their properties and sold off portions to others. In Southgate Gardens and myriad other nearby subdivisions, migrants from the Upper South found home places where they had ways and means of staying financially afloat and

[8] Barnett (1978) made a similar observation about the outskirts of Stockton in California's San Joaquin Valley, noting that what he calls *libertarian suburbs* persisted there as late as the 1970s.

hanging onto their land even amidst jarring fluctuations in the availability of nearby wage work (ibid).

Although the demographics, economy, urban form and much else in the City of Gateway have radically changed over the past century, semiproletarianism and its related ethic of self-provisioning remained deeply embedded in the political cultures of its constituent jurisdictions for decades after most of the Upper South migrants and their descendants had decamped for other places. While, on the surface, it may seem implausible that such a worldview as plain-folk Americanism rooted in the Upper South would find resonance with Chicanos, Latin American immigrants, and their descendants, in Chapter 8 I argue that there is in fact a continuity of outlook that survived all of the wrenching changes that the City of Gateway has experienced since 1965. This explains much about the rise of the informal housing market in the area over the past half century.

Weak and fragmented local governance in the City of Gateway

While the subdividers of Southgate Gardens and similar subdivisions delivered cheap house and garden lots with minimal use restrictions to the (white, native-born) working class, their other promises to seed the creation of a vibrant civic realm and ensure the preservation of a peaceful rural atmosphere were largely not kept (ibid). Homeseekers were more or less left to build community on their own, which when considered alongside their aversion to taxes, predictably led to a "rough and tumble" civic realm in the area, with roads remaining unpaved, cesspools substituting for sewer systems, and kerosene lamps in place of electric streetlights (Nicolaides 1999).[9]

Financially-strapped local governments in the City of Gateway, where they existed at all, stood little chance of persuading their flinty homeowner constituents to support property tax increases. Instead, they brushed aside the trend, then sweeping middle class and affluent communities throughout the nation, of using the new technique of zoning to keep noxious land uses physically separated from residential areas, and instead unabashedly recruited industry in a bid to expand their tax bases. Unlike in the then-burgeoning bourgeois utopias, including the Westside of Los Angeles city, which might have otherwise been expected to be a logical place for a concentration of factories, in the City of Gateway industry and residences, along with food production for self-provisioning, came to be jumbled together (Nicolaides 1999; Nicolaides 2002). Nicolaides imagines the atmosphere of Depression-era South Gate thus: "Hardly the peaceful Arcadian suburbs of lore, here a cacophony surely filled the air—chicken squawks mingled with the grinding of machinery, the rumble of trucks, and the shouts of children playing in vacant lots" (ibid).

The striking weakness of the local state in the City of Gateway of today can be traced directly to its original pattern of development. Fulton notes that "factories,

[9] Barnett 1978 makes a similar observation concerning the "libertarian suburbs" on the outskirts of Stockton, observing that most residents of such communities, as late as the 1970s, refused to support the tax increases needed to build what elsewhere would be considered even minimal infrastructure, such as sidewalks.

residential neighborhoods, and retailing centers like Pacific Boulevard [in Huntington Park] were bunched together, and the whole arrangement was separated from surrounding towns by farms and fields," with the result resembling a constellation of self-contained Midwestern factory and farm towns (Fulton 1997, p. 73). Flood-prone parcels along the Los Angeles River, particularly in Bell Gardens and Cudahy, remained undeveloped as the boom of the 1920s yielded to the Great Depression, remaining agricultural until the 1940s, and thus prolonging the physical separation of the City of Gateway's emergent nuclei (ibid). In addition, both natural and manmade barriers reinforced the separation. For instance, what would later become the City of Bell Gardens was (and is) cut off from its neighbors to the north and south by rail lines, and to the east and west by watercourses (the Rio Hondo and the Los Angeles River, respectively) that were transformed into imposing expanses of concrete once they were channelized in order to control the regular devastating floods endemic in the LA Basin (Waldie 2004).

The geographic pattern of residential and industrial growth in the City of Gateway encouraged the incorporation of municipal governments so small that they governed territories closer in scale to neighborhoods than to typical small cities. Another major contributing factor to this geographic fragmentation of governance was the advent of the "Lakewood Plan" in 1954, named for a pioneering suburb located between the City of Gateway and Long Beach. This was a new arrangement allowing for "local government on the cheap," characterized by the then-novel contracting out of the majority of municipal functions to private operators or regional governmental entities such as the Los Angeles County Sherriff's Department (Connor 2012). Small communities, which might once have faced a choice between the Scylla of preserving unincorporated status and low taxes while continuing to receive poor municipal services and the Charybdis of higher taxes following annexation to an existing city, now seemingly had the best of both worlds open to them. Taking advantage of the Lakewood Plan, a wave of incorporations occurred starting in the 1950s, with Bellflower (1957), Paramount (1957), Cudahy (1960), and Bell Gardens (1961) joining the City of Gateway's six other self-governing municipalities, all of which had incorporated decades earlier, from 1888 (Compton) to 1927 (Bell).

The municipal fragmentation in the City of Gateway is striking even within the context of the United States, a nation that is notable within the developed world for the extent to which it divides much of its suburban territory into small political units with their own locally elected governments. But there is one crucial way in which the immediate vicinity of the City of Gateway is unmatched for political fragmentation by anywhere in the nation outside of LA County: namely, the enormous, unchallenged power wielded by the elite of two *single-use industrial cities.* Lying immediately to the north of Huntington Park and Maywood, and Bell Gardens, respectively, these are the Cities of Vernon and Commerce.

Incorporated in 1905 as a vice zone designed to harbor land uses and activities banished from the City of Los Angeles, the City of Vernon found a new purpose in the 1920s. During this time, the Leonis family, which founded the city and controlled it politically for nearly a century, transformed Vernon into a single-use industrial city by using eminent domain powers to acquire the properties of, and

then displace, all residents who were not their political allies (Valle and Torres 2000). Eventually, for all practical purposes the land and tax base of Vernon became, in the words of the city's unapologetic motto, "Exclusively Industrial" (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3. Entering the City of Vernon. While mottos created for US cities by marketing firms are more often than not aspirational, "Exclusively Industrial" is an accurate description of the City of Vernon rather than an empty slogan. As of the 2010 Census, Vernon had over 40,000 jobs and barely 100 official residents. It is the first, and still one of the most extreme, exemplars of the unique-to-Los-Angeles-County phenomenon of the single use industrial city. (Source: Google Maps Streetview.)

Today, Vernon pushes the minimum requirements for California cityhood to absurd extremes, with over 40,000 jobs and all of 112 official permanent residents within its boundaries. Vernon City Elementary School—the lone school within the city's boundaries—has an enrollment, 256, that exceeds the entire population of the city (Census 2010; LEHD 2011). Under California statutes, every incorporated city must include at least one school, and Vernon City Elementary, primarily attended by the children of the low-wage employees that fill most of the jobs in Vernon, duly meets the letter of the law.[10]

It is difficult to imagine any defensible incarnation of local democracy that allows a City Council with jurisdiction over industrial enterprises generating untold millions of dollars in annual property taxes and other revenues to, in effect, select the voters that elect it. Nevertheless, Vernon, along with a handful of other nearby

[10] Enrollment data for Vernon City Elementary School can be found on the website for the Los Angeles Unified School District at http://search.lausd.k12.ca.us/cgi-bin/fccgi.exe. In an interview, Councilmember Nestor Valencia of the City of Bell informed me about the need for a jurisdiction to have a school within its boundaries as a legal precondition for cityhood.

emulators, including the City of Commerce immediately to the east, have been run effectively as quasi-private fiefdoms of industrial and commercial employment for decades (Davis 1992; Valle and Torres 2000).

Together, Vernon and Commerce have exerted a powerful economic gravitational pull on the City of Gateway for generations, but have remained politically and economically a world apart from the cities and unincorporated neighborhoods lying immediately to the south. While I excluded Vernon and Commerce from my definition of the City of Gateway for reasons explained at the beginning of this chapter, it is impossible to properly conceptualize the local economic context of the City of Gateway without taking these two only-in-Southern-California jurisdictions into account. Fulton aptly describes the City of Gateway at the end of the incorporations in the early 1960s as "a decentralized area with a small-town feeling, sliced up politically into small pieces that permitted the area's power brokers to deliver what their constituents needed: an unfettered, low-tax environment for the industries in Vernon and Commerce to the north, and a series of small, self-governed communities for the workers to the south." (Fulton 1997, p. 76).

The Watts Riot of 1965 and white flight

For a relatively brief historical moment following World War II, South Gate and other nearby City of Gateway communities transcended their hardscrabble origins and attained many of the totems of widespread middle-class prosperity long emblematized by such iconic postwar suburbs as Lakewood and Levittown, Long Island (Nicolaides 2002). As blue-collar wages at nearby large, unionized plants soared, South Gate and its neighbors to the north, east, and south became home to something of an *embourgeoised* working class. Municipal finances allowed for well-appointed city parks and other infrastructural trappings of prosperous postwar suburbia to be installed. By 1950, South Gate was largely "built out," and homeownership hit its all-time high water mark of roughly 70% (ibid).

During this time, politics in South Gate and other nearby communities took a rightward turn. Although the powerful Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) union had targeted southeast Los Angeles County as a new bastion of unionism and progressive politics, this was not to be, despite the heavy union membership in the area (Davis 1992). Part of the reason was a complacency among workers brought about by postwar prosperity. But a more profound explanation has everything to do with race.

In the years after World War II, integration of the armed forces, anti-segregation court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education,* and other trends towards a dismantling of segregationist laws and practices led to a perception of besiegement among the white working class in places such as South Gate. Unlike suburbanites living in more upscale communities at a greater remove from African American ghetto areas, whites in South Gate, Huntington Park, Lynwood and other communities east of Alameda Street, the "great white wall," felt that they were on the front lines of unwelcome integration. After all, by 1954, even the City of Compton, recently home to the staunchest of white anti-integrationists, was in the midst of rapid racial turnover, with African Americans breaching the rigid ghetto

boundaries that had kept them confined to South LA, Watts, and Willowbrook (Sides 2004). In the career of Floyd Wakefield, who rose from anti-school integration activism in South Gate to elected positions representing the area in the California State Assembly and later the State Senate, Nicolaides (2002) notes an early bellwether of the eventual "southernization" of white working-class politics.

To the people who would later be labeled the "silent majority" and later still "Reagan Democrats," the Watts Riot confirmed their worst fears. The civil disorder, named for a section of the City of Los Angeles located immediately to the west of South Gate, began on August 11, 1965 and lasted for six days. The first of a series of urban riots during the 1960s that would shake American society to its foundations, the Watts Riot drew an estimated 50,000 participants and left 34 people dead and 900 injured (Davis 1992; Nicolaides 2002). While local law enforcement and bands of self-appointed armed civilian vigilantes largely kept the violence from spilling east of Alameda Street, vast numbers of the white working class of South Gate and other nearly all-white City of Gateway areas reacted in the following years by voting with their feet. Downey, lying east across the Los Angeles River from South Gate, was a common aspirational destination, as was Orange County (Davis 1992).

Much of the foregoing is a very familiar American story of the era. In the industrial heartland of a great American city, in an area many called "Little Akron" (Fulton 1997), it requires little imagination to envision what happened next. The original Akron, in Ohio, and scores of other cities around the nation collectively provide the outlines of a now-familiar story in US urban history. The narrative goes something like the following: African Americans, partly as a result of legal triumphs over racist covenants, begin to succeed in buying houses in neighborhoods where they were formerly barred by means of racist legal mechanisms and mob violence. White homeowners who are initially slow to sell their houses are goaded, through unscrupulous "block busting" tactics, into parting with their properties at fire-sale prices. A riot centered in a nearby African American ghetto area accelerates the pace of racial turnover. White homeowners move away to other communities located further away from the central city. At around the same time or shortly thereafter, nearby industries that had formerly offered well-paid, unionized jobs to (mostly white) men lacking college educations begin to shutter (cf. Sugrue 2005; Massey and Denton 1993; Katz 2011). All of the foregoing roughly corresponds with what occurred in the City of Gateway. As with Detroit, Newark, and numerous other American cities, while the Watts Riot was merely a particularly dramatic expression of social forces that had been set in motion long before, it nevertheless serves as a historical dividing line. Afterwards, nothing was quite the same ever again.

The City of Gateway Since 1965: Economy, Demographics, and Housing

The last section recounted the beginning of the familiar story of the American city in the urban crisis era, ending with the start of deindustrialization. As argued, the broad contours are applicable to what occurred in the City of Gateway. As commonly understood, this familiar story then continues in the following manner: in the wake of white flight, African American newcomers find better housing, but far fewer jobs in their new homes as a result of the twin specters of hiring

discrimination and deindustrialization. Eventually, the tight social fabric that had existed in the spatially cramped but socioeconomically diverse African American pre-1965 ghetto comes undone. As black people who manage to benefit from integrated schools and an expanded social safety net achieve upward social mobility, they also take advantage of reduced housing discrimination and move away—geographically outward as well as socioeconomically upward—from the areas where white homeowners had fled before them to newer suburbs with better schools and safer streets. Left behind are the members of a new African American underclass, struggling to survive amidst rampant unemployment, epidemic crime rates, a patchy welfare state, and an expanding carceral complex (Wilson 2012; Wacquant 2008). The area's population slowly declines, over decades, until it is a fraction of what it once was. Partly as a result, the urban fabric of the area begins to physically unravel, as low demand for housing, retail spaces, schools, and other types of buildings leads to many of them being abandoned, demolished, or destroyed through arson (Glaeser and Gyourko 2005). This completes the widely understood view about what happened to US cities in the wake of the "urban crisis" of the 1960s.

However, little from the previous paragraph describes what happened in the City of Gateway in the decades following Watts. What happened instead was something quite unexpected to students of the American city. The City of Gateway post 1965 neither evolved into a place that today is anyone's idea of a prosperous suburban paradise, but nor is it even remotely a hollowed-out community akin to Detroit or Cleveland, or the declining inner-ring suburbs that surround them (Orfield 2002). To be sure, the City of Gateway and the surrounding area lost most of their large, unionized factories, as did so many other places, but they then *reindustrialized*, leading to renewed demand for City of Gateway labor. Far from dropping, the population in the City of Gateway has dramatically increased over the past half century even as it almost completely turned over, despite the area having been largely "built out" at the time of Watts. And far from widespread abandonment, the housing stock in the City of Gateway began to burst at the seams as it absorbed a vast influx of newcomers, many of them immigrants drawn to the United States by the promise of industrial jobs that, while low-paying, represented greater opportunities than had existed in their home countries. Together, these trends set the stage for the emergence of the massive informal housing market that is the object of analysis in this dissertation. Each of the next three sections describes in more detail the monumental economic, demographic, and housing stock changes that washed over the City of Gateway post-1965.

Economic changes after Watts

While deindustrialization hit the City of Gateway notably later than in other cities, its beginnings were palpable as early as the beginning of the 1960s (Nicolaides 2002). However, its effects were most concentrated over three waves spanning from the early 1970s to the early 1980s (Davis 1992). In the early 70s, plants in the City of Gateway relocated to Orange County, seeking more space and following their suburbanizing workforce. In the late 1970s, much of the trucking industry, formerly clustered near the twin ports to the south of the City of Gateway,

moved to the Inland Empire to escape traffic congestion. Finally, in the 1980s, by which time the neoliberal era of transnational capital flows and increased global competition was well underway, much of the local heavy industry, such as steel and automobile production, collapsed in the face of Japanese and Korean competition (ibid; Hackworth 2006). The impact to the local economy was devastating: Davis (ibid) tallied 11 large plant closures from 1971 to 1982 in Commerce, South Gate, the adjacent manufacturing district of the City of Los Angeles, and Vernon. Collectively, they accounted for over 29,000 jobs. When smaller operations are included, roughly 40,000 well-paid manufacturing and trucking jobs disappeared at the moment when, cruelly, many black and Chicano workers had just begun to make real breakthroughs in shopfloor seniority and union leadership (ibid).

The economic impacts began to draw attention. In a 1982 Rand Corporation report that highlighted the then-novel concept of economically troubled suburbs, no fewer than six of the City of Gateway's ten incorporated cities met the study's demographic, economic and fiscal criteria for classification among the 84 "troubled suburbs" out of 408 analyzed. And among only 14 suburbs nationwide that met more stringent criteria for classification as "disaster areas," Paramount, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, and Compton all made the unwelcome cut. Furthermore, among City of Gateway municipalities only Bellflower escaped being listed in the report's bottom 30 suburbs, amongst 1,191 nationwide with 10,000 or more people, in terms of income growth from 1969 to 1977 (Fernandez, Pincus, and Peterson 1982).

Fulton (1997) used the phrase "Suburbs of Extraction" to label an area running twenty miles along the Alameda rail corridor, from Vernon in the north to the twin ports in the south, that includes the City of Gateway. In so doing, he referred to many of the desperate economic development strategies that cities in the area turned to in order to cope with the collapse of the Fordist heavy industrial economy all around them. Foremost among these was legal gambling. Bell Gardens' Bicycle Club is the largest example, but other cities such as Bell also tried their hand at opening "card clubs," with varying levels of success, to bring in gambling revenues while sidestepping the restrictions on full-blown casinos that exist in California outside of Indian reservations. Other examples of extraction included a proliferation of junk-processing and recycling businesses, including one in Huntington Park that received rubble from the Northridge earthquake of 1994 and created a mound of noxious debris so high that residents in the residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent dubbed it *la montaña* (the mountain). Extractive enterprises in many cases received sanction from local politicians whose conduct, when it was not outright criminal, may as well have been because of their almost complete lack of accountability to the publics that they served (ibid).[11]

Individual people, as well as local governments, found ways to navigate the new economic order of the City of Gateway. Many of them turned to informalized business activities as a deliberate strategy to earn more money than was possible in the formal wage economy, or to make up for a lack of affordable childcare. Recent

[11] *De facto* and *de jure* political corruption and its effects on the City of Gateway and its housing market are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

scholarship has highlighted Los Angeles as a hot spot for these sort of livelihood activities, and has sought to understand their complexities and the agency of their participants, whether male gardeners or predominantly female sidewalk food and durable goods vendors (cf. Huerta 2011; Muñoz 2008). On a drive down South Normandie Boulevard on Valentine's Day, in South Los Angeles immediately west of the City of Gateway, all one had to do was note the dozens of flower vendors to perceive the influence of this mode of informalized entrepreneurial activity.

Notably, and anomalously when considered in comparison to national trends, the City of Gateway and its immediate surroundings underwent a process of *reindustrialization.* A new industrial economy grew within the physical and jurisdictional shell of the old Fordist economy even as its predecessor was still in the process of withering (Davis 1992; Soja 1996). For instance, in the period between the Watts Riot of 1965 and the Rodney King riots of 1992, the LA garment industry surpassed that of New York City (Soja 1996). The new factories were small, rather than large; generally low-tech, rather than sophisticated; produced lighter goods such as furniture and clothing while reacting nimbly to shifts in consumer tastes rather than churning out steel and cars in vast quantities; and relied heavily on low-wage and often unauthorized immigrant labor rather than unionized employees. Davis noted that a disproportionate share of the investment in these enterprises came from Chinese diaspora capital (Davis 1992).

In 2005, 37% of LA County manufacturing establishments had five or fewer workers, and fully 88% had under 50 (Chapple et al. 2010). Given that in 1996 the five major craft industries in the county were textiles, apparel, furniture and fixtures, printing and publishing, and jewelry, it is not surprising that LA manufacturing in recent decades has been characterized by vertically disintegrated firms that cluster together in order to source inputs from nearby firms and, perhaps more important, share a common labor pool (Scott 1996).

As early as the late 1980s, Sassen-Koob (1989) had noted a propensity for small, often informalized industrial enterprises to cluster within particular districts of global cities such as New York in order to respond to the demands for production with short turnaround times and high customization levels, even while taking advantage of the availability of low-wage immigrant labor. Soja (1996) made similar observations about LA. But reindustrialization seemed to take on an especially outsized prominence in Los Angeles in general, and in the City of Gateway in particular. As Valle and Torres (2000, p. 5) put it:

> Los Angeles seems unique among global cities. In New York, Chicago, even London, downtown central business districts have been regenerated by way of their mediation of global financial markets supplemented by high-end retail stores and low-end service sector jobs. In Los Angeles, by contrast, high-end retail consumption is dispersed across the western portion of the city. Low-wage manufacturing is to the Latinized workforce of Los Angeles what service sector jobs offer other cities in the postindustrial order.

Unlike the middle third of the 20th century, the industrial might of Los Angeles County today is not powering widespread prosperity. According to a newly-

developed California Poverty Measure that takes living costs into account, Los Angeles County has the highest poverty rate in the state, at 26.9% (Bohn et al. 2013).[12] When one considers that this metric defines the threshold for poverty for a family of four in LA County as a household income of $30,785, and then compares the threshold against typical manufacturing wages, it is easy to see why. Although certain skill-intensive sectors, such as petroleum and coal products, offer their workers an average annualized wage of over six figures, more typical are the wages for apparel workers, the second most common category, who earn an average of $32,278, or just over the PPIC poverty threshold, or textile mill employees, who earn $28,825, or below the threshold (LAEDC 2011).

It has become somewhat fashionable for commentators to speak of manufacturing as though it effectively no longer exists in the United States, even within traditionally manufacturing-heavy locations such as Los Angeles. In fact, as of 2011, the US remained ahead of China as the world's premier manufacturing economy, producing 21% of all manufactured products, with goods production contributing 11% of total national GDP in 2009. While it is true that LA County manufacturing employment was more than cut in half since 1990, from over 800,000 to just over 389,000 in 2009, the five-county LA region still led all other metropolitan areas in the nation and exceeded entire states, such as Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, that have long been thought of as the nation's workshops in the popular imagination (ibid). Situated near the center of manufacturing in the leading manufacturing urban region in the world's leading manufacturing nation, this influence remains powerful in the City of Gateway. In 2011, 35% of all of this area's workers were in the manufacturing, construction, and transportation, warehousing, and utilities industries, as compared to an already-hefty 23% in the five-county metro region (LEHD 2011).[13]

But while a manufacturing economy and blue-collar work may have endured in and around the City of Gateway, they are qualitatively different from what they once were in the 1950s. Most of the jobs offer only enough for subsistence and fall far short of paying enough to support a truly middle class existence in one of the metropolitan regions with the highest housing and other living costs in the nation. Even so, reindustrialization and the economic transformation that it wrought sparked both a drastic increase and a total transformation in the makeup of the population in the City of Gateway. These trends are the subject of the next section.

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[12] The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC)'s California Poverty Measure incorporates changes in costs and standards of living that have taken place since the early 1960s, when the standard poverty line metric, in widespread use today, was developed. The California Poverty Measure also accounts for tax credits and in-kind social safety net assistance, which are ignored in the standard poverty line measure.

[13] Measured slightly differently (i.e., by type of occupation rather by industry), the numbers are even more dramatic: in the City of Gateway, 40% of workers labor in jobs classified as pertaining to either natural resources, construction, and maintenance or to production, transportation, and material moving. This is almost double the comparable figure of 21% in the five-county region. (ACS 2007-2011a.)

Population changes after Watts

The transformation of the City of Gateway's economy described in the previous section has led to drastic changes in both the size and the characteristics of its population since the Watts Riots of 1965. Each of these is dealt with separately in turn below.

Population growth and high density in the City of Gateway

As shown in Figure 4.4, the City of Gateway has dramatically increased in population over the past half century, from just over 407,000 in 1960 to just under 709,000 in the most recent decennial Census in 2010. Remarkably for a suburban area in the United States during a period when the vast majority of metropolitan areas were "thinning out," this 74% population increase occurred in a region that was already quite close to "built out" at the beginning of the period. For instance, South Gate, which was described in a report quoted by Nicolaides (Nicolaides 2002) as largely entirely developed by 1950, nevertheless increased in population by 75% from 1960 to 2010. During this period, the populations of Compton and Willowbrook went up by 34% and 46%, respectively. The populations of all of the other 12 City of Gateway jurisdictions increased by at least half, and in the cases of Cudahy and Lynwood, more than doubled (Table 4.1). Thus, the population gain in the City of Gateway was both large and geographically widespread.

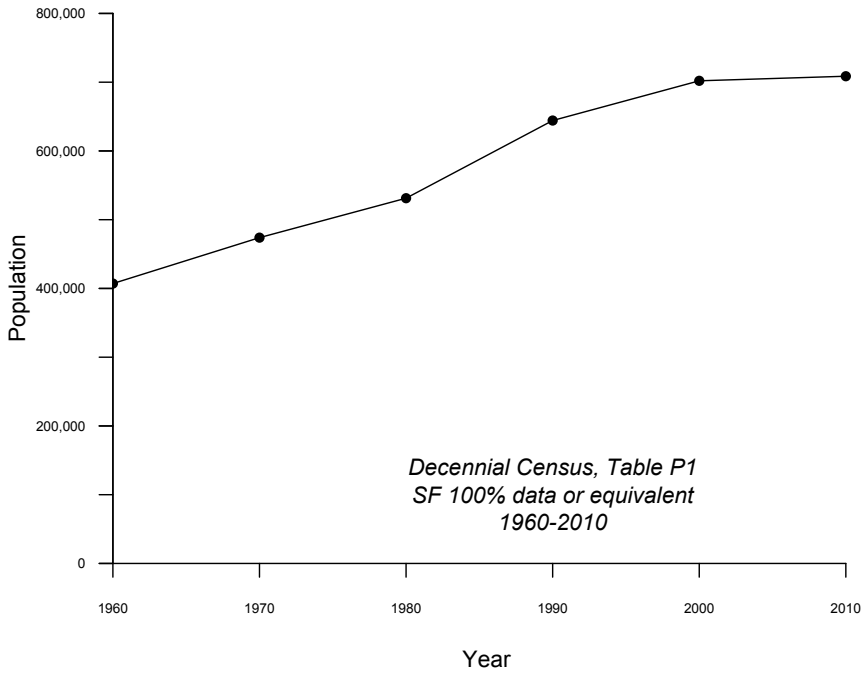

Figure 4.4. Total population of the City of Gateway, 1960 to 2010. The population in the City of Gateway grew rapidly from 1960 to 2000, then began to taper off in the next decade. Note that some jurisdiction-level population totals in the 1960 and 1970 censuses were not given, and were estimated from tract-level data.

Table 4.1. 2010 population, 1960-2010 population increase, and 2010 population density by City of Gateway jurisdiction. Population figures computed as in Figure 4.4; land areas from Table T2A, Social Explorer, www.socialexplorer.com.

Incorporated Cities	**Population 2010**	**Population Increase 1960-2010**	**Population Density 2010 (people per square mile)**
Bell	35,477	95.7%	14,191
Bellflower	76,616	70.8%	12,519
Bell Gardens	42,072	59.0%	17,102
Compton	96,455	34.3%	9,636
Cudahy	23,805	111.1%	20,174
Huntington Park	58,114	94.2%	19,307
Lynwood	69,772	120.7%	14,416
Maywood	27,395	87.8%	23,216
Paramount	54,098	98.5%	11,437
South Gate	94,396	75.4%	13,038
Unincorporated			
East Rancho Dominguez	15,135	70.8%	18,457
Florence/Graham	63,387	66.1%	17,706
Walnut Park	15,966	70.8%	21,345
Willowbrook	35,983	45.5%	9,565
City of Gateway Total	**708,671**	**74.1%**	**13,581**

One of the many shopworn clichés about Los Angeles in urbanist and planning circles is that it is a "spread out" and "sprawling" metropolitan region. A Census Bureau report that ranks 365 US metropolitan areas on the basis of their population-weighted density by census tract shows that this perception is badly out of date. Measured in these terms, the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana Metropolitan Area (consisting, under this definition, of Los Angeles and Orange Counties) ranks third, just behind San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, in the nation.[14]

Another way to consider the urban form of metropolitan regions is to examine how many people they have added over time in relation to the land that has been urbanized in the same period. Measured this way, Los Angeles has consumed proportionately less land to accommodate its rising population since 1950 than any

[14] Unsurprisingly, the New York region is first, and is far denser (over 31,251 people per square mile in population-weighted terms) than either the San Francisco or LA regions (12,145 and 12,114 per square mile, respectively). In US urbanism, New York City is in its own special category. Unlike Los Angeles, however, Gotham has received ample attention for its density, and is effectively a metonym for urban bustle. By contrast, Los Angeles is often popularly lumped in with archetypal low-density Sunbelt metropolises such as Atlanta or Dallas, which is entirely misleading.

of the other 39 regions with populations of 1 million or so save San Jose (EPA 2013). According to this metric, at least, Los Angeles appears to have been close to the *least* sprawling region in the nation over the last 60 years. Thus, the growth that has occurred in the City of Gateway since 1960 has been consistent with the regional pattern, but remarkable for having taken place within a section of the metropolis that was largely built up by 1950. Today, the City of Gateway, consisting of sections of the Los Angeles metropolis that constitute a largely unknown "empty quarter" in the popular imagination (Davis 1992),[15] has a population density that exceeds that of such famously urban places as Boston, Chicago, and Washington, DC (Figure 4.5).

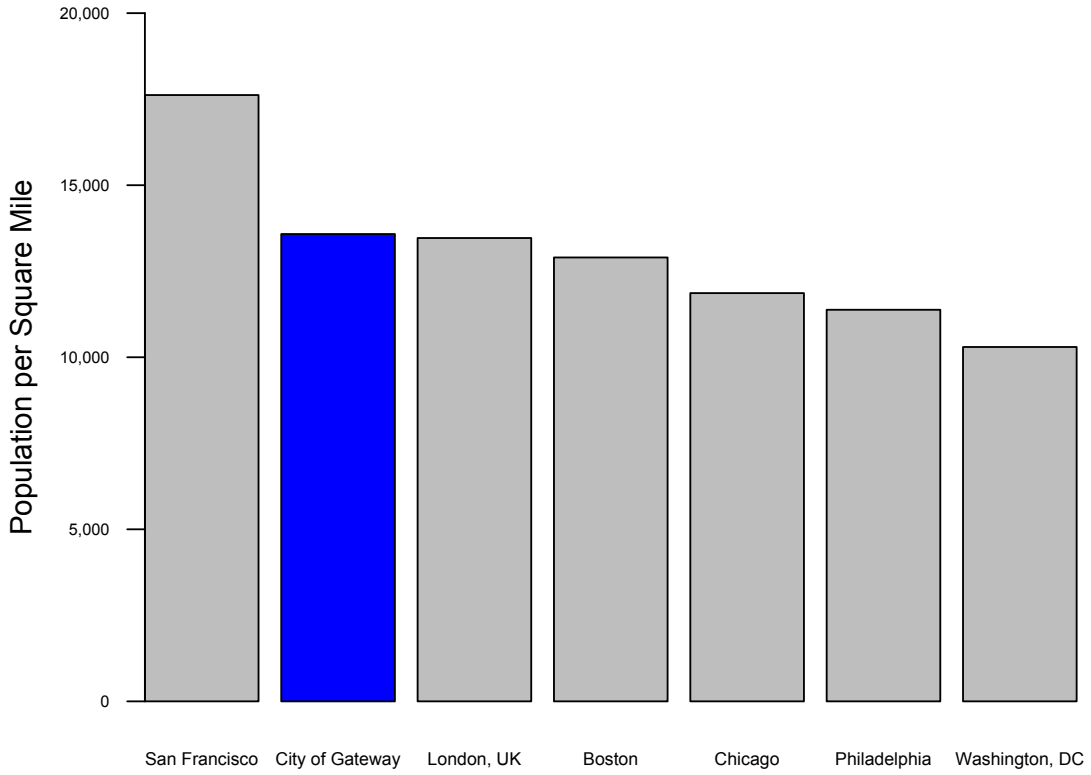

Figure 4.5. The population density of the City of Gateway in comparison to other, better-known cities. Sources identical to those in Table 4.1, except for London (Nomis, UK Office for National Statistics, Table QS102EW). All data for the year 2010, except for London (2011).

It should be noted that the population and density numbers cited above for the City of Gateway likely represent underestimates. In interviews, the city manager and housing director of Cudahy, and the code enforcement manager and chief building official of South Gate estimated that the 2010 Census undercounted population in those two cities by 20% and by 10% to 20%, respectively. Both pairs of officials from each city (interviewed simultaneously) specifically cited extralegal

[15] Thanks to its notoriety gleaned largely through its association with gangsta rap music, Compton is the exception, and is the one place within the City of Gateway whose name is a worldwide household word. See Sides (2004).

housing arrangements, rather than a lack of effort on the part of Census enumerators and their managers, as the driver for the undercounts. One can certainly imagine that city officials have an incentive to claim higher population numbers for their jurisdictions, given that so many grant programs from higher levels of government are tied to population counts. Even so, a working paper that estimated population undercounts in LA County cities for the 2000 Census using statistical sampling techniques and other data sources, such as school rosters, found that the ten City of Gateway incorporated cities ranked from #2 (3.0% undercount, in Cudahy) through #21 (2.1% percent undercount, in Bellflower) among the 88 cities in LA County (Ong and Houston 2002).[16] Regardless of which estimate most closely resembles the actual undercounts, whether in the 2000 or 2010 censuses, it is likely that population in the City of Gateway has been systematically underestimated to a greater extent than elsewhere in the LA region, given the City of Gateway's large informal housing market and large population of unauthorized immigrants.

Change in population composition in the City of Gateway

In the heart of the City of Gateway, and hard by the I-105 freeway in Lynwood, Plaza Mexico is a mall that offers its patrons a lavishly detailed simulacrum of a charming Mexican town square (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. The heart of the Plaza Mexico open-air shopping mall in Lynwood. (Photo by the author.)

[16] The city with the #1 undercount was Vernon—hardly surprising, given that its total population, including the upward adjustment of 3 people, was estimated as 94. By comparison, LA County (in its entirety, including unincorporated areas) had an estimated undercount of 1.76%, and LA city had a rate of 2.01%.

In addition to offering a sprinkling of American mall staples such as Chuck E. Cheese and Subway, Plaza Mexico includes numerous *taquerías,* a *tamale* restaurant, a stand that specializes in *bírria* (goat stew), a bustling Mexican-style indoor food market, and an array of non-chain clothing and electronics stores with low-cost merchandise serving a heavily Spanish-speaking local clientele.

While serving as a community gathering place and perhaps offering many patrons a nostalgic reminder of their home country, Plaza Mexico also includes services that bespeak the complexities of immigrant life. For instance, an attorney there specializes in serving clients eligible for the DREAM Act, those seeking to petition to bring their relatives in Latin America to the US, and those hoping to help relatives who have been detained by US immigration authorities. While one might expect that a mall such as Plaza Mexico, developed by Iranian-American entrepreneurs, might be just another entry in LA's by now long tradition of simulated urban experiences (cf. Soja 1989; Davis 1990), the place is arguably actually quite responsive to the needs of the immediate local community (Pulido, Barraclough, and Cheng 2012; Loukaitou-Sideris 2012). What is certain is that Plaza Mexico speaks volumes about the demographic changes that have unfolded in the City of Gateway since the Watts Riot.

To borrow a clever turn of phrase from Pastor (2013), today's Maywood is not Mayberry, and nor are any of the other 13 places in the City of Gateway. As Pastor (ibid) notes, pre-1980 Census data is problematic for distinguishing Latinos from non-Hispanic whites. However, we know from historical accounts such as Nicolaides' (2002) that South Gate, Maywood, Huntington Park, and other nearby communities were almost exclusively all-white, non-Hispanic and nonimmigrant communities on the eve of the Watts Riot. The turnabout from then until now is remarkable: in the 2010 Census, the Hispanic share of the City of Gateway stood at 82%, up from 48% in 1980, and the white share had dropped to 4%, down from 26% in 1980 (Figure 4.7). In all 14 of the City of Gateway jurisdictions, Latinos represented a majority of the population in 2010, and a share of two thirds or greater everywhere but Bellfower, Willowbrook, and Compton (Table 4.2). While the population in the City of Gateway has changed in numerous important ways, the replacement of whites with Latinos as the area's majority is perhaps the single most dramatic demographic fact about its post-Watts Riot evolution. As discussed in Chapter 8, the effects on local politics have been profound.[17]

[17] The white-to-Latino political shift took place decades later than the underlying demographic one, and in some cases is still not complete even today. This delay in political turnover has had major implications for the City of Gateway as a whole, and for the informal housing market in particular, as discussed in Chapter 8.

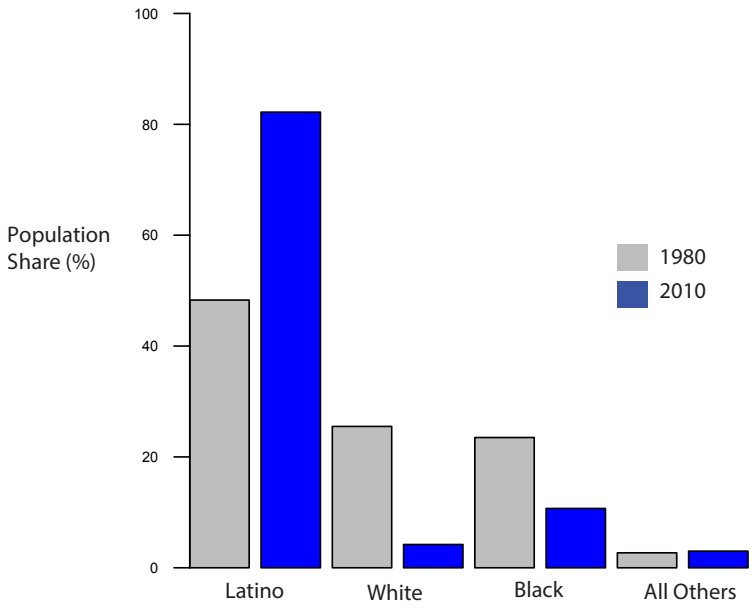

Figure 4.7. City of Gateway racial and ethnic composition, 1980 compared to 2010. Note that people classified as "white," "black," and "all others" are those who self-identified as not Latino. Source: Social Explorer, Tables T13 and T15 (1980) and T55 (2010), www.socialexplorer.com. East Rancho Dominguez figures included in overall 1980 totals are approximated from census tracts.

Table 4.2. 2010 population share by race and ethnicity, City of Gateway jurisdictions. Percentages may not exactly total to 100% due to rounding. Source: Social Explorer, Table T55, www.socialexplorer.com.

Incorporated Cities	Latino	Black	White	All Others
Bell	93%	1%	5%	1%
Bellflower	52%	14%	20%	15%
Bell Gardens	96%	1%	3%	1%
Compton	65%	32%	1%	2%
Cudahy	96%	1%	2%	1%
Huntington Park	97%	0%	2%	1%
Lynwood	87%	10%	2%	2%
Maywood	98%	0%	2%	1%
Paramount	79%	11%	6%	5%
South Gate	95%	1%	3%	1%
Unincorporated				
East Rancho Dominguez	82%	15%	1%	2%
Florence/Graham	90%	9%	1%	1%
Walnut Park	97%	0%	2%	1%
Willowbrook	64%	34%	1%	1%
City of Gateway Total	**82%**	**11%**	**4%**	**3%**

Why were Latinos, rather than African Americans, the ascendant group in the City of Gateway in the wake of white flight? The reasons are undoubtedly complex but it is worth noting that white flight was a gradual process that took decades. While prejudice on the part of white residents in the City of Gateway towards people of color was not uniform, it was widespread, and remaining whites in the City of Gateway undoubtedly played a role in continuing to block African Americans from cities such as South Gate (where the black population stood at only 1.8% in 1980, and has decreased ever since). Sides (2004) notes that Latinos in LA County have generally been treated as an "in-between" group by prejudiced whites, owing to their generally lighter skin color.

Another factor in the dramatic growth in Latinos rather than African Americans in the City of Gateway concerns the existence of pre-existing historic *barrio* communities, such as that which existed near the northern boundary of Compton even at the height of its existence as an otherwise all-white suburb in the early 1950s (ibid). Pastor (2013) notes that in LA County, one typical early and mid-20th century suburbanization pattern was the creation of new, all-white communities around and between pre-existing *barrios,* which had originated to fill various economic niches, such as the provision of labor for farms and railroad construction. Some even dated back to the Mexican colonial era in the 19th century and the time of Spanish colonial missions in the 18th. While Latinos' status as the inhabitants of Southern California with the deepest roots (aside, of course, from members of the Native American tribes that traditionally lived in the area) did not automatically protect *barrio* residents from periodic crackdown and expulsion attempts from newly-arrived nearby white suburbanites—far from it—their longstanding existence in the area established beachheads that grew over time (ibid).

But perhaps the most important reason for the vast and sudden increase in the numbers of Latinos in the City of Gateway was the reindustrialization process described in the previous section. Both deeply-rooted Chicano Californians and immigrants arriving directly from Latin America came to the City of Gateway in large numbers to fill the low-wage, non-union, and non-skill-intensive factory jobs that were created amidst the destruction of the old Fordist industrial economy. For various reasons revolving around racism and the ease of economic exploitation of immigrants, particularly unauthorized ones, the new low-wage industrial workforce was overwhelmingly Latino (Valle and Torres 2000).

Several other points concerning the contemporary City of Gateway are worth making:

- **The Latino population is highly diverse.** It would be a grave mistake to assume that the Latino population in the City of Gateway is monolithic, any more than it is in Los Angeles as a whole. For instance, as of the 2010 Census 16% of City of Gateway residents self-identified as Latinos reported being of non-Mexican origin (down from a peak of 21% in 2000). Rocco (1996) noted the formation of significant communities of Peruvians (particularly in South Gate), Colombians, Central Americans, and Cubans in and around the City of Gateway, although they often tended to form and maintain intra-ethnic

networks over metropolitan space rather than confine themselves to spatially concentrated enclaves. His ethnographic work noted workplace and political tensions between Chicanos and Mexican-Americans and members of these more recent groups (ibid). Another source of acrimony has been between native-born Latinos and immigrants, particularly as the share of foreign-born City of Gateway residents soared from 29% in 1980 to 40% in 2010, 95% of whom were born in Latin America or the Caribbean.[18] Arguably, today's Latino majority in the City of Gateway is much more diverse and less politically and culturally unified than the white majority, comprised overwhelmingly of native-born Americans, many with roots in the Upper South, that preceded them decades earlier.

- **African Americans are still a significant force, particularly in certain locations.** Today, African Americans still comprise 11% of the City of Gateway's population, considerably more, for example, than the white share of 4% (Figure 4.7). In addition, their influence is magnified in a few locations where they are concentrated. Of the seven City of Gateway places where African Americans make up at least 8% of the population, there are two general categories of places. One consists of communities where the African American population share has steadily grown in recent decades. Paramount and Bellflower fall into this category. One plausible explanation for this dynamic is that African Americans are benefiting from a steady drop in housing discrimination that formerly barred them from these suburbs, and are benefiting from better housing in these places.[19] The other category consists of communities that were integrated early, in the 1960s or before, but where the formerly large African American community has steadily dwindled in both relative and absolute numbers since 1980. Compton, Lynwood, East Rancho Dominguez, Florence-Firestone, and Willowbrook fit this pattern. As discussed in Chapter 8, these demographic trends have set up local political dynamics, related to but distinct from those in which whites have held onto local power long after they became the minority, in which African Americans have monopolized political control in the face of an emergent Latino majority. This phenomenon is particularly strong in the City of Compton.

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[18] The foreign-born share of the City of Gateway population actually dipped from 43% to 40% from 2000 to 2011, suggesting that the seemingly inexorable immigration wave, following national trends, of the previous several decades had crested during the first decade of the new century (Census 2000; ACS 2007-2011b). For a discussion of the implications of this important break with the last half century of historical patterns for the future of the City of Gateway, see the conclusion to this dissertation (Chapter 8).

[19] Indeed, whereas African American families earn only 83% of the median in Los Angeles County, in Bellflower and Paramount they earn 92% and 116% of the citywide median family income, respectively (ACS 2007-2011c).

- **Family structure and the economic profile of families is highly divergent from national, state, and regional norms.** Myers and Pitkin (2013) portray a Los Angeles (defined in this case by the county) that in recent decades diverged from national trends in many ways. While nationwide family sizes declined, they grew in LA. In LA County, children became more, not less, numerous. As a result, the population grew younger, rather than older, as was the case in the US as a whole. Table 4.3 shows a cross-sectional view of these patterns as they stand at the present time. They are palpable in California compared to the US, and in the five-county LA region compared to California, are most noticeable of all in the City of Gateway. In the City of Gateway, families[20] with children are a much larger proportion of the overall population than in the US, California, or greater LA. They have far lower rates of education and much lower mean incomes.[21] These tendencies, all of which have intensified since the Watts Riot, suggest that not only the sheer increase in people in the City of Gateway but the *composition* of the local population have put enormous pressure on the housing stock of the area. I now turn to a discussion of what has happened to the housing in the City of Gateway since 1965.

[20] Families, according to the US Census, are households that contain two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Particularly for data collected prior to California's legalization of same-sex marriage in June 2013, this conception of family is inherently heteronormative. It is, however, useful in this context for illustrating how the City of Gateway differs from regional, state, and national trends.

[21] Chapter 7 includes a brief discussion about the usefulness of median, rather than mean, family income as an indicator of household (and by extension, municipal-level) prosperity. Here mean, rather than median, family income is used so that figures can be aggregated between the five regional greater LA counties and between the 14 local jurisdictions that comprise the City of Gateway. The mean is somewhat less useful than the median for these purposes, but it makes the comparisons shown in Table 4.3 possible, and it still reveals a lot about income disparities.

Table 4.3. Family structure and social characteristics in the City of Gateway, 2007-2011. Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011, Tables DP02 and DP03.

Characteristic	United States	California	Los Angeles Region *****	City of Gateway
Share of family households *	67%	69%	70%	83%
Average family size	3.2	3.5	3.6	4.3
Children as share of household population	30%	32%	33%	41%
Share of high school graduates **	85%	81%	78%	52%
Share of population 65 or older	13%	11%	11%	7%
Mean family income *	$84,422	$94,747	$91,982	$52,402
Grandparents living with own minor grandchildren ***	22	28	32	47
Births ****	14	14	14	19

** Families are defined by the Census as households in which two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption live in the same housing unit.*
*** Among adults aged 25 or more.*
**** Per 1,000.*
***** Births to women aged 15 to 50 in the past 12 months, per 1,000 people.*
****** Defined as Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties.*

Housing trends post 1965

As surely as economic changes since Watts have driven population and demographic changes in the City of Gateway, the new residents have drastically altered the character of the local housing stock. The discussion below starts by examining commuting patterns and their effects on housing demand. Next, I examine housing stock changes observable in census data. I then present evidence of the informalization of the housing stock over time using results from a housing stock model, and close this section with some figures that show the relatively small role that subsidized housing plays in sheltering City of Gateway residents, despite their low incomes.

Commuting patterns and spatial implications for housing demand

A brief examination of commuting patterns supports a view that proximity to jobs, particularly in downtown Los Angeles and in the industrial belt to its east and southeast, extending into Vernon and Commerce, has driven much of the recent population growth in the City of Gateway. Of jobs held by City of Gateway residents, 56% are located within 10 miles of their home, as compared to only 46% for the five-county LA region (LEHD 2011). Downtown Los Angeles, the nation's fifth largest and densest job cluster (Levy and Gilchrist 2013), is a major destination for City of Gateway commuters, drawing 6%, while job-rich Vernon and Commerce together account for 5% more . Fully 12% work within the City of Gateway itself,

with an additional 9% in the other Gateway cities. A large share of City of Gateway job holders, in other words, live very close to their jobs. Figure 4.8 shows where these nearby jobs are most intensively clustered: in downtown LA; in Vernon/Commerce; in the district surrounding St. Francis Medical Center, the safety net hospital in Lynwood that serves a vast swathe of southeast LA; and in an industrial district in Compton that lies along the Alameda freight rail corridor.

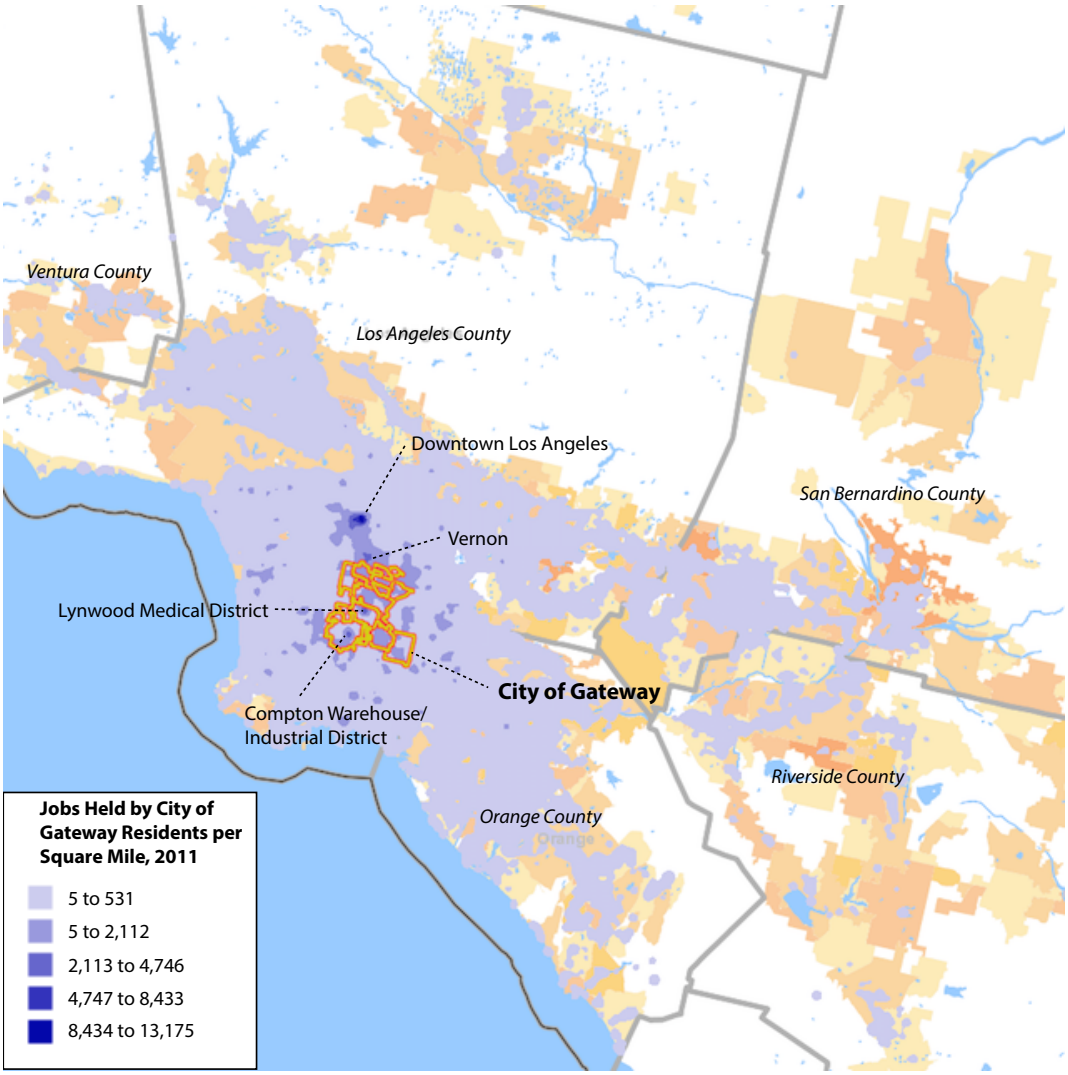

Figure 4.8. Density of jobs held by City of Gateway residents. Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey data, US Census. Map created by author using the "On The Map" application, http:// onthemap.ces.census.gov.

Despite so many of them living close to their jobs, 71% of City of Gateway residents commute alone in automobiles to reach their workplaces. This is surprisingly high, given the high population density and poverty of the area. It is not much lower than in the five-county metro area as a whole, where the drive-alone work commute share is 74%. Other means of reaching jobs, such as public transit, carpooling, and walking are more common in the City of Gateway than in the metropolitan region, but not by much (Table 4.4). Although LA County's extensive

bus system serves the major arterials within the City of Gateway, the region's limited (though expanding) passenger rail network does not reach the most densely populated quadrant, the northeast.[22] (See Figure 4.1.)

When one considers that, as we saw above, so much of local employment is in factories, railyards, warehouses, junkyards, construction sites, and other dispersed locations likely to be poorly served by public transit, and that many City of Gateway workers hold jobs with shifts that lie outside standard working hours, the high share of driving to work begins to make sense.[23]

Table 4.4. Work commute mode share, City of Gateway compared to the LA region. Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2011, Table D03, American Fact Finder 2.

Mode of travel to work (2007-2011)	City of Gateway	Five-county Los Angeles region
Driving alone	71%	74%
Carpooling	14%	12%
Public transit	8%	5%
Walking	3%	2%
Other	2%	2%
Working at home	2%	5%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

These commuting patterns have implications for the City of Gateway's housing stock. Workers who live there appear to have sought places to live that offer proximity to their jobs, whether as a result of necessity or preference or both. By definition they are not—as the by-now clichéd phrase from the Smart Growth literature would have it—"driving until they qualify." Meanwhile, their relative lack of reliance on public transportation means that there is not a particular impetus for housing to be clustered around rail stations, or along the arterial streets that offer high-frequency bus service. Instead, the pressure of demand on the housing stock in

[22] Maywood and Cudahy, both located in the northeast section of the City of Gateway, are the two most densely populated incorporated cities in California. (See Table 4 for comparison with other City of Gateway jurisdictions.)

[23] On a nighttime driving tour, one of my informants, a transportation planner and lifelong South Gate resident, showed me a street that connects mostly residential Huntington Park (where it is called Miles Avenue) to industrial districts in Vernon and Los Angeles (where it is called Soto Street). As one of the few north-south thoroughfares that crosses formidable barriers in the form of a major freight rail line and the Los Angeles River, Miles/Soto is used by a strikingly large number of bike riders, most of them men, who use it to reach their jobs, braving poor pavement conditions, high traffic speeds, and large volumes of semi trucks at all hours of the day and night. Given the Census undercount issues discussed earlier, and the low incomes, linguistic isolation, and unauthorized immigration status of many of these workers, it is probable that they are undercounted in official statistics. For a journalistic account of the as-yet understudied phenomenon of "invisible bike riders," who are found nationwide but particularly prevalent in LA, see Koeppel (2006).

the City of Gateway appears to be broadly distributed rather than intensely concentrated within particular nodes or along arterial streets. Indeed, the existence of a large and pervasive informal housing market seems to be precisely the result of this widespread demand for housing focused on broad swathes of ostensibly low-density, or "residential," neighborhoods.

Housing trends over time

In the City of Gateway today, hundreds of the residential blocks of the City of Gateway present the image, as seen from the street, of rows of modest detached single-family houses. This basic characteristic has remained unaltered in many such areas for the past half century or more. But much else about housing in the City of Gateway has changed dramatically in the same period.

One striking change has been a drop in the homeownership rate, from an already-low 51% in 1960 to 41% in 2010 (Table 4.5). Furthermore, the homeownership rate has dropped in every City of Gateway jurisdiction during this period, although today it still varies widely. Homeownership rates range from slim majorities in Compton, East Rancho Dominguez, Walnut Park, and Willowbrook, downward to Cudahy, with a rock-bottom rate of 18% in 2010. The overall picture is one of a large majority of renters in the City of Gateway, which does not confirm with traditional views of US suburbia, whether in its bourgeois or working-class incarnations, as a bastion of homeownership.

Table 4.5. Homeownership rate of occupied units by City of Gateway jurisdiction. Sources: Social Explorer, Table T69 (for 2010 Census); 1960 Census of Housing, Vol II (Metropolitan Housing), Part 3. Some 1960 jurisdictions estimated from census tracts.

City of Gateway Jurisdictions	1960	2010
Incorporated Cities		
Bell	37%	29%
Bellflower	64%	40%
Bell Gardens	37%	24%
Compton	64%	55%
Cudahy	43%	18%
Huntington Park	30%	27%
Lynwood	57%	47%
Maywood	35%	30%
Paramount	57%	43%
South Gate	57%	46%
Unincorporated		
East Rancho Dominguez	67%	55%
Florence/Graham	39%	37%
Walnut Park	62%	53%
Willowbrook	55%	52%
City of Gateway Total	**51%**	**41%**

Meanwhile, changes in the physical nature of the housing stock appear to divide into two phases. From 1960 to 1970, as might be expected for a region experiencing rapid population growth, the proportion of multifamily housing in the City of Gateway increased dramatically (Table 4.6). The share of apartments in buildings of 5 units or more leaped from under 8% to 18% in just one decade. This multifamily building boom was widespread within the 14 jurisdictions, but particularly concentrated in Bellflower, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, and Paramount. In each of these places, the share of the housing stock in buildings of 5 or more units increased threefold or more. Davis vividly describes the effects of this multifamily construction, decades later, on the physical landscape of Cudahy in this way: "'Victory garden' lots, 60 feet wide and as much as 390 feet deep, which were designed for a bungalow, a chicken house, and an orchard, now accommodate 'six-pack' stucco tenements three or four deep—in effect, continuous barracks that house as many as 125 people on a former single-family site" (Davis 1992, p. 70; Figure 4.9).

Table 4.6. Units in structure as share of housing stock in the City of Gateway, 1960 to 2010. Sources: Census Bureau, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses; and 2007-2011 American Community Survey. Units in Structure tables. Some jurisdictions are approximated as census tracts in 1980 and earlier. Note that 1-unit subcategories are not available in Census data prior to 1980.

Type of Structure	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007-2011
1-unit: detached	-	-	*54%*	*52%*	*50%*	*58%*
1-unit: attached	-	-	*6%*	*10%*	*14%*	*9%*
1-unit: Mobile home, boat, RV, van, etc.	-	-	*3%*	*4%*	*3%*	*3%*
1-unit subtotal	80%	70%	63%	67%	67%	70%
2-4 units	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	11%
5+ units	8%	18%	25%	21%	21%	20%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

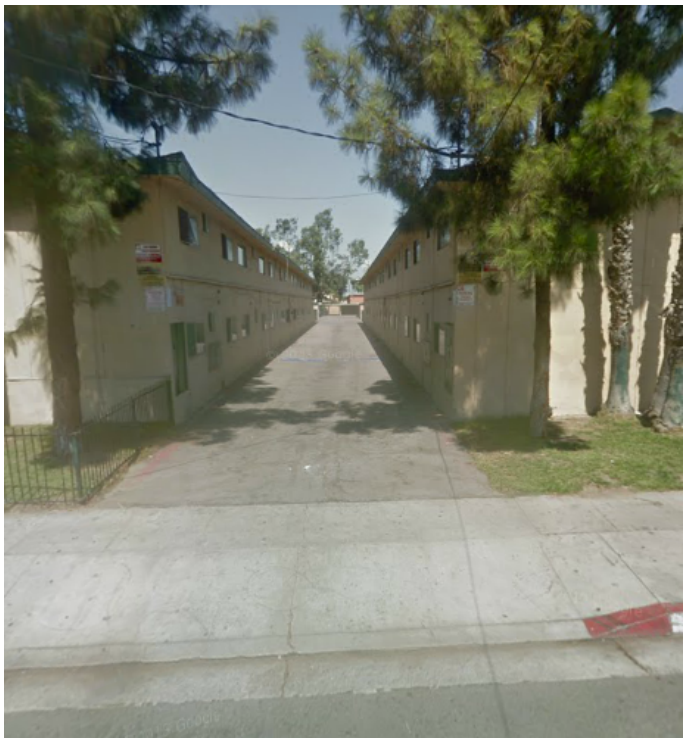

Figure 4.9. An example of low-rent legal rental housing stock in the City of Gateway. This image shows part of a typical 60s-era apartment development in Cudahy, built to fit onto the city's characteristic unusually deep residential parcels. Today, this type of housing, while often in poor physical condition, houses a large number of low-income renter households. Source: Google Maps Street View.

Unfortunately, detailed comparison from 1970 to 1980 within the "1-unit" category is not possible, but the basic trend from 1980 onwards is easy to discern, and it is markedly different from what prevailed during the decade of the 1960s.[24] By the 1980s, the boom in construction of large multifamily buildings had ended, and in fact apartments in buildings of five or more units declined in percentage terms from 1980 to 2000 and onwards to 2007-2011 (Table 4.6, above). The only category that increased substantially from 1980 to 2000 is that of "1-unit attached," which includes both townhouses and many forms of extralegal units, such as cases in which a single-family house has been subdivided into two or more apartments. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the common physical forms that extralegal units take in the City of Gateway.)

From 2000 to 2007-2011, curiously, there is a sudden uptick in the number of units classified as "1-unit detached." Given that the City of Gateway's single-family subdivisions had been built out decades earlier, this major increase suggests three possible explanations: 1) the increase is a byproduct of sampling error resulting

[24] Reported data for "units in structure" from the 1960 and 1970 decennial censuses do not distinguish between single-family detached and single-family attached units within the "1-unit" category. In addition, in 1960 and 1970 mobile homes, boats and other vehicles used as housing are included within this category as well. From 1980 onward, all of these categories are separately tallied.

from the Census Bureau's switch from a decennial census to the American Community Survey during this period; 2) the Census Bureau was much more aggressive in locating detached back houses not visible from the street from 2007 to 2011 than it had been in 2000; or 3) there was a spurt in construction of back houses during the decade of the 2000s. It is not possible to sort from among these three hypotheses, but likely any one of them or some combination of the three demonstrates the consequence of the informal market on the housing stock of the City of Gateway. As explained further in Appendix 4-1, these dynamics appear to have been especially strong in Bell, Maywood, and South Gate.

Even a relative burst in permits granted to buildings containing five or more units during the 1980s (Figure 4.10) was not enough to arrest the gradual decline in the multifamily stock during this decade. During the 1990s and 2000s, permitted production was even more anemic. By about 1991, these data suggest, permitted housing production within the City of Gateway had essentially sputtered. Although multifamily housing production declined nationwide, with the federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 playing a key role in reducing the attractiveness of apartments for investors (Poterba 1991), in the City of Gateway production has never recovered since then despite ongoing population growth. Even so, something has been allowing the area to accommodate a still-growing population and replenish aging housing stock. The next subsection presents additional evidence that this something was the informal housing market.

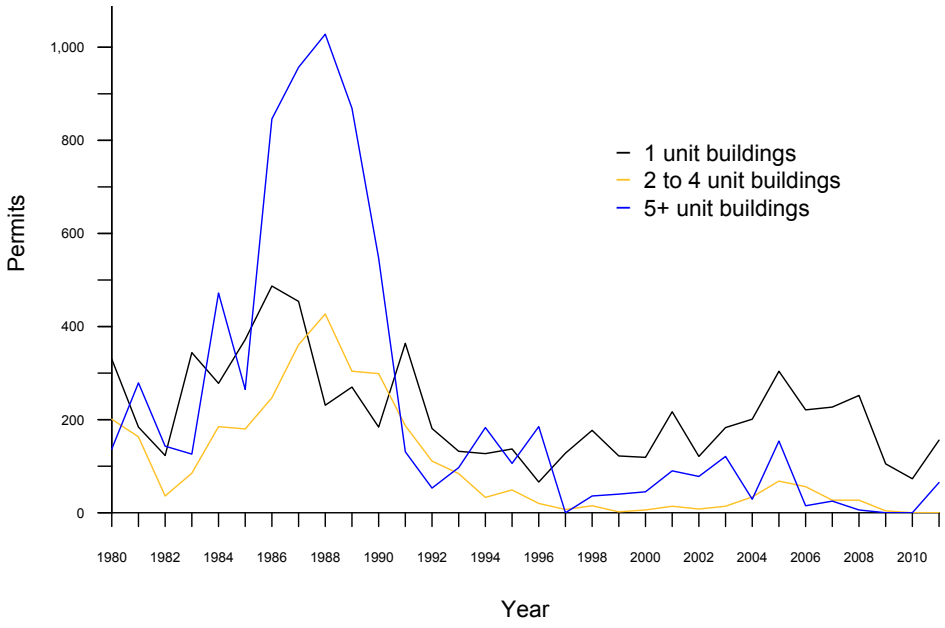

Figure 4.10. Annual building permits issued in City of Gateway incorporated jurisdictions from 1980 to 2011. Note that this analysis only includes the ten incorporated cities in the City of Gateway, while excluding the unincorporated areas, due to data limitations. Source: Building Permits Survey; data obtained via CD-ROM mailed to the author by the US Department of Commerce.

Informalization of housing stock

Estimates of the "shadow" housing stock are notoriously imprecise and prone to fluctuation on the basis of the assumptions that are used. Gellen (1985), Baer (1986), and Hardman (1996) have all made nationwide estimates using an obscure HUD publication, the Components of Inventory Change (CINCH), that uses data from the American Housing Survey to account for changes to the national housing stock over time. In this subsection, I use a modified version of these authors' techniques to model a simple estimate of the extent of informalization of the City of Gateway housing stock since 1980. The key differences are that 1) my analysis is at the sub-metropolitan, not national or multistate, level; and 2) I incorporate city-level building permit data from the Census Bureau's annual Building Permits Survey into my analysis. The model is necessarily a blunt instrument, but it is a useful tool for gauging the approximate extent and timing of an increase in informalization of housing in the City of Gateway from 1980 onward. (Methodological details are described in Appendix 4-2.)

Roughly speaking, the modeled results for the ten incorporated cities in the City of Gateway are as follows.[25] From 1981 to 2010, had no replenishment of the housing stock of any sort (whether permitted or otherwise) occurred, modeled housing stock loss rates suggest that the total number of housing units (excluding mobile homes, RVs, and other housing not attached to permanent foundations) would have dwindled from 136,654 to 107,760. Instead, according to year 2010 census data, the housing stock increased to 145,462. (See Table A-3 in Appendix 4-2.) Thus, according to the model, 37,702 housing units were added to the stock in the ten cities from 1981 to 2010. However, according to BPS data, only 16,958 units received permits during this period.[26] This would imply that an additional 20,744 units, or 55% of the increment, were added by means other than permitted construction (Figure 4.11, rightmost bar). While it is possible that not all of these additional 20,744 dwellings were added via extralegal means, it is likely that the vast majority of them were (see Appendix 4-2 for more discussion).

A modified version of the model resets, at the beginning of each new decade, the modeled number of units to the actual figures recorded in the decennial census. This makes it possible to compare the estimated rate of informalization of the housing stock by decade. During the 1980s, according to the model results, permitted construction can explain 98% of the replenishment and net expansion of the housing stock that took place (Figure 4.11, leftmost three bars). This result

[25] I could not include the four unincorporated areas in the analysis, since building permit statistics disaggregated at the level of Census Designated Places within unincorporated county areas are not tracked in the Building Permit Survey. Therefore, this analysis applies only to the ten incorporated cities within the City of Gateway, and excludes the four unincorporated areas.

[26] Naturally, not all units that receive permits actually get built. However, most of them do, owing to the time and expense required for a property owner to get a set of construction drawings ready for review by a city building department. In any case, building permits are a conservative proxy for permitted construction, since they represent the maximum number of permitted units that could have been built.

suggests that the construction boom during the 1980s shown above in Figure 4.10 (modest compared to what occurred in the 1960s and 1970s) may have obviated the need for widespread extralegal unit production, although media reports from the period suggest that garage conversions in particular underwent a sharp increase at the time.[27]

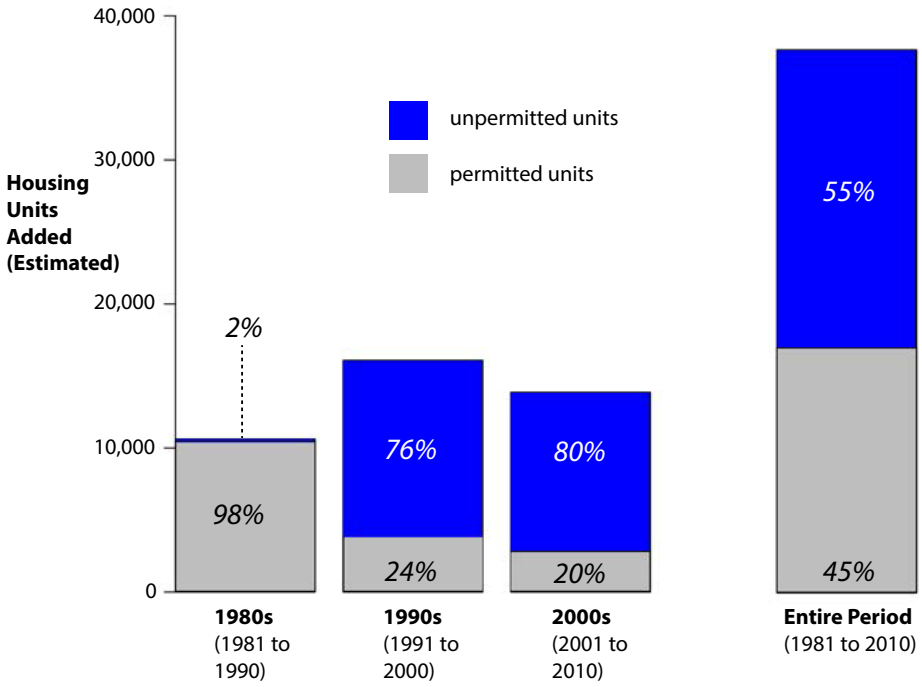

Figure 4.11. Housing added to the stock in the City of Gateway by permit status mode (incorporated jurisdictions only), from 1981 to 2010. This is a summary of results obtained by the housing stock model summarized in Appendix 4-2. Note that the components of the decadal bars (the three bars on the left) do not precisely sum to those in the bar representing the entire time period of 1981 to 2010 (the bar on the right), due to differences in assumptions. (See Appendix 4-2 for an explanation.)

The situation in the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium was altogether different. In the decades from 1991 to 2000, and from 2001 to 2010, permitted units could explain only 24% and 20%, respectively, of the units estimated to have either replenished or augmented the housing stock in the ten cities. While these results are only estimates, they suggest a larger trend of acceleration of the process of informalization of the housing stock over the past

[27] The media coverage of informal housing processes that began in the 1980s could perhaps be explained by the relative novelty of garage conversions at the time in communities that were not yet accustomed to them. See Chavez and Quinn (1987) for perhaps the most comprehensive example. Media coverage, in the LA Times at least, seemed to pick up steam in the 1990s and then diminish in the 2000s, perhaps because by then extralegal conversions were an old story. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of local media coverage of informal housing issues.

three decades, as permitted construction sputtered, existing housing stock continued to age, and as population growth continued.

Relative paucity of rental housing subsidies

An analysis of a HUD database shows that subsidized rental housing, in its various forms, forms a relatively small share of the housing market in the City of Gateway.[28] Using the most recent data (from 2008), and making the most conservative assumptions (i.e., that no units are double-counted across more than one subsidy source), an estimated maximum of a little over 6% of the 2010 housing stock in the City of Gateway was subsidized for low-income rental occupancy. Of this subsidized rental housing, only 41%, or less than 3% of the overall total stock, is covered by place-based rental housing programs such as public housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and HUD direct subsidy programs. The rest, or just 4% of the overall total, consists of housing owned by landlords whose tenants use Housing Choice Vouchers (commonly known as "Section 8") to help pay their rents.

These figures make it plain that subsidized housing in the City of Gateway, while not insignificant, is not doing the heaviest lifting in the housing of tens of thousands of low-income households that live in the area. The estimated total of just over 9,300 subsidized units is less than half the estimated more than 20,700 extralegal units added since 1980 (Figure 4.11 above, rightmost bar). The relatively minor role of subsidized rental housing in the City of Gateway in comparison to informal housing becomes even more so given that according to an LA County code enforcement officer, landlords of extralegal apartments in some cases accept Section 8 vouchers.[29]

An absence of affordable housing in the area is unsurprising when one considers the lack of political support for it. For instance, of the ten incorporated cities within the City of Gateway, only two, Compton and South Gate, took the initiative to set up their own public housing authorities during the era in the mid 20th century when this new form of subsidized housing governance came into being nationwide. The other eight cities, as well as the unincorporated sections, are covered by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles. Today, the nine public housing developments in the City of Gateway are all located in Willowbrook, Compton, and East Rancho Dominguez.[30] The role of the two housing authorities

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[28] It would be an error to conflate housing subsidy with rental housing. In fact, the overwhelming lion's share of US housing subsidies go to owner-occupied housing, and particularly to the highest income households (Carroll, O'Hare, and Swagel 2011).

[29] This is despite the formal inspection process conducted by the local housing authority that is required to ensure that a unit is up to code before a landlord can lease to a tenant bearing a Section 8 voucher. According to my informant from LA County, the inspection process, while generally effective in identifying substandard living conditions, in many cases does not identify apartments that are noncompliant with local land use ordinances such as zoning.

[30] It is almost certainly not a coincidence that these three jurisdictions had substantial African American populations as early as the 1950s, when public housing construction began in earnest. Politicians in jurisdictions that at the time were nearly all-white, such as South Gate, tended to vociferously resist the construction of public housing developments,

operating in all other areas of the City of Gateway is restricted to managing tenant-based Section 8 vouchers. As of 2008, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)-subsidized rental housing was more widespread, with its 1,664 restricted units spread among 27 developments located in 11 of the 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions, but LIHTC-subsidized housing, in most cases, has been subject to far less stigma than public housing, in part because it tends to serve less impoverished tenants (HUD 2008; Erickson 2009). In any case, the number of LIHTC-funded units, while much greater than the tally of public housing stock, is still comparatively modest.

Summary

As has been shown in this chapter, although the present City of Gateway is a dramatically different place than its early- and mid-20th century antecedents, the seeds of its current reality can be seen in trends observable a half century or more ago. A weak and fragmented governance structure established then persists to the present day, and is perhaps even more overwhelmed by current realities than was the case when the City of Gateway was a hardscrabble mélange of farms, factories, and suburban homesteads. An ethic of flinty self-reliance brought by the area's original suburban settlers influences the City of Gateway's politics even today, in spite of the near-total departure of their descendants from the area. And the rigid racial segregation that characterized most of the area in the 1950s set the stage for the wholesale white flight and repopulation by Latinos that was to follow.

Following the lead of Nicolaides, I have focused on the Watts Riots of 1965 as a watershed moment in the history of the City of Gateway. For reasons unrelated to the civil unrest, but beginning at roughly the same time and accelerating several years thereafter, a disappearance of the Fordist industry that propelled the area at its peak of prosperity in the 1950s began to take place. Anomalously for a US metropolitan area, the all-too-familiar flight of high-paying, unionized plants was followed by a reindustrialization process that gave rise to a very different production economy, one that grew within the physical shell of its predecessor. One of the best places to see this dramatic transformation is today's South Gate Industrial Park, which is an adaptive reuse of an enormous, lavishly ornamented factory on a 40-acre parcel near Alameda and Firestone in South Gate built in 1927 to house the Firestone Tire and Rubber plant. Today, where heavy industrial production once took place, the cavernous space is filled with an assortment of apparel makers, warehouse space, an adult school, and sundry other light industrial activities and their spinoffs (Pulido, Barraclough, and Cheng 2012) (Figure 4.12).

The Watts Riot hastened the process of white flight, again all too familiar to students of the American city, but was then unexpectedly followed in the subsequent decades by a reoccupation of the housing stock that mirrored the repurposing of industrial property. Newcomers began to arrive in the City of Gateway at a rapid rate, at a time when, because of the economic changes wrought by reindustrialization, their incomes could not support new housing construction.

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excepting only temporary wartime housing for white defense workers, because federal law compelled them to be racially integrated (Nicolaides 2002).

By the 1990s, the existing housing in the City of Gateway was stretched to its breaking point and the informal housing market became the only plausible pressure release valve. All of this unfolded in an area where political support and implementation for affordable housing had always been tepid at best, and where subsidized rental housing was therefore not up to the task of housing the waves of newcomers.

Figure 4.12. The former Firestone plant, South Gate. Today's South Gate Industrial Park is a perfect examplar of the transformation of the City of Gateway's industrial economy from large-scale, unionized, and Fordist production to small-scale, low-wage, and deskilled plants. Home to myriad small enterprises, it is carved out of the physical shell of the former Firestone factory. Photos by the author.

As a result, the City of Gateway came to have the large, but poorly understood, informal housing market that is the subject of this dissertation. The next chapter describes the on-the-ground physical expression of this market.

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Chapter 5: The Physical Expression and Impact of the Informal Housing Market in the City of Gateway

This chapter addresses one of this dissertation's four research sub-questions (introduced in the preface): What is the physical expression and impact on residential neighborhoods of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway? The physicality of extralegal housing in the area is of broader significance, rather than simply of inherent interest on its own, for several reasons. First, conversion and addition of space devoted to unauthorized housing affects the daily lives of residents, both those living in such spaces and others who live nearby. The details of how the extralegal living space is configured make a difference for how residents experience those impacts, including noise, parking shortages, and others. Second, the particular physical form that extralegal housing takes, and not simply its sheer quantity, has ramifications for impacts on the broader community, including environmental concerns such as increased stormwater runoff and an exacerbation of the urban heat island effect.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as I argue in Chapter 8, the on-the-ground physical expression of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway has reinforced existing symbolic categories that feed back into political processes at the local level. Because extralegal housing has added density, of both people and living quarters, to residential streets in a recondite manner, these areas' residents experience the realities of dense urban living even as their streetscapes continue to project the visual symbology of suburbia as seen from the public realm. This has ramifications that go far beyond the aesthetic. This disjuncture has had dramatic political consequences for the communities within the City of Gateway, with accompanying major effects on the life chances of local residents and constraints on the future trajectories possible for their communities.

Plan for Chapter 5

The rest of this chapter is organized in the following manner. It begins with a "field guide to informal housing" in the City of Gateway, which describes the seven principal modes by which habitable living space is added to the informal market on residential lots, either by converting it from existing buildings or by adding new structures. One additional mode, commonly used in medium-sized apartment buildings, is described as well. The next section details four tactics that operators of extralegal housing use to create usable living quarters: self-building, improvising utility connections, ephemeral commercial activity, and partial permitting from building inspectors.[1]

[1] Chapter 7 is devoted entirely to *code enforcement*, or enforcement action by the local state that occurs *after* extralegal housing has been physically installed. By contrast, building inspections take place before and during the construction phase, not post-occupancy.

Whereas the first two sections of this chapter, described above, are a *description* of extralegal housing modes and tactics in the City of Gateway, the next section examines the *impacts* of such housing on its surroundings. First, it introduces the concept of *horizontal density,* a characteristic pattern of incremental micro-infill and urban form in residential areas that is particular to the Los Angeles region and particularly pronounced in the City of Gateway. It then presents the results of two different types of *building footprint analysis*, one limited and longitudinal and the other comprehensive and cross-sectional. These allow for the quantification and the visualization of the spread of horizontal density in residential areas in the City of Gateway. The chapter then ends with a brief summary.

Methods used in this chapter

The first two sections in this chapter rely on findings from two of the three qualitative methods used in this dissertation, interviews and direct observation. The building footprint analysis described in the third section uses Sanborn maps and publicly available building outline and residential parcel data from LA County as data sources. These data are analyzed using Adobe image-processing and ESRI GIS software.

A Field Guide to Informal Housing in the City of Gateway

In her 2004 book *A Field Guide to Sprawl*, Dolores Hayden sought to bring taxonomic and analytical precision to a landscape, "sprawl," that remains stubbornly inscrutable, and indeed whose very defining characteristics are at times hotly disputed, despite its near-total ubiquity on the fringes of US metropolitan regions (Hayden 2004). What follows here is a small-scale echo of Hayden's book-length treatment, but applied to the common forms of extralegal housing extant on the ground in the City of Gateway rather than to sprawl.

Each instance of a pattern of extralegal housing, or *mode* (to echo Roy's terminology), is explained below (Roy 2005).[2] Some, but not all, are instances of what in official planning terminology are variously referred to as *secondary units* or *Accessory Dwelling Units* and colloquially as *mother-in-law apartments, granny flats,* or *coach houses,* among other terms*.* As described in Chapter 2, several bodies of literature have sought to describe and conceptualize secondary units through various lenses. However, fully self-contained dwelling units on the same lot as a single-family house comprise but a subset of the modes that are used to extralegally add housing to residential lots in the City of Gateway. The field guide is intended to

[2] Roy uses the concept of *mode* in her 2005 paper to emphasize that many people have one foot in the formal economy and another in the informal realm. In so doing, she argues against the notion that there are strictly delineated formal and informal *sectors* of the economy. Her conceptualization of mode is particularly apropos here, since almost all forms of extralegal housing in the City of Gateway rest on a foundation of fully legal property ownership. I explore some of the political implications of this basic fact, and the contrasts with several closely studied cases from the Global South, in Chapter 8.

encompass most of the extralegal housing tactics common on residential lots in the area.

Each mode presented in the field guide below should be seen not only as a physical type, but also—in keeping with Roy's characterization—as a bundled set of tactics that meet the needs of landowners, occupants, and tenants for some combination of the following objectives: provision of adequate living space for self, friends or family; earning an adequate return within the informal market; and avoidance of interference from the local state. In other words, this typology of modes attempts to make visible the underlying processes that result in the on-the-ground alterations to the urban environment, and not simply describe the physical alterations themselves.

In this section, I make no attempt to quantify the relative prevalence of the different modes. Rather, in describing them I rely entirely on evidence from direct observation and from interviews with participants in the informal housing market. Where I make statements about some modes being more or less common than others, I am relying on the opinions of my informants rather than systematic data collection. Although I have made efforts to quantify the rate of growth and the overall size of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway in this dissertation (see Chapters 4 and 7, respectively), these techniques do not allow for a differentiation between the different modes described here.

The modes of extralegal housing discussed below fall into two categories: the creation of living quarters from either the *conversion of existing space* or the *addition of new space* (Table 5.1). In past scholarship, conversion has tended to get the lion's share of emphasis as the mechanism that has produced unpermitted residential units in U.S. cities and suburbs (cf. Gellen 1985; Hardman 1996). Where extralegal processes that result in a net increase in living space have gotten scholarly attention, they have tended to be situated in the distant historical past (Harris 1999), in rural areas (Buckley and Littmann 2010), or on today's metropolitan fringe (Ward 1999). As will be described below, in the City of Gateway the addition of new space *and* the intensified use of existing built space are both important mechanisms for an informal housing market that has been operating in the very heart of the Los Angeles megalopolis for decades.

Table 5.1. The seven main modes of extralegal housing provision in the City of Gateway. They are classified according to two dimensions: conversion versus addition (horizontal axis) and less versus more intrusive to surrounding residents (vertical axis).

Less intrusive

CONVERSION	ADDITION
Creation of extra units by partitioning a house	
	Enlargement of a house
Inhabitation of nonresidential space	
	Emplacement of a habitable vehicle
Transformation of a house into a dormitory	
	Construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure
Transformation of a house into a noncompliant group home	

More intrusive

One additional distinction among the modes of extralegal housing is worth making: their level of *intrusiveness*. While this term carries some normative baggage, it is intended to make a distinction between extralegal housing practices that are perceived as relatively less or relatively more of an affront to the peaceful residential atmosphere expected by people living on neighboring properties. More intrusive extralegal housing types would be expected to be more likely to result in neighbors filing anonymous complaints that are by far the most common trigger for code enforcement action (a dynamic discussed at length in Chapter 7).

To be sure, the distinctions between more or less intrusive extralegal housing modes can easily become blurred. For instance, a (typically) less intrusive house subdivision could yield three or four, rather than just two, units from a single-family house, and therefore increase the previous single-family house's impact on the neighborhood much more than if it had been only converted into an extralegal duplex. Conversely, the (typically) more intrusive construction of a back house could have relatively little impact on the surrounding neighborhood if it is relatively small compared to the main house, if it contains adequate sanitation facilities, and if off-street parking is provided. These categories can become further blurred when

more than mode is used on the same residential parcel, as frequently occurs. Nonetheless, making a distinction amongst extralegal housing modes on the basis level of intrusiveness is at least somewhat useful for these purposes, and is reflected in the vertical axis in Table 5.1 (above).

One final note regarding the field guide to informal housing is in order: each of the modes discussed functions independently from the mechanism of *crowding,* or the occupation of a given living space by a number of persons that exceeds some given threshold.[3] Crowding, of course, has long been noted as one of the principal coping mechanisms that people use to resolve the intersection of low incomes, high-rent unsubsidized housing, and scarce or altogether unavailable subsidized housing. Indeed, Los Angeles is frequently singled out as the US metropolis with by far the most crowded housing when measured in terms of people per room.[4]

It would be a mistake to assume that households using crowding as an affordability strategy simply passively accept difficult living conditions. Instead, they employ various strategies to cope with crowded conditions. For instance, Roberto,[5] an interview respondent, recounted residents, living together on a multi-unit property in Florence-Firestone, instituting an informal system of keeping car keys in the same location so that residents could move cars in and out of the driveway and therefore park more automobiles on the lot than would have otherwise been possible. Even as a child, Roberto would assist in driving the cars in and out of position. A former code inspector who worked in an incorporated City of Gateway jurisdiction recalled a woman who shared a garage apartment with another family, with the two spaces partitioned by a bedsheet hanging from the ceiling. Chavez (1990) uses the phrase *coresidence* to describe unauthorized Mexican and Central American immigrants' strategies to select people with whom to live in order to find companionship, mutual support, childcare, and other needed resources so as to not merely endure overcrowding, but also to build support networks into their living arrangements.

Nonetheless, and notwithstanding minor and major creative strategies such as the ones described above, in crowded conditions living is difficult, and conflict is rife, as was the case for the woman sharing the garage split by a bedsheet, and as Mahler's (1995) research from Long Island in the early 1990s showed. For this reason, people facing the present reality or the upcoming prospect of crowded living conditions in the City of Gateway frequently go beyond the coping strategies exemplified above, and make, or at least take advantage of, extralegal physical modifications to living spaces. Crowding, of course, can be in evidence whether or not living quarters have been physically modified. But the purpose of this section is

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[3] There is no single well-recognized measure nor standard for crowding, and evidence suggests that different ethnic groups' tolerance for crowding, even among the affluent, varies widely (Newman 2008). Even so, I mention crowding as an important concept, since it is so often used as an explanation for how low-income renters cope with tight market conditions, but typically without mention of extralegal housing modes. For a typical example from a policy paper, see Mathur and Parker (2007).

[4] For a recent example, see Reyes and Menezes (2014).

[5] Not his real name.

to spotlight the agency that owners and operators of extralegal housing assert in modifying living space, and not simply passively accepting overcrowded conditions. Each of the seven modes by which they do so is now detailed in turn below.

Conversion: Creation of extra units by partitioning a house

According to an LA County code enforcement officer who works within the unincorporated area of the City of Gateway, one of the most common extralegal housing modes in his territory (along with garage conversions) is partitioning a single-family house into multiple separate living spaces. Such modifications can be made with relatively little cost, and typically entail adding "solid walls" within the house, adding exterior doors to the outside, and modifying plumbing. As a different LA County code enforcement officer, Jonathan Pacheco Bell, whose territory is Florence-Firestone, noted, this mode is well-suited for carving separate living spaces out of the long houses that occupy narrow and deep parcels in this and other nearby areas. Other variations include partitioning a duplex into an unpermitted triplex (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. An example of an extralegally partitioned house in Bellflower. This photo from an online real estate sales advertisement shows a triplex that had been partitioned, without permits, from a pre-existing, permitted duplex. Without the verbal description in the advertisement, it would be difficult to perceive from the house's exterior appearance the modification that has been made to its interior. Photo from www.redfin.com.

Roberto, introduced in the previous section, recalled living as a child, for a time, in a former three-bedroom, two-bathroom single-family house that had been split into two units (with a third unit created from the garage). The conversion had been accomplished by building a drywall partition down the centerline of a hallway, with one of the bathrooms simply split into two. He noted that one of the advantages of this mode is its reversibility. Later in his childhood, after his mother had purchased a five-unit property (permitted for three units) in Florence-Firestone, a

code enforcement action from the county compelled his family to reduce the unit count to three. Removing an internal wall was all that was needed to restore the front building, which had earlier been split into one two-bedroom-one-bathroom and one one-bedroom-one-bathroom apartment, back into its earlier incarnation as a three bedroom-two bathroom house.

Sharon[6] is another interview respondent who lived for a time in a house from which a separate unit had been carved out. Facing a tense living arrangement, and raising two grandchildren, Sharon accepted her daughter's longstanding offer to move into the four-bedroom house she owned and shared with her family in Compton. Sharon did not regard her daughter's offer as entirely altruistic, given that it was clear that her daughter expected her to be a "built-in babysitter" in addition to paying $900 per month in rent.

Sharon's son-in-law, who lived in the house with her daughter and their two children, was skilled in handyman work. To create private living quarters for Sharon and the two grandchildren she was raising, he closed the hallway. With a pre-existing side door providing access to the outside, the arrangement provided enough privacy to be tolerable, at least for a time. When Sharon's hot plate ceased functioning, she purchased a used stove, and her son-in-law connected it to a gas line and installed a sink, thus creating a makeshift kitchen.

There were downsides to living in a partitioned house: mice and cockroaches proliferated in Sharon's quarters, and the grandchildren that she was raising sometimes pounded their hands on the walled-off hallway, creating noise that disturbed her daughter. Eventually, in what Sharon recalls as a godsend, her name rose to the top of the waiting list for City of Los Angeles public housing, after a seven-year wait, and she moved to Nickerson Gardens (a development in Watts), where she currently resides, and which she perceives to be her best possible housing option.

Because it entails the interior partitioning of space previously used for residential occupancy, this mode of extralegal housing provision is typically relatively modest in terms of its intrusiveness as perceived by neighbors (as shown above in Figure 5.1). In most cases, few changes are visible from the exterior, except in cases where additional doors need to be cut into the house's exterior walls to provide direct access to a carved-out apartment. Impacts could include more vehicles parked on the parcel or on the street, or people entering the side of the building to gain access to their units, rather than from the front or back. However, in many cases these impacts would be no different for a large family occupying a single-family house than they would be if the same house were partitioned into two units and occupied by two families with the same total number of persons between them.

The extralegal legal status of house partitions derives from two sources: their lack of permitting as verified by building inspectors and their failure to comply with the limits of unit density in zoning codes. In many house partitions, it is physically possible for the wall separation to be done in such a way as to be code-compliant, particularly if bathrooms are added or modified. In such instances, then, the

[6] Not her real name.

insurmountable obstacle to legal status for the added unit is the limit on density in the house's zoning district, as in the case of a single-family house in a single-family zone split into a front-to-back duplex. In this instance, the critical element in marking the house's extralegal status is the second kitchen.[7] In the end, cultural preferences for single-family living embedded in zoning ordinances originally drafted, in some cases, nearly a century ago consign a great many partitioned houses in the City of Gateway to extralegal status.

Conversion: Inhabitation of nonresidential space

Arguably a greater deviation from the single-family ideal than the partition of a house into multiple units, as described above, is the conversion of nonresidential space on a residential parcel into living space. Indeed, the most common instance of this mode—the conversions of garages into living space—has become, as Mukhija (2014) incisively observes, the symbolic emblem for the informal housing debate in the Los Angeles region as a whole for decades. As Nicolaides (2002) noted in the conclusion of her book, the garage apartment in the City of Gateway represents a return to the area's historical origins amidst vastly changed circumstances. Much as homeowner-builders in the 1920s in South Gate frequently lived in the garages they built on their newly purchased plots until they could build habitable main houses, many of today's residents live in garages as well. The difference is that today's garage dwellers are much less likely to own their properties, and their prospects for eventually moving into more commodious quarters in the area are dimmer (ibid).

Garage conversions are appealing to the people that undertake them for several reasons. First, the older housing stock that predominates in many parts of the City of Gateway is often accompanied by detached garages that are too small to park many of today's popular large vehicles, such as sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks, and even large sedans. In many cases, such spaces have already been used for storing personal belongings apart from vehicles, with cars parked on driveways, front yard paved parking aprons, or on the street. In these instances, converting the space from storing belongings to creating housing for people is a short step.

In addition, conversions of garages to apartments are often relatively simple, quick, and cheap. Hilda McCall, a homeowner in the Harbor Gateway section of the City of Los Angeles (located about two miles west of Compton's western boundary), created an apartment from her detached garage for her teenaged daughter and her daughter's then-boyfriend (and now husband) when she became pregnant, at a cost of about $10,000, in the 1990s. This yielded a relatively spacious and comfortable two bedroom, one bathroom apartment of about 400 square feet. Creating a rudimentary garage apartment requires little more than sealing the garage door

[7] Many California jurisdictions, in response to a mandate from state law (Assembly Bill 1866, effective in 2003), have modified their zoning codes to allow secondary units. However, most such ordinances within the City of Gateway have provisions, such as parking requirements, minimum and maximum size restrictions, owner-occupancy requirements, and others that in practice would preclude many apartments created from typical house subdivisions from counting as legal secondary units even if their owners were to seek to get them regularized.

(with caulk, or else building a false wall behind it), installing appliances, bringing in utility connections (discussed in the next section of this chapter), stuffing foam or paper into the exterior walls for insulation, and possibly building internal drywall partitions (Figure 5.2). The simplest converted garages, which often lack their own bathroom or kitchen, can cost $2,000 or less, according to an LA County code enforcement officer.

Figure 5.2. Several examples of garage apartments from the City of Gateway. Clockwise from top left: an apartment from the City of Bell; an occupied attached garage in Paramount (note still-visible outline of garage door and dead-end driveway, both to the right of the main part of the house); a converted garage in Florence-Firestone; a garage apartment interior in Willowbrook. All photos from www.redfin.com.

Finally, garage conversions are easily reversible. A real estate agent who represents buyers in an area that includes the City of Gateway noted that in cases where a homeowner is forced by code enforcement action to remove a garage apartment, the process is straightforward. Where the garage door has not been removed, little more is required than tearing out the drywall, removing appliances (and storing them for future use), and capping plumbing. All of the foregoing may cost as little as $2,000, or less than half the cost of demolishing a typical backyard shed and hauling the material away. What is more, a garage apartment, after removal, can quickly and easily be reinstated. The LA County code enforcement officer quoted above noted that many homeowners view the cost of (temporarily) removing garage apartments as simply "the cost of doing business."

According to the realtor quoted above, garage apartments tend to be rented to family members. One respondent with familiarity with the City of Bell Gardens told me that it is common in that city for longstanding tenants of single-family houses to convert garages to accommodate their relatives or their own growing

households, or to cope with rent increases imposed by their landlords. In many cases, tenants make these modifications without the knowledge of the longstanding (often white) absentee property owners, many of whom left Bell Gardens decades earlier for Downey and other typical "white flight" destinations. In other cases, the homeowner lives in a back house and either converts or allows the tenant family living in the front house to convert the garage into more living space. This respondent had never seen a homeowner living in the front house that converted a garage for rental on the open market, i.e., to people other than family members, relatives, or friends.

Garages are not the only type of nonresidential space that is converted into living quarters in the City of Gateway. An LA County code enforcement officer (different from the ones quoted earlier in this chapter) observed that workshops are also commonly used as living space. In many instances, their square footage is listed on assessor's property tax records, and they comply with building codes, but only if they are not used as sleeping quarters. Because such spaces are often well-built, with full-fledged foundations (unlike many garages), and because it is common for them to be well-lit and sometimes equipped with plumbing, they are tempting targets for conversion. As the officer noted rhetorically, "Who has a [work]shop in their backyard nowadays?"

It is quite rare for garage apartments to be legalized, for several reasons. First, they often are built in ways that make retrofitting them for code compliance difficult and expensive. For instance, Hilda McCall, the Harbor Gateway homeowner described earlier, received an order from a City of Los Angeles code enforcement officer to close down her garage apartment, following an anonymous complaint from a neighbor. Bringing the apartment to a state of compliance would have required excavating under the garage and installing a concrete foundation underneath it, at an estimated cost of about $25,000, or two and a half times the original (and comparatively high) cost of the original conversion.

In addition, garage apartments often require extensive life safety modifications to meet code requirements, such as egress doors. Enforcement of such codes is regarded by many code enforcement officers as a top priority, since garage apartments have an extensive history of fatal fires in Los Angeles County.[8] Consequently, when garage apartments come to their attention, they are often under pressure to ensure that homeowners make all the improvements that the code dictates.

In addition, in many cases it is impossible for garage apartments to comply with *zoning* codes even if they can be brought into compliance with *building* codes. For instance, according to one of the LA County code enforcement officers with

[8] In June 2013, the California legislature passed California Assembly Concurrent Resolution 32, a symbolic resolution that urged communities statewide to follow the lead of the City of Long Beach in aggressively enforcing building safety codes on unpermitted garage conversions. Long Beach had previously renamed its municipal code sections pertaining to enforcement against such conversions after the Aviles family, three of whose children perished in a 2007 garage apartment fire. (California Assembly Concurrent Resolution 32, passed June 5, 2013; see http://legiscan.com/CA/text/ACR32/id/836801.)

whom I spoke, in all residential zones in Los Angeles County habitable space must be at least 5' from the sides of the parcel and 15' in front of the rear property line. Very commonly, garages lie within those areas, known as "setbacks." Thus, garage apartments in such cases cannot be brought into compliance with zoning unless they are physically moved, a very expensive proposition.

The foregoing zoning regulations are justified by their defenders on the basis of life safety. Off-street parking regulations, on the other hand, have no such justification. In almost every jurisdiction in the City of Gateway, a single-family house generates a requirement for the provision of two *covered* off-street parking spaces. (See Appendix 5-1 for details on these requirements.) Thus, if a garage—even one that has not been used to store an automobile for decades—is to be legally converted into an apartment, then the property owner must replace the covered parking that it formerly provided to the main house, as well as adding two additional covered parking spaces. Even in cases where a parcel is large enough to provide enough space for parking three or more additional automobiles, creating covered spaces in the form of carports or new garages adds additional expense.

For all of the foregoing reasons, permitted apartments created from garages (and, to a lesser extent, from other nonresidential spaces) are relatively rare in the City of Gateway. Likely this, along with their reputation for unsafe living conditions and fire danger, contributes to the unsavory reputation of garage apartments throughout the City of Gateway and the Los Angeles region, particularly among those who are disinclined to favor anything but a law-and-order stance towards extralegal housing. Conversely, their modest visual impact on their surroundings, and their tendency to be occupied by relatives of those living elsewhere on the property contribute to their relative toleration in many neighborhoods, even on streets where the majority of garages or workshops have been converted into living space.

Conversion: Transformation of a house into a dormitory

If subdivided houses are relatively unobtrusive and conversions of garages and other nonresidential space somewhat less so, conversions of single-family houses into extralegal de facto bunkhouses or group homes (discussed separately below) arguably have a considerably greater degree of impact on the residential atmosphere of their streets. Much as Kissam (Kissam 1998) made a distinction between extralegal housing practices in farming regions, contrasting the kinship-based practices of the Central Valley town of Parlier, California with the more purely exploitative "artificial support networks" of Immokalee, Florida, it is possible to make similar distinctions within the spectrum of extralegal housing modes in the City of Gateway. Unlike what is typical in the conversion of nonresidential space and sometimes in the subdivision of houses, the practice of converting erstwhile single-family houses into dormitories appears to be motivated entirely by economic gain and not at all by people seeking to help family members, relatives, or friends find housing.

In my research, I came across two settings in which conversion of single-family houses into bunkhouses appeared to be common. One was outside the City of Gateway, in one of the cities of predominantly working-class north Orange County,

while the other was Willowbrook in unincorporated Los Angeles. In both cases, extralegal bunkhouses were a solution to the economic problem of very large, overvalued single-family houses that had been built in socioeconomically downscale neighborhoods during the intense speculative frenzy that ended with the onset of the Great Recession in 2007.

According to an informant intimately familiar with Willowbrook, groups of investors, often young and inexperienced real estate operators, acquired small houses, demolished them, and replaced them with large, single-family houses that often almost entirely filled their small parcels. Attempting to sell these houses for up to $500,000, in a neighborhood well-known in the region for its modest housing stock, high crime rates, and low-performing schools, many of the investors lost the houses to foreclosure following the onset of the economic downturn. Many of the houses have subsequently been purchased by bunkhouse operators, who install up to three bunk beds per room, and convert living rooms and even kitchens into sleeping quarters. In some cases, up to 40 single men, almost all of them recently arrived immigrants, paying $400 to $450 per month for a bed, have shared as few as four bathrooms in such houses.[9]

The building official for the north Orange County city mentioned earlier described a "revolving door" economic model for extralegal dormitory operators that entailed making as much profit as possible before his department managed to close down a given bunkhouse. He described the basic economics as follows: the operator purchases a foreclosed house for a low enough price to pay about $2,000 per month to the bank lender principal, interest, and property tax escrow, as well as homeowner's insurance. By charging $400 to $500 per month to 10 tenants, the operator earns $2,000 to $3,000 in profit per month. In the most extreme case that he recalled, the level of crowding approached the highest levels in Willowbrook, where a nominally four-bedroom house had been divided into 12 rooms with 30 people living in them. The official noted that he had seen many of the same tenants, and even many of the same operators whose bunkhouse operations had been previously closed down, in a succession of enforcement cases that had come to his attention. He estimated that 1,000 such houses were in operation in his city. In north Orange County, as in Willowbrook, the tenants of the bunkhouses were overwhelmingly immigrants who had recently arrived in the United States.

While bunkhouses undoubtedly exist elsewhere within the City of Gateway, they did not appear to be a predominant extralegal housing mode. Nevertheless, their existence in Willowbrook, and elsewhere in the Los Angeles region, highlights Roy's (2005) argument that the relevant "divide … is not between formality and informality but rather a differentiation *within* informality" (p. 149). Extralegal bunkhouses serve as a reminder that at least some housing arrangements existing outside the law in the City of Gateway and nearby are purely profit-driven and based on the exploitation of highly vulnerable, recently-arrived immigrants.

Judging by the economic potency of the extralegal bunkhouse economic model, there is no question that such places fulfill the demand for housing for

[9] This person-to-bathroom ratio of 10:1 is close to the typical ratio of 12:1 seen in cheap lodging houses in San Francisco a century ago (Paul Groth, personal communication).

unattached men who have arrived, often without papers, in the United States to find work. Mahler's study of extralegal enclaves on Long Island, New York suggests that despite what appear to be difficult living conditions, in some ways such housing is less problematic for its occupants than other extralegal modes that male immigrants turn to once they send for or meet romantic partners, and begin to have children, or send for their existing ones living in their home countries. Under those circumstances, struggles over privacy become acute in cramped quarters. Nonetheless, bunkhouses were regarded as some of the most unsafe and exploitative extralegal housing arrangements by the informants who described them to me.

Conversion: Transformation of a house into a noncompliant group home

On a driving tour, a code enforcement officer employed by Los Angeles County pointed out to me a former single-family house that had been converted into a women's shelter. While the owner had initially set up the shelter through proper legal channels, on an inspection the officer found that the shelter had come to house 11 people even though it was legally restricted to serving no more than four. As a result of his inspection and subsequent enforcement action, the shelter's population dwindled back down to four, although he suspected that it had subsequently accepted more residents. He expected that he would soon perform another inspection once his department received another anonymous complaint.

This episode is illustrative of the presence of extralegal group homes of various sorts, such as shelters for women fleeing domestic violence (as in the previous example) and recovery houses for people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction, in residential neighborhoods in the City of Gateway. As with the women's shelter described above, the distinction between legal and extralegal status can turn on occupancy levels and other fast-changing attributes that are relatively difficult for the local state to monitor. Such facilities in the City of Gateway are typically adapted from unsubsidized housing originally built to house nuclear families.

It is easy to see how group homes can switch to an extralegal mode even after having gone through official channels when they were first established. The pressures on their owners to add more than the allotted number of occupants are considerable. From the supply side, Hilda McCall, the Harbor Gateway homeowner described earlier who created a garage apartment for her pregnant daughter, and who subsequently made ends meet by turning the home in which she lives into a state-licensed board and care facility, spoke of the economic difficulty she faced as a result of adhering to the limit of 12 beds imposed by the planning department of the City of Los Angeles.[10] She lamented that Supplementary Security Income (SSI) benefits to the residents of her home and care facility only allows for just over a dollar per day for residents' food and clothing needs. "This is more of a charity" than a business, she told me.

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[10] McCall had originally applied for 14 beds, a level that she thought balanced economic viability with a home-like atmosphere. At the time of the interview, standards had been further tightened such that a new operation as hers could have only had 10 beds, rather than the 12 she was able to operate as a result of grandfathering.

From the demand side, Hilda McCall spoke of the insatiable need for beds in group care facilities. Sharon (introduced earlier) confirmed this impression from her experiences. After losing her Section 8 voucher and the apartment it paid for following a dispute with a neighbor, she (along with her children) cycled through two group care facilities in Florence-Firestone that accepted payments on her behalf by a local homeless services nonprofit that was providing her with assistance. Despite extralegal practices employed by the landlords, such as operating within foreclosed buildings, Sharon felt that she had no recourse with the operators because other prospective tenants were clamoring to take her place.

While I have no data concerning extralegal group homes, and while my quantitative estimate of the growth in size of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway in Chapter 4 focuses entirely on individual units and not at all on group homes, my interview results indicate that noncompliant care facilities are a prominent phenomenon in the area. Additional research and other data sets would need to be mobilized, in future research, to craft an estimate of the size of this portion of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway. Fairbanks (2009) performed just such a study of the "recovery house" phenomenon prevalent in Philadelphia, centered in neighborhoods with extreme levels of housing vacancy and abandonment, providing housing to an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 people.

Fairbanks' (ibid) research from Philadelphia, and the limited anecdotes from the City of Gateway above, serve as a reminder that the informal housing economy is not entirely an all-cash, off-the-books phenomenon.[11] In the case of group homes in Los Angeles County, as with the recovery houses of Philadelphia, extralegal group homes mediate the contradiction between, on the one hand, a shrinking social safety net and, on the other hand, a high-cost housing market by bundling residents' government assistance payments together and using them to create (non-code compliant) housing. As with extralegal dormitories for single men created from former single-family houses, group homes fill a grossly undersupplied economic niche but are typically perceived by neighbors as an unwelcome intrusion into the residential atmosphere of their street. While land use and licensing regulations, imposed by local and state government, respectively, are intended to keep the impacts of group homes in check, extralegal operation of such facilities increases their impacts on neighbors even further. As Fairbanks (ibid) observes, the costs that taxpayers avoid when their elected state and federal representatives vote to shrink assistance payments are effectively shunted onto the residents themselves and their neighbors in the form of informal housing.

Addition: Enlargement of a house

According to the real estate agent mentioned earlier, additions to houses are a more common extralegal mode than garage conversions. In online real estate advertisements (described in Chapter 6), rear additions to houses are often referred

[11] Another example: according to Jonathan Pacheco Bell, Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) funds are occasionally used to subsidize tenants' rents of extralegal apartments in Los Angeles County. This is despite the county housing authority's required inspections of apartments prior to granting permission to tenants to move in and use their vouchers there.

to as "bonus rooms" or "rumpus rooms." In some instances, the space is completely unpermitted. In others, via a tactic I refer to as *partial permitting* (and describe in the next section), the living area was inspected by a building official but has subsequently had unpermitted plumbing improvements, to create a bathroom or even a small kitchen.

The real estate agent stated that none of her clients had ever stated their intention to add an unpermitted addition following their purchase of a house. Rather, she had found that her clients who went on to create unpermitted additions did so after they had attempted to go through the official permitting process, and had become frustrated by the difficulty, time, and expense it entailed.

Rear additions are far more common than upward additions. This is likely due to the influence of code enforcement activity, which is less likely to be directed against extralegal physical alterations that are not visible from the public street.[12] Enlargements of houses towards the rear of the lot are typically unobtrusive, both because they cannot be seen from the public street, and also because they often cannot be visually differentiated from the main part of the house. Even so, rear additions add up to make a large impact on the City of Gateway. Their extent is quantified in the two different building footprint analyses towards the end of this chapter (one over time in two small areas, and the other at one point in time throughout the City of Gateway), both of which suggest that the impact on urban form is considerable.

Rear additions can be used to add more space for members of the household occupying the main house. In other instances, they are used in tandem with another mode, the creation of extra units by partitioning a house (described previously), to create an additional separate dwelling unit without reducing the floor space of the main house.

Although sometimes built from the ground up, a common pattern is for rear additions to be constructed from a pre-existing structure. For instance, in another example of partial permitting, a building inspector in a north Orange County city told me that homeowners there frequently build a rear patio, which is duly inspected and permitted, and then subsequently enclose it to create an extralegal back room addition to the house. Figure 5.3 shows an unpermitted, enclosed rear patio in Bellflower.[13]

Another example of building a rear extension without permits from a preexisting structure is recounted by Roberto, who was introduced earlier in this

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[12] This is due to a legal concept known as the "expectation of privacy," which is discussed at length in Chapter 7.

[13] The Orange County city building inspector that I spoke with was entirely aware of these practices, and he gave the impression that this is the norm for other building inspectors. Frequently he inspects renovation projects that will obviously be subsequently converted into extralegal space; for instance, a covered patio may include water and sewer "stub-outs" that will facilitate the installation of appliances after the patio's walls are (extralegally) filled in following his issuance of the permit. But as long as the improvements that he inspects meet the letter of the code, there is little that he can do to prove the homeowner's intent to violate the building or zoning code after he signs off on the building permit.

chapter. When he graduated from high school, he decided to become serious about his studies and attend community college. The five-unit property (officially permitted as three dwellings) in Florence-Firestone that his mother owned, while lively and sociable, offered him no quiet place to study. To solve this problem, his stepfather, who was skilled in construction, enclosed what had been an open-air, sheltered laundry room behind the main house. The resulting space was odd in many respects: it extended down to the bottom of the house's crawlspace, and therefore had 12' tall ceilings. Meanwhile, it was only about 7' wide, barely enough for a twin bed. The room lacked windows and air conditioning.

Figure 5.3. An unpermitted rear addition in Bellflower. Created by enclosing a formerly open air rear patio, it appears to exhibit a relatively high level of construction quality. Photo from www.redfin.com.

And yet this was the first room Roberto had ever had all to himself. It was equipped with a desk, bookshelves, a separate telephone line, and a modem. Because it had its own door to the rear, Roberto could come and go at all hours without disturbing his family in the main house. To keep the room cool on warm summer nights, he would keep the rear door open and run a fan. Improvised as it may have been, his private bedroom afforded Roberto the privacy he needed to succeed in his studies.[14]

[14] Today, Roberto is pursuing a doctorate at a highly regarded California university.

Addition: Emplacement of a habitable vehicle

According to one of the four Los Angeles County code enforcement officers I interviewed, one of the cheapest and simplest ways to create rentable space is to drive a recreational vehicle (RV) onto a property, or to tow a travel trailer and leave it in the yard or in the driveway.[15] In Willowbrook, such living quarters typically rent for $400 to $500 per month. In one extreme case, eight habitable vehicles had been placed behind a single-family house on an exceptionally deep parcel in Willowbrook, to create, in effect, an extralegal trailer park hidden from view from the street (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4. An extreme instance of trailers used as housing on a residential lot. In this case (visible in the center-left of the photo) in Willowbrook, no fewer than eight inhabited trailers, each housing a separate family, were placed behind the main house, taking advantage of an unusually deep lot. To maneuver the trailers into place, they were towed from the adjacent lot (shown immediately beneath the lot with the trailers). The fence separating these two parcels was built after the trailers had been brought into the positions shown here. (Courtesy Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.)

Because it is common for RVs and trailers to be parked both on driveways and curbside throughout the City of Gateway, the presence of such vehicles used as quasi-permanent housing on a residential property often attracts little notice.[16]

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[15] Inhabited RVs parked alongside lightly trafficked streets, whether in residential areas, within parks, underneath overpasses, or in industrial neighborhoods, are a common sight in California's coastal metropolitan areas, owing perhaps to their combination of high housing costs and relatively mild climates. Of course, people who rely on this mode of housing risk hostility from local residents and running afoul of parking regulations. The extralegal mode presented here of parking mobile homes on residential lots arguably provides a higher degree of security of tenure to the people living within them because of the vehicles' placement on private property rather than public right of way.

[16] Generally zoning ordinances prohibit people dwelling within mobile homes on residential properties, with few exceptions. For instance, the LA County zoning ordinance allows the homeowner and her family to live within a vehicle, but only during construction on the

They are convenient in that they typically already contain a kitchen, a bathroom with a shower, and built-in furniture such as a table and a bed. No construction is necessary other than (possibly) making connections with electrical, water, and sewer lines. Furthermore, unlike other forms of extralegal housing, mobile homes can be driven (if their motors are in working order) or towed elsewhere in the event of enforcement action. Finally, this extralegal housing mode is attractive because it takes advantage of the different treatment of vehicles under zoning ordinances than fixed buildings: in many cases, an RV or trailer parked in a driveway or in a backyard only represents an enforceable zoning violation if it can be demonstrated that it is inhabited. This can be difficult and time-consuming to prove. Finally, RVs and trailers are regulated by HUD, and thus their interiors are not subject to local building codes.

This mode of housing provision does not always entail deploying mobile homes as entire self-contained housing units on wheels. In one common variation, according to Jonathan Pacheco Bell of LA County, the vehicles serve as a bathroom facility for other extralegal spaces, such as converted garages or backyard shacks, that have been created and that lack plumbing. In another, the mobile home becomes the nucleus onto which is built a group of other, not easily movable, structures. In this arrangement, while the vehicle begins as a mobile home, over time it becomes relatively immovable as it becomes the nucleus for an assemblage of adjacent permanent structures (Figure 5.5). This particular variation of this extralegal housing mode is effectively an urban version of the common practices seen in the colonias of rural California and the homestead subdivisions of peri-urban Texas (Mukhija and Monkkonen 2006; Ward 2004), where it is typical for homeowners to park a mobile home on their lots after purchasing them, and later build additional structures onto it.

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main house, during the duration of the building permit, and only at the discretion of an official. (Los Angeles County Zoning Ordinance Section 22.20.090, available at http://library.municode.com/HTML/16274/level2/TIT22PLZO_DIV1PLZO.html.)

] Willowbrook, used as quasi-permanent housing. Note the accompanying incremental additions to create more usable interior and exterior space. (Courtesy Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.)

Addition: Construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure

The final mode is the construction of a separate structure, or alternatively the emplacement of a prefabricated structure, on the rear of the lot. As the real estate agent quoted earlier in this chapter observed, a backhouse is more visually intrusive than either a rear house extension or a garage conversion. It is therefore more likely to elicit notice, or possibly an anonymous complaint to code enforcement, from a neighbor.

Because of the time and expense involved both in constructing or installing a detached rear structure, and of demolishing it or removing it in the event of code enforcement action, homeowners must feel reasonably confident that they will be able to make use of such a structure before they invest in installing one. According to one of my informants from LA County's code enforcement division within the Department of Regional Planning, some homeowners are simply unfamiliar with US-style code enforcement and receive an unwelcome surprise when they install a backhouse and soon thereafter must remove it. More typically, however, homeowners that install rear structures take a calculated gamble that code enforcement will not visit their property. As discussed in Chapter 7, there are considerable variations in stringency of code enforcement amongst jurisdictions, with LA County having some of the least capacity. For that reason, unpermitted

backhouses are a common sight in unincorporated Willowbrook and Florence-Firestone, among other areas in the City of Gateway.

On a driving tour of Willowbrook, I was shown what may be the version of this mode that has the least possible cost, to both the homeowner and the tenant. In the yard behind the main house, and next to a garage that had been converted into an apartment, an elderly man lived alone in a shed that was just big enough for a bed, and little else (Figure 5.6). The property owner, who lived in the main house, had built the shed himself. Such a living space might, if rented to a stranger, cost a rock bottom $200 per month in rent, but because the elderly man was a friend of the homeowner, he was paying between $50 to $100—"a little bit here and there" to help defray the homeowner's costs.

According to an LA County code enforcement officer, such a shed-like structure is the most basic possible extralegal housing option in the area. An RV would be considered a step upward, and a garage a step beyond that, with a fully-equipped backhouse being the arrangement that would offer the most comfort and privacy (Figure 5.7). Thus, a separate backyard structure can run the full gamut in terms of relative rental cost and housing quality, and range from the most rudimentary accommodations for a single person (almost always a man) to family housing for a couple with multiple children.

Figure 5.6. An inhabited shed in Willowbrook, occupied by a single elderly man. It is large enough to fit a twin bed and no other furniture. Photo by the author.

Figure 5.7. An unpermitted back house on a residential property in Lynwood. Source: www.redfin.com.

An additional extralegal housing mode: unpermitted units within medium-sized apartment buildings

Although the seven modes of extralegal housing summarized above and in Table 5.1 constitute the lion's share of unpermitted housing on residential streets in the City of Gateway, other extralegal modes certainly exist in other settings as well. These include carving out living spaces within, above, or behind stores, or on industrial properties. Although extralegal housing modes outside of residential areas[17] are largely beyond the scope of this dissertation, I mention one additional mode here: additional dwellings carved out of medium-sized apartment buildings.

One might assume that because of their professional status, businesspeople who earn their primary livelihood by developing or operating apartment buildings would be less likely than homeowners to add unpermitted apartments to their properties (Sternlieb 1966; Krohn, Fleming, and Manzer 1977). While this is likely true, the provision of extralegal units by real estate professionals is surprisingly common in the City of Gateway.

Hector Rodriguez and Saúl Bolívar, the City Manager and Housing Director, respectively, of the City of Cudahy, reported that in their city developers constantly present plans for proposed developments with the intention of splitting one dwelling into two following permit issuance. The architectural design, for example, may be formulated to make it easy to transform a two-level, 2,500 square townhouse into two flats, with one on each floor.[18] When City of Cudahy officials

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[17] As a reminder, for the purposes of this dissertation I am defining "residential" properties as those with one to four units, following the convention of the US mortgage system. Thus, a 7-unit apartment building would not be considered a "residential" property under this definition even though it is entirely composed of living space.

[18] One common configuration leaves room for walls and doors forming an internal entry vestibule to be installed after permitting. This allows occupants of what are now two

intervene in such efforts—which Rodriguez and Bolívar readily acknowledged that they are not always successful in doing, despite their best efforts—the tip-off may be a gas line, ascending to the second floor, that does not appear in the plans but that is noticed during one of the periodic building inspections for the project. Only the intention to subsequently install a second-floor kitchen could explain a gas line rising above the first floor. In such instances, the developers tend to retain ownership post-occupancy, so that they can profit from the "extra" income derived from their newly-developed rental space. As Bolívar put it, "Who doesn't want their goose to lay twice as many eggs?"

An appraiser who calculates the value of commercial multifamily (i.e., 5 unit or larger) properties for banks or for potential buyers (in the case of all-cash transactions) told me that he frequently sees apartment buildings in the City of Gateway and surrounding areas in which a larger apartment has been split into smaller apartments, without permits. Landlords typically undertake such actions in order to maximize their rental revenue. If a potential seller has not disclosed such a condition, the appraiser may notice it as a result of a discrepancy between assessor's records and the number of units listed by the seller, or else by physical tip-offs such as a lack of code-mandated bedroom closets in units that have been created by subdividing a larger apartment. Other configurations include a studio unit built behind the rear of the building, and living quarters, complete with a kitchenette, carved out of a building's basement storage area. The appraiser noted that units added to commercial apartment buildings tend to be in relatively small buildings, with 10 units as a typical size.[19]

While it is impossible to know how many medium-sized apartment buildings have extralegal apartments, their ubiquity within the City of Gateway is telling. Informal housing, it would seem, is imbricated far and wide within the everyday practices that constitute the housing market in the local area, and among real estate professionals as well as people who primarily earn their living elsewhere.

Extralegal Housing Tactics

Several tactics are central to the ability of City of Gateway residents to use the extralegal housing modes described in the previous section. Four of them are discussed in this section. First, *auto-construction* is used to physically convert or

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separate apartments to enter the townhouse's front door, and then open one of two separately keyed doors, leading either directly into the ground-floor unit or to an internal side staircase ascending to the second-floor unit. On the plans reviewed and approved by the city, the stairs are shown as internal circulation within a two-story townhouse.

[19] I characterize these buildings as medium-sized apartment buildings since they are larger than the 4-unit threshold for properties that qualify for residential mortgages, but much smaller than apartment complexes that are large enough to support common amenities such as swimming pools, workout facilities, etc. One might expect that large apartment complexes would be the least likely to include extralegal units, because of being likely to be owned by Real Estate Investment Trusts or other large, corporate owners, but this is conjecture.

construct additional living spaces on residential properties. Second, *improvised utility connections* are needed to allow the residents of extralegal spaces to benefit from plumbing, electricity, telephone and internet connections, and mail service. Third, they conduct *commercial activities in physically ephemeral forms* to earn some or all of their livelihoods on or adjacent to the residential lots where they live. Finally, residents use *partial permitting* to evade building inspectors. Each of these four practices is discussed separately below.

Auto-construction

My interviews suggested that auto-construction is the predominant mechanism for the addition and conversion of extralegal space in the City of Gateway. Auto-construction is taken here to encompass not only self-*building* on the part of homeowners, but also self-*directed* construction. This refers to homeowners sometimes purchasing prefabricated modules (including but not limited to trailers and RVs), or else receiving free or paid help from family, friends, or unlicensed contractors. The key point is that whether homeowners actually swing a hammer themselves or not, when engaged in auto-construction they directly oversee all of the work done on their homes (Ward 2004).

While an emergent scholarship is working to uncover a heretofore hidden history of self-building in North American urban fringe areas in the early 20th century (Nicolaides 2002; Harris 1999; Wiese 2005), scholarship on contemporary auto-construction in the United States is relatively sparse. Much of it is centered on Habitat for Humanity, a prominent Georgia-based housing charity with a "sweat equity" model that requires its participants to join a group of volunteers in building their own homes (cf. Hays, 2002). Most of the scholarship on auto-construction in the US that does not involve the intervention of charitable organizations originated from the by-now well-studied case of *colonias,* described earlier in this chapter.

Both self-built and self-directed construction have an *incremental* quality to them. Homeowners engaged in auto-construction tend to eschew debt, whether by choice or, more frequently, by necessity, and instead pay for improvements with cash as it becomes available. They often temporarily make do with less-than-ideal living conditions on their own properties as they improve them, frequently over a period of many years. And they tend to value the long-term *use* value of their properties over their potential *exchange* value, which puts them out of step with the traditional American ethos of commoditizing residential real estate (Fischel 2009). All of these elements are apparent in the auto-construction that occurs in the City of Gateway as well as in *colonias*.

Giusti and Olivares (2012) make a link between incremental construction practices in Texas and cultural practices particular to Latinos in Texas *colonias*. While acknowledging the downsides of incremental building, including life safety concerns such as vulnerability to fire (a particularly acute concern in Los Angeles) and a rough-and-ready aesthetic, they note several positive elements as well. First, and most elementally, "the urgent need for shelter is addressed in the very short run" (ibid, p. 100). They also note the development of "social infrastructure" that results from auto-construction in Latino communities, where social interaction occurring during the construction process instills a sense of belonging amongst

people who participate, even those who experience marginalization in the wider society. In this conception, then, auto-construction can be seen as both problematic and as a creative problem-solving process that builds social capital (ibid).

Roberto's childhood experiences align with Giusti and Olivares' characterization of auto-construction. Following the death of his father, Roberto's mother remarried a man that Roberto recalls as a "jack of all trades." He had no formal training in construction, but he enjoyed it, took satisfaction from the work, and took pride in parceling out as little of the work—even specialized electrical tasks—to outside contractors as possible. For instance, it was Roberto's stepfather who converted the rear open-air laundry room into Roberto's own bedroom, as described earlier.

Following a common pattern in small-town Mexico, where one of the brothers in a family would become adept at handyman work, Roberto's stepfather took on a wide variety of projects for others, such as building kitchens, bathrooms, and cabinets, bookcases, and other furniture. He even taught himself welding and other metal-working skills, and became adept at building and installing the metal gates that surround residential lots throughout Latino districts of greater Los Angeles. Eventually, Roberto's stepfather bought a large assortment of tools, and started making his full-time living from handyman work. Roberto recalls his mother's annoyance at his stepfather's practice of charging for little more than the cost of his labor and materials; because so many of his clients were sourced through his personal networks, he was reluctant to adopt the posture of a hard-nosed, profit-seeking businessman when he did work for them.

Roberto recalls many occasions on which his uncles would come to his property to participate in a building project led by Roberto's stepfather, and to learn from him. Roberto himself spent a great deal of time, as a small boy, in the company of the men, and as a sort of helper or apprentice to his stepfather. Frequently a work project would yield to a social occasion, which Roberto remembers fondly, during which family members would begin grilling food and drinking beer. In short, Roberto's portrayal of the role of auto-construction in his childhood and within his family is entirely consonant with Giusti and Olivares' notion of "social infrastructure."

The social infrastructure fostered by auto-construction in the Latino neighborhoods of the City of Gateway resembles, to a large degree, the portrayals by Harris of the self-builders on the outskirts of Toronto who pooled their labor to help each other build houses on plots of land that they had purchasd. Similarly, auto-construction in the City of Gateway, with much of the incremental construction relegated to the rear of the property as a result of pressure from code enforcement, recapitulates the processes of cottage building in West Oakland described by Groth (2004) in the mid- to late-19th century. Contemporary auto-construction in the City of Gateway also recalls the contrast Groth (ibid) emphasizes between the formal, front "face" that cottage properties presented to the public street and their much more ad-hoc, improvised and visually chaotic rears, hidden from public view. Finally, as discussed in Chapter 4, self-building practices in the City of Gateway today, and the accompanying ethos of self-sufficiency amongst their practitioners, recall the daily practices and worldview of the original émigrés from the Upper

South of the US who settled the original properties in the area (Nicolaides 2002). Thus, it could be said that auto-construction in the City of Gateway draws on precedents near and far, and extending from the deep past to the present.

Improvised utility connections

One of the most important practical problems that the operators of extralegal housing must solve is how to provide water, sewer, electrical, gas, cable, telephone, and mail service to the living quarters that they convert or construct. Interview results suggest that utility connections are made in a wide variety of ways, which range in quality from indistinguishable from permitted construction to arrangements that fall far short of what is required under building codes.

Several of the utilities are relatively simple to arrange. Among the simplest is mail service. For instance, Jonathan Pacheco Bell of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning noted that homeowners can simply affix a mailbox to the exterior of an extralegal unit that they have created, assign it a number or letter (as in 100 Elm Street, #2 or 100 Elm Street, Unit B, etc.), and the US Postal Service will begin delivering mail to those mailboxes without the need for any intervening official procedure to establish the new address. Unlike code enforcement officers, postal workers are free to walk along driveways towards the rear of properties in order to reach mailboxes (whether associated with permitted units or not).

Telephone and cable line connections are also straightforward. Tenants can call a telephone or cable/internet provider, and as long as they are able to pay for their service, an installer will come to the property and bring a telephone or cable line into a living space without regard to its permitted status.

Electrical connections are a step upward in difficulty from mail service, telephone, and cable connections. In some cases, electrical connections are as rudimentary as running an extension cord from the inside of one structure into another, with a portion of the cord sometimes exposed to the elements. In other cases, people perform unpermitted electrical work, such as installing fuseboxes and branching electrical service from existing circuits to serve extralegal spaces.

Unlike so many well-documented cases in the Global South where homeowners make their own electrical connections to utility lines, in the City of Gateway almost every property that has extralegal living space already has an official, permitted connection to the electrical line running down the street or alley. Thus, in the City of Gateway, providing electrical service is a matter of splicing electrical connections from existing service, rather than creating extralegal connections to the utility lines themselves. For this reason, extralegal electrical connections are relatively invisible, and are unlikely to be contested by Southern California Edison (the gas and electrical utility that serves the area), since the electricity that is drawn from its lines by extralegal units is provided on the condition that bills are paid just as is the case with all electrical service in the area.

All of the code enforcement officers with whom I spoke regarded unpermitted electrical work as a hazard and as a major contributor to the heightened danger of fire in extralegal structures. To them, addressing these dangers was a major part of their personal motivation for doing their work, and for

overcoming uneasiness that they may have felt about closing down housing units in an area where they are in short supply. But fire danger is not the only issue posed by ad hoc electrical connections; another is conflict. Because, according to the real estate agent referenced earlier, electricity supplying extralegal units is almost never submetered, the potential for disputes regarding who is responsible for payment of Southern California Edison bills is high.

The experiences of a respondent named Sandra[20] living in extralegal housing in Florence-Firestone provide an example of such conflict due to ambiguity over which unit's occupants are responsible for contributing to a bill. In her case, electrical service was constantly cut because of nonpayment of utility bills. Eventually, she put the account into her name to assure reliable utility service, but she was unclear about whether she was paying for other tenants' electricity usage at the same time.

Jonathan Pacheco Bell described a similar situation he had experienced, also in Florence-Firestone, where he inspected an extralegal unit as part of a Nuisance Abatement Team (described in Chapter 7), a multi-agency enforcement team from LA County. The tenant in the front house welcomed the arrival of the enforcement team, and stated that he had realized that he was paying for the electricity of the occupants of the back house after receiving an anomalously high electrical bill. The front house tenant's reaction to the visit led Bell to suspect that it may have been he who called in the anonymous complaint against his next door (or more precisely, his rear door) neighbor. Incidents such as these help reinforce the observation that the real estate agent, quoted above, made: conflicts over utility payments contribute to the propensity for extralegal property owners to fill their added living spaces with extended family or friends rather than strangers where possible.

Finally, water, sewer, and gas line connections appear to cause the most difficulty among extralegal utility services. An informant with detailed local knowledge of unincorporated Willowbrook told me that it is common for extralegal units (including RVs parked on residential properties, a housing mode described earlier in this chapter) to be directly connected to sewer lateral pipes. To make such connections, residents will dig a trench to expose the lateral, and then cut through the pipe and add a junction to it. In some cases, to achieve a downhill flow gradient from an extralegal living space (since sewers, unlike water lines, require gravity to flow), the connections to the sewer lateral will be made above the ground, with the junction remaining exposed. Unsurprisingly, such connections are often amateurish and frequently lead to sewer occlusions back into the property, which can result in unsanitary conditions. The informant noted that water and gas lateral lines are also modified to create extralegal branches, although the technical difficulties are perhaps somewhat less than with sewers.

Because of the difficulties of making extralegal water, sewer, and gas connections, in many cases residents simply avoid the need to make them altogether. Tactics for doing so are numerous and varied. As discussed earlier, one of them involves using an RV or trailer effectively as a freestanding restroom, which requires either periodically moving the RV to empty its sewage tank or creating an

[20] Not her real name.

ad-hoc connection from the vehicle to the property's sewer lateral. Another is installing portable toilets of the sort commonly used at construction sites or special public events such as festivals in backyards. Showers installed on the sides of houses, taking advantage of existing irrigation spigots and avoiding the need for drainage, are common. Roberto described his parents cooking on a portable camp stove when he was a small child, because they lacked a kitchen with a built-in electric or gas stove. There are also many instances where residents of extralegal housing, such as the elderly man living in the backyard shed that I observed in Willowbrook, simply enter the main house whenever they need to use the restroom. In other instances, residents have resorted to the use of backyard trenches to relieve themselves.

The impacts of ad hoc utility connections extend beyond the inconvenient or sometimes unhealthful conditions that residents of extralegal living spaces must, in some cases endure. In the aggregate, they strain the overall performance and viability of utility networks, particularly water and sewer systems. As such, they create the impetus for a Los Angeles version of a "politics of shit" (Appadurai 2001), a local political discourse that is a direct byproduct of extralegal housing, but that also simultaneously obscures meaningful local policy debates about such housing. I explore these political ramifications of extralegal utility connections in Chapter 8.

Commercial activities in physically ephemeral forms

Although American zoning laws crystallize an intention to achieve a physical separation of residential and commercial activity, commercial activities of various sorts are a common sight on the residential streets of the City of Gateway. Although Home-Based Enterprises (HBEs) are gaining increasing attention from scholars studying West Africa and other parts of the Global South (cf. Ezeadichie 2012), perhaps the only notable references to such phenomena in the US stem from efforts by New Urbanists to advocate for zoning that allows for purpose-built "live-work" spaces in newly-built neighborhoods (cf. Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2001). But HBEs that have cropped up extralegally in existing neighborhoods have received scant attention. Part of this could be due to the general absence of commercial activity within colonias, the best-studied form of informal housing in the US, owing to these communities' low population density (Ward 1999).

For the most part, physical space permanently devoted to commercial activity is rare on the residential streets of the City of Gateway. As a rule, code enforcement would tend to place a high level of emphasis on shutting down such structures, particularly if they are visible from the public street. For this reason, the conversion of the front setbacks of residential parcels into commercial shops, with a housing unit remaining in the rear, as is frequently seen for example in suburban tract developments on the outskirts of Mexico City following their occupancy, by and large does not occur in the City of Gateway (Guerra 2013).

But this does not mean that commercial activities do not take place on residential streets. Rather, they unfold in ephemeral spaces (Rojas 2003). All of the Los Angeles County code enforcement officers with whom I spoke mentioned extensive commercial activities in unincorporated neighborhoods. These include automobile repair in front yards or on driveways; clothing sales to passersby from

racks placed on front yards; food vending, which I witnessed being conducted from a grill placed under a front-yard shelter in Willowbrook; a makeshift rear-yard restaurant that was pointed out to me on a Willowbrook street; houses used as hair salons or other extralegal businesses providing personal services; and an extralegal convenience store at the front of a house (Figure 5.8). (This last one is a relatively rare example of a purpose-built extralegal commercial space that fronts on a public street.)

Figure 5.8. An extralegal convenience store that I was shown in Willowbrook. The store was added to the front of a single-family house. The roof of the house can be seen in the upper-right hand corner of the photo. An extralegal metal plating shop borders the property, and can be seen on the left of the photo. (Source: Google Streetview.)

In addition, a great deal of vending occurs within public right-of-way, whether quasi-permanent (i.e., daily or weekly) sidewalk sales on residential streets, or vending of food, clothing, sundries, and other goods on busier commercial streets. Such activities are particularly visible, within the City of Gateway, in Florence-Firestone, but they exist throughout Los Angeles, likely to a greater degree than anywhere else in the United States, as various scholars have noted (cf. Muñoz 2008; Rojas 2008).

Although physically ephemeral in a way that extralegal living spaces are usually not, extralegal commercial activities on or adjacent to residential properties in the City of Gateway should be seen as part of a spectrum of self-provisioning activities, with housing provision included among them. Local residents use these activities to earn a living, to earn some extra money in addition to their main employment, or to help family members. Thus, residential blocks in the City of Gateway become de facto "mixed use" urban places, even if their zoning codes and physical form indicate otherwise.

Partial permitting from building inspectors

Earlier in this chapter, I recounted two examples of common practices in which people building extralegal space obtain building permits from a building inspector, and then subsequently modify the space in ways that render it extralegal. One example was from Cudahy, in which developers design new-construction, two-story townhouses so that, with minimal modifications, they can later be converted into stacked flats.[21] Another example was from a city in north Orange County, where a homeowner will commonly receive a permit for an outdoor patio built behind the main house. The homeowner then subsequently fills in the patio's open walls to create an additional enclosed room at the back of the house, which could not otherwise have been permitted (because, for example, of lot coverage requirements, or the need to build a full-fledged foundation underneath it).

These practices, along with similar ones, such as installing kitchen appliances connected to plumbing or gas lines following approval by building inspectors, are all variations on a single tactic: seeking partial permitting from building inspectors. They take advantage of what are often relatively minute legal distinctions between permitted and unpermitted space. For instance, extralegal status could hinge on whether a living space has one kitchen or two, or whether the walls of a patio are predominantly open-air or solid. A great many of these distinctions are a consequence of the privileged position that single-family houses occupied by one family are afforded within zoning codes throughout Los Angeles and the United States, and the City of Gateway is no exception (Perin 1977). In effect, the distinctions are a legal crystallization of a deeply embedded normative preference for a nuclear family living within its own detached house. As the legal studies scholar Mariana Valverde has observed,

> The phrase "single-family detached" creates a slippage between the building and the household, and obscures from view the fact that a family with ten children will always be a legal household, no matter how overcrowded the space, whereas a perfectly orderly household of six adults will often be in breach of local law" (Valverde 2012, p. 118).

Why do so many developers or homeowners bother enduring the added time, expense, and aggravation of seeking building permits for new construction or additions, when immediately thereafter they modify the new spaces in ways that render them extralegal? The answer is straightforward for developers: they cannot evade the building permitting process for a new construction project on a vacant site that is open for all to see. While wholly unpermitted large-scale construction projects, carried out with the connivance of local officials, are widespread in Mediterranean Europe (Allen et al. 2004), I came across no such instances, even

[21] Similar practices occur with new construction projects in Los Angeles County. As one code enforcement officer observed, "Usually [developers] wait for the plans to get signed off, and then they start doing the shady stuff."

purported ones, in the City of Gateway. Because building inspections are unavoidable for developers, and because permits are granted only if building inspectors confirm that all requirements in the zoning code have been adhered to, developers must obtain construction permits at the beginning of the construction phase, and certificates of occupancy at the end.

However, the situation changes after developers receive their building permits. The subsequent changes take place within the envelope of the building, and can thus be concealed. Furthermore, they are undertaken, as with the case of a two-story townhouse split into two flats that can be occupied by separate households, to increase the profits that the developer can realize. In the Cudahy case, developers typically retain ownership of townhouses that they have constructed and subsequently split into flats, because they can earn a higher return by renting two smaller units to two households, rather than selling one large unit to a single household, particularly during the recent real estate market downturn. When they ultimately sell their townhouses, the projects' developers can recombine them into one unit, but their layout will likely increase their appeal to the ultimate homebuyers, who will have the option of reconverting them into flats. Via extralegal means, developers in Cudahy, LA County, and elsewhere are realizing, for purely profit-driven reasons, McGill architecture professor Avi Friedman's vision of a "grow home" that can be easily reconfigured over time (Friedman 2001).

Perhaps less obvious are the motivations for homeowners to seek partial permitting for spaces that they build. Getting space permitted, even if extralegal modifications will later be made, does carry certain benefits. For instance, many contractors, particularly those that are licensed and bonded, and including many that are capable of high quality work, refuse to take on building projects that will not be permitted. This can work to the benefit of the homeowner: for instance, the permitting process is the local government building department's imprimatur of sound construction, and can be valuable to the homeowner in verifying the quality of the contractor's work.

Contractors that refuse to take on unpermitted projects may well be willing to build renovation projects that *could* be rendered extralegal by the homeowner (perhaps with the help of a different, less exacting contractor) after the receipt of permits. In such cases, what the homeowner does to modify the space following the receipt of an occupancy permit is not the contractor's concern. In addition, the contractor cannot be held legally responsible for any post-permit extralegal modifications to the renovation or addition.

Finally, permitted space is widely believed to be more valuable for resale than unpermitted space. (Chapter 6 provides some evidence for this contention.) If a living space can be easily converted from permitted to extralegal, then the reverse is typically quite simple as well. Such a reconversion could prove quite useful during a sale of the property, both to maximize the sales price from the ultimate buyer and to evade so-called "pre-sale" inspection requirements, which some (but not all) City of Gateway jurisdictions impose on homeowners selling their properties.[22]

[22] See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of pre-sale requirements.

None of the foregoing should be construed to imply that all, or even the majority, of extralegal living space in the City of Gateway is partially permitted. Many of the unpermitted living quarters in the area have undergone no building permit review whatsoever. Many of these, even if they could comply with zoning codes, would be so far from compliance with building codes that demolishing them and rebuilding them would be the best course of action for homeowners seeking to get them permitted. Thus partial permitting should be seen as part of the wide spectrum of tactics and outcomes associated with extralegal housing in the City of Gateway.

The use of partial permitting, as one tactic among many used by homeowners seeking to add extralegal space, goes a long way towards explaining why at least some of the extralegal space, to the untrained eye, is visually indistinguishable from legal living quarters. It thus contributes to the invisibility of extralegal housing in the City of Gateway, with political consequences that are explored in Chapter 8. The very existence of the tactic of partial permitting underscores the complexities of extralegal housing in the Global North in general and in the City of Gateway in particular, where informality is widespread not as a result of the absence of official regulation and enforcement, but where it thrives alongside state action even as it is altered by its presence.

The Physical Effect of Informal Housing on Urban Form

The seven modes used by homeowners in the City of Gateway, the creation of extra units in larger buildings, and the suite of tactics that sustain these practices, all described above, add up to have major impacts on their neighborhoods and on the broader region. These broader impacts are the focus of this section. I begin by introducing the concept of *horizontal density,* which is closely related to William Fulton's notion of *dense sprawl*, and describes a common urban form seen in Los Angeles and especially in the City of Gateway. Next, I show two sets of results from analyses of building footprints in the area: two examples of their change over time, and a cross-sectional comparison throughout all 14 jurisdictions.

Horizontal density

The City of Gateway's residential areas exhibit an urban form that is peculiar to greater Los Angeles, one of *horizontal density.* The California urban planning expert William Fulton has used the term *dense sprawl* to refer to the urban form and growth patterns of the entire LA region.[23] Horizontal density can be seen as a component of the region's overall pattern of dense sprawl that characterizes many of its residential streets, a component that reaches something of an apex in the City of Gateway.

What is horizontal density? It refers to a vernacular building practice of achieving high residential densities by covering a greater portion of a parcel with buildings at the expense of building taller structures. As a result, rather than taller buildings at the front of a lot paired with a substantial open backyard in the rear,

[23] For example, see the first chapter of Wolch, Pastor, and Dreier (2004).

under horizontal density the front building is kept lower while a separate structure, or rearward extension to the main structure, is placed in the back. (See Figure 5.9 for an extreme example of horizontal density in Florence-Firestone.)

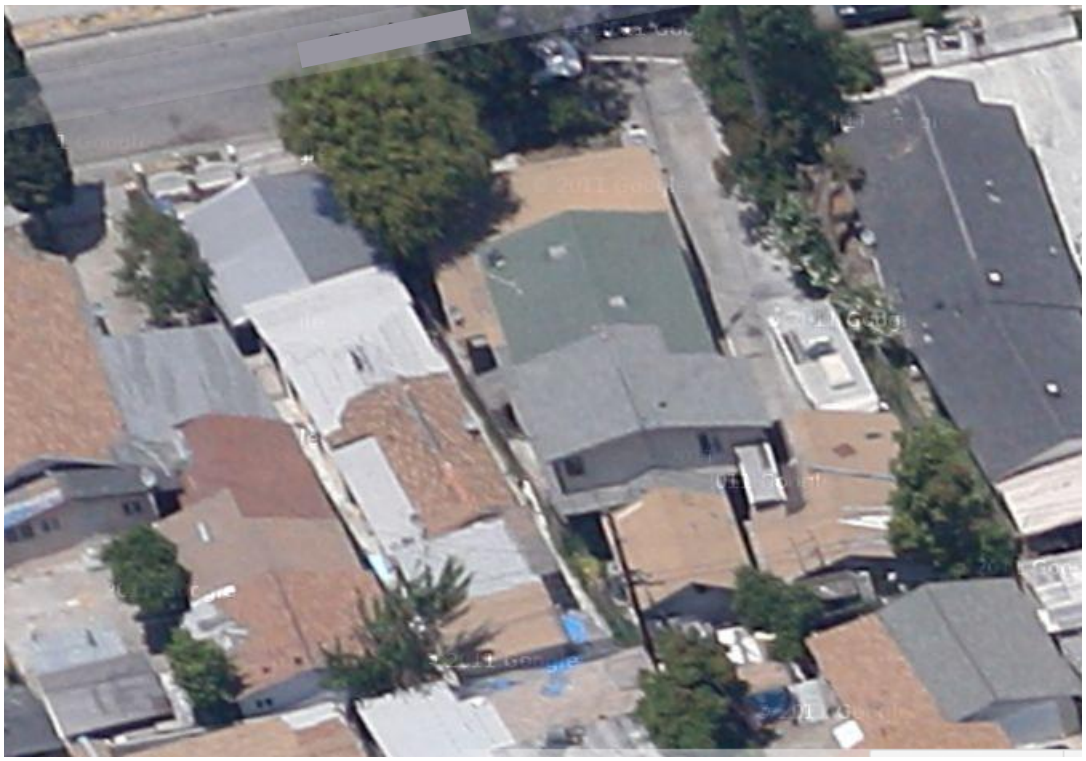

Figure 5.9. An extreme example of horizontal density at the scale of several residential parcels, Florence-Firestone. On some of the lots, so many extralegal structures have been built that little or no rear yard open space remains. The property with the recreational vehicle parked in the driveway was pointed out to me by LA County code enforcement officer Jonathan Pacheco Bell. Note that the image has been altered to obscure the street name. (Source: Google Maps.)

While two-story buildings can be seen on residential streets in the City of Gateway, it is exceedingly rare to see three-story structures that contain from one to four units. Los Angeles wholly lacks a regional building tradition akin, for example, to the three-decker houses of Boston, the three-flats of Chicago, the triplexes of Montreal, or the three-family houses of New York City's outer boroughs (Heath, 2001; Ryan, Bruegmann, Schnell, and Siegel 2006; Hanna 1986; Starr 1997). In addition, greater Los Angeles lacks a strong tradition of attached rowhouses, as in cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Washington, DC, which achieve relatively high densities by eliminating the spaces between adjacent houses, while typically keeping the backyards free of buildings.[24]

[24] This is no longer true; today attached townhouse developments are built as infill projects throughout the City of Gateway and greater Los Angeles. But this is a relatively recently turn of events only several decades in the making.

Horizontal density in Los Angeles has deep historical roots. For instance, De Graaf (1970) quotes a report from a City of Los Angeles commission on slum housing from 1908, which noted the propensity of low-rent housing, much of which housed marginalized groups including Chinese, Japanese, and above all Mexicans, to consist of low-slung structures that crowded their lots. The commission noted the differences between slums of this type and the multistory tenements found at the time in the likes of New York, Boston, and Chicago, but concluded that they were nevertheless "as vicious as the tenement condition in Eastern cities" (ibid, p. 338). Other ground-consuming LA residential types, not all of them panned by reformers as slum housing, developed during this period, including bungalow courts and garden apartments.

It is difficult to know precisely why horizontal density has characterized LA's neighborhoods for so long. It is possible that one factor was a desire on the part of builders to maximize access to the ample sunshine for which the region was, and remains, celebrated. But in the City of Gateway, and undoubtedly in many other parts of greater Los Angeles, there exists a strong contributor to the perpetuation of horizontal density that has nothing to do with the region's famously mild Mediterranean climate. This is code enforcement, and its effect on the extralegal housing market.

As noted in the descriptions of extralegal housing modes earlier in this chapter, most of them rely on concealing their visual signature from the vantage point from the public street.[25] For those modes that entail the addition of new buildings or the enlargement of existing ones, the predominant pattern is to build within or towards the rear of the lot, rather than upward, to avoid visibility from the public right-of-way.[26] This dynamic fuels horizontal density.

In Chapter 8, I argue that horizontal density, juxtaposed with the persistent image of spacious suburbanesque streets, is a major contributor to a political stalemate, in which the very impacts of extralegal housing units added to the City of Gateway constrict the space of possible policies that could be enacted or at least considered to alleviate their impact. Beyond this aesthetic, and ultimately political, concern, the USC geographer Su Jin Lee identifies environmental impacts that are associated with horizontal density (Lee 2012).

Horizontal density converts vegetated, permeable ground surface to impermeable rooftops or pavement at a higher rate, for a given area of added floor space, than more vertically-oriented patterns of urban form. Lee (ibid) identifies three primary environmental problems that this raises. First, the elimination of trees and other plants aggravates air pollution, already a major issue in the Los

[25] The exception is the emplacement of inhabited vehicles, which takes advantage of the different treatment under zoning codes of vehicles as compared to fixed buildings.

[26] I learned of and witnessed several cases of unauthorized second-story additions, but these tended to quickly be brought to the attention of and acted upon by code enforcement officers. Of course, front yard additions could also, in theory, contribute to horizontal density, but I never heard of a single case where this had occurred in the City of Gateway. This is because a front yard addition would be immediately perceptible to all concerned as an obvious violation of zoning ordinances.

Angeles region and even more so in the City of Gateway, given the region's inland location far from cleansing ocean winds and its heavy concentration of industry.[27] Second, the conversion of vegetated and permeable surfaces into hardscapes aggravates the urban heat island effect, which increases temperatures in the local area, with ramifications ranging from greater demands for air conditioning to health impacts such as increased hospitalizations from heat stroke. Finally, increases in hard surfaces resulting from horizontal density increase stormwater runoff over what it otherwise would be, increasing the strain on overtaxed stormwater drains and treatment facilities, and increasing the risk of floods in an already flood-prone, low-lying region, particularly along the Los Angeles River and Rio Hondo within the City of Gateway (Waldie 2004).

Regardless of whether horizontal density is viewed as a creative local solution to housing problems that continues of the region's vernacular traditions or a strain on the region's environment, or perhaps a little of both, it is a notable phenomenon. The next two subsections present analysis that quantifies its extent, first its change over time in two small areas of Cudahy and Huntington Park, and then as a recent snapshot throughout the entire City of Gateway.

Building footprint changes over time

As discussed in Chapter 4, the population of the City of Gateway almost doubled from 1960 to 2010, despite the area having been already essentially "built out" by 1960. How was this possible? While part of the answer is attributable to conversion, as described earlier in this chapter, the expansion of residential building footprints has also played a key role. In this subsection, I present two illustrative cases from within the City of Gateway that demonstrate and quantify the expansion in building footprints on residential streets over a roughly four decade-long period.

Lee (2012) used a land cover classification algorithm to categorize land in single-family residential lots within the 20 biggest cities in LA County, collectively accounting for roughly two thirds of the county's population, into four categories: vegetated landscape, tree cover, buildings, and hardscape (pavement). Comparing images from 2000 and 2001 with more recent images from 2009 and 2010, he found that about 10% of single-family residential properties had been physically modified enough for their footprints to change over this roughly nine-year period. In Compton and South Gate, 6% and 10% of single-family properties, respectively, had been modified. Among the single-family parcels in the 20 largest LA County cities where modifications had taken place, the average building footprint increased by 10%, compared to 11% in Compton and 10% in South Gate.[28]

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[27] A multi-indicator environmental screen of all California zip codes by the California Environmental Protection Agency classifies almost all of the City of Gateway's zip codes as within the top 10% of the most environmentally stressed statewide zip codes. Air pollution plays a major role; for instance, the same report shows the entire City of Gateway lying within the two highest statewide categories for the concentration of particulate particles under 2.5 mm in diameter. (California EPA 2013.)

[28] Compton and South Gate are the only two City of Gateway cities among the top 20 most populated municipalities in Los Angeles County, and thus the only two that Lee analyzed.

Lee's results suggest, therefore, that the Cities of Compton and South Gate, at least, were at most relatively typical and even (in the case of Compton) less likely to experience footprint expansion in the first decade of the 20th century than LA County as a whole. When footprint expansions did happen in those two places, they were, on average, roughly typical in magnitude. How can these results be squared with my claim, articulated in Chapter 3, that the City of Gateway has experienced among the most rapid expansion of its informal housing market anywhere in greater Los Angeles?

Several explanations seem likely to make a contribution. First, population growth in the City of Gateway leveled off from 2000 to 2010 (see Figure 4.4 in Chapter 4), although it did not stop altogether. Second, it is likely that building footprint expansions in more affluent jurisdictions in the last decade tended to be permitted and to be expansions intended to enlarge existing houses, for use by the people already living in the pre-existing houses. By contrast, building footprint expansions in the City of Gateway and other similar areas elsewhere in the Los Angeles region were almost certainly more likely to be unpermitted, and to include living quarters to be occupied by people other than the families already living in the pre-existing houses. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish these mechanisms from Lee's data and analysis, which simply reveal the extent, and not the type, of building footprint expansions.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, given how dense the City of Gateway had already become by 2000, it is likely that a great many owners of residential parcels had made building footprint expansions during the previous decades of extremely rapid growth in the informal housing market (see Figure 4.11 in Chapter 4) that had already consumed much of the remaining backyard open space. In other words, by 2000, for many of the City of Gateway's residential lots, there was simply no more room left to grow, at least not without growing upwards.

Two illustrative cases—one from Cudahy and one from Huntington Park—demonstrate building footprint expansion over a span of about four decades. Neither case can be said to be representative of the entirety of the City of Gateway; a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, the two cases provide examples of how dramatically the physical landscape of ostensibly single-family residential parcels altered over the span of several decades in many places.

To select each case, I sought areas that i) were depicted in Sanborn fire insurance maps during the 1950s or 1960s and ii) that included large contiguous areas zoned for single-family residential at present. The two cases from Cudahy and Huntington Park, each shown in Sanborn maps from 1966, met the criteria. For each of them, I manually outlined and filled in the footprints of the buildings on the parcels using graphical software (Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop). I outlined every structure that I saw, whether it appeared to be a house, a stable, a shed, a detached garage, or some other sort of structure.[29]

[29] Sanborn maps from 1966 do not indicate the primary use of the structures depicted; any attempt to assign uses to the structure would have to rely on either on inferences based on their spatial relationships or on other evidence.

To obtain the footprints of the same parcels from recent years, I relied on a GIS shapefile, made publicly available online by Los Angeles County, of all building footprints of 400 square feet or larger in the entire county. The layer had been created using satellite imagery from 2008 as raw data, followed by image processing that automatically drew outlines around each building.[30] Because of the 400 square foot minimum cutoff, the building footprints from 2008 may be underestimated, since buildings that are smaller are excluded from the data set.

Using GIS, I georeferenced the building footprints from 1966 for the two cases, so that they could be brought into the same coordinate projection as the 2008 layers and therefore compared with them. The results are shown in Figure 5.10. In both cases, the building footprints from the areas zoned for single-family residential (depicted in red and blue, referred to here as "residential" parcels[31]) can be seen to have expanded a great deal between 1966 and 2008. To quantify the amount of expansion, I selected these footprints in Adobe Photoshop and used the software to count the number of pixels. Comparing the extent to which the number of pixels selected had grown, from 1966 to 2008, and in both Cudahy and Huntington Park, allows for a relatively robust estimate of the extent to which the building footprints expanded during that period.

In Huntington Park, according to the estimating technique described above, the footprints of buildings on the residential parcels in the area shown in Figure 5.10 increased by 33% from 1966 to 2008. In Cudahy, the change was still more dramatic: a 155% increase during the same period. Of the 90 residential parcels in Huntington Park and 53 in Cudahy, only one of the parcels in Cudahy was altogether vacant in 1966. (By 2008, a house had been added to it.)

Figure 5.10 also shows that the footprints of buildings other than 1-4 unit properties (drawn in black) changed over time as well. In Huntington Park, commercial buildings at the end of the two residential blocks shown were added to vacant lots even as existing buildings were expanded.[32] Much more dramatically, in Cudahy many of the exceptionally narrow and deep "victory garden" lots saw the replacement of single-family houses with low-slung (one or two story) apartment

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[30] The data was released on the LA County GIS Data Portal at http://egis3.lacounty.gov/dataportal. I retrieved the building footprints layer in April 2013. As of the present time, the building footprints layer has been removed from the website and appears to no longer be publicly available.

[31] Here I use the term "residential" to refer to 1-4 unit parcels, thereby excluding large multifamily buildings, even though these contain residences as well. This nomenclature follows conventions used in by local planners and participants in the real estate and mortgage industries.

[32] To be precise, it is not possible from the data presented here to tell whether a building footprint on a given lot that has grown from 1966 to 2008 in fact represents an addition, or whether the building was demolished and subsequently replaced with a larger building. In this section, I will use "building expansion" as shorthand for the process of the building footprint on a given lot expanding, regardless of whether it was due to addition or to demolition and replacement.

buildings extending through most or all of the depth of the parcels.[33] These processes are illustrative of how horizontal density has steadily intensified in the City of Gateway in recent decades, and not only on residential parcels.

[33] The construction of this type of apartment building in Cudahy and in adjacent cities occurred at a rapid rate during the 1960s and 1970s, and is discussed in Chapter 4 (and depicted in Figure 4.9) as well as described by Davis (1992).

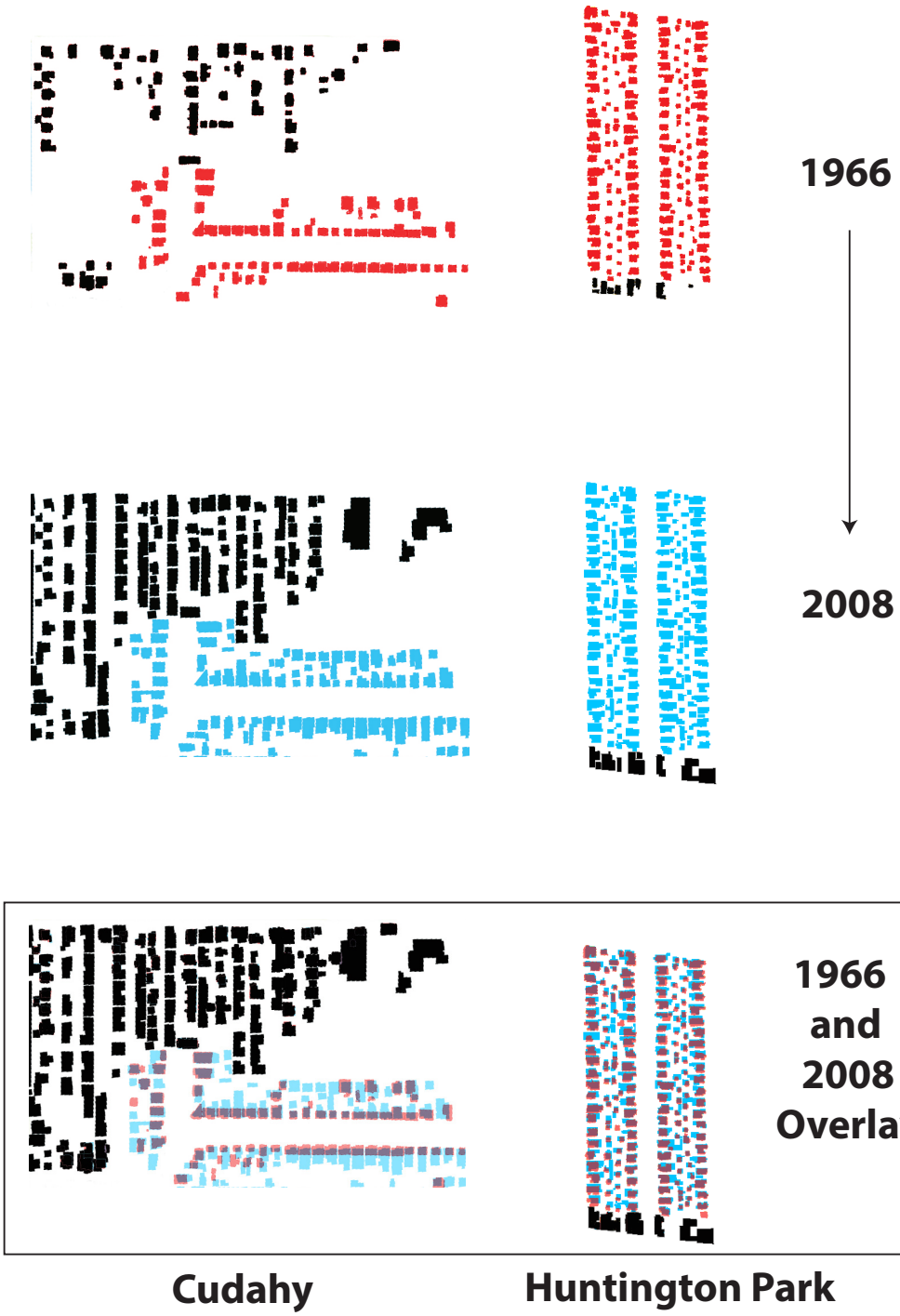

Figure 5.10. The evolution, in terms of building footprints, of two sections of Cudahy and Huntington Park from 1966 to 2008. The three diagrams for Cudahy are not at the same scale as the three diagrams for Huntington Park. Red denotes 1966 footprints of buildings (from Sanborn maps) on parcels zoned for single-family residential as of 2013; blue denotes 2008 footprints on the same lots (from LA County GIS data). Black shows footprints of buildings on multifamily, commercial, or open space lots. All image manipulation by the author.

Even within the extremely limited selection of the two areas from Cudahy and Huntington Park, it is apparent that lot-filling patterns have varied over roughly the past four decades. Table 5.2 shows the percentage of residential lots that experienced building footprint expansion via four different mechanisms. In both Cudahy and Huntington Park, a majority of the parcels in each case—66% and 54%, respectively—included front houses that were expanded towards the rear of their lots. However, in Huntington Park, 53% of the parcels included rear structures that existed in 1966 that by 2008 had been significantly enlarged. By contrast, only 7% of the parcels had experienced such a change in Cudahy. Conversely, 40% of parcels in Cudahy saw the addition of an entirely new rear yard structure, whereas this occurred on only 7% of the lots in Huntington Park.

Such discrepancies between lot-filling patterns over the same time period in two areas located only several miles apart shows the difficulty of generalizing about exactly how horizontal density has spread in the City of Gateway. Differences are likely attributable to some combination of variations in lot dimensions, stringency of code enforcement, characteristics of pre-existing housing stock, and perhaps even localized building practices. Generalizing about such patterns would require examining far more than just two sampled areas. Even so, the two cases analyzed here provide some quantification and specificity about both the amount and the type of increase in horizontal density that has occurred in two small portions of the City of Gateway.

Table 5.2. The share of residential lots in the sample areas with building footprint changes. This is a summary of the types of building footprint changes shown graphically in Figure 5.10.

Type of building footprint change on residential lot	Cudahy Sample Area	Huntington Park Sample Area
Front house widened	15%	17%
Front house extended towards rear	66%	54%
Existing rear structure enlarged	9%	53%
One or more new rear structures added	40%	7%
Number of parcels zoned single-family residential	*53*	*90*

Building footprints compared to lot coverage standards in 2008

Using the same building footprint GIS layer from 2008 described above, I compared the extent to which residential lots in the City of Gateway comply, or fail to comply, with lot coverage standards delineated in the applicable local zoning ordinances. Unlike the limited analysis shown in the previous subsection, this does not reveal a change over time; rather, it provides a "snapshot" of the extent of horizontal density within the City of Gateway at present. It also allows for the rate of noncompliance with one particular zoning parameter, lot coverage, to be evaluated.

While it would be useful to be able to assess the rates at which City of Gateway residential parcels comply with other key zoning requirements, such as off-street parking requirements, these comparisons would be far more difficult. Lot coverage, on the other hand, is readily observable from building footprint data, and can be easily compared against lot coverage standards in city and county zoning ordinances. Furthermore, lot coverage can be measured and compared for the entirety of the City of Gateway.

Methodological details of the criteria I used for filtering "residential lots" and for calculating the building footprints, as well as their comparison against zoning codes, are described in Appendix 5-2. The results are summarized in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. A summary of the cross-sectional analysis of lot coverage ratios across the entire City of Gateway as of 2008. Source: LA County GIS data.

Incorporated Cities	# of Res. Lots (< 1 acre)	Avg. Lot Size (sf)	Avg. Lot Cov.	Share of Lots Not in Compliance with Lot Coverage Standards	Footprint of Existing Res. Bldgs. (Millions of Square Feet)	Share of Building Footprint Exceeding Lot Coverage Standards
Bell *	3,113	6,350	42%	42%	7.9	21%
Bellflower	3,323	8,206	25%	9%	5.9	2%
Bell Gardens	1,296	6,109	39%	28%	2.0	8%
Compton	12,847	5,654	27%	N/A	18.8	N/A
Cudahy	839	7,646	39%	N/A	2.4	N/A
Huntington Park	2,823	6,033	42%	27%	7.0	7%
Lynwood	8,406	6,513	37%	24%	19.9	4%
Maywood	2,708	6,160	41%	4%	6.7	1%
Paramount	11,086	6,436	38%	N/A	26.2	N/A
South Gate	4,620	6,929	37%	33%	10.2	6%
Unincorporated						
East Rancho Dominguez	1,219	5,835	40%	45%	1.8	20%
Florence - Firestone	6,402	5,383	40%	49%	8.7	21%
Walnut Park	1,368	5,796	40%	46%	3.2	13%
Willowbrook	6,247	6,505	35%	32%	13.1	7%
Total or Weighted Average	**66,297**	**6,274**	**36%**	**31% ****	**134.3**	**9% ****

** Calculated for compliance with FAR standard rather than LCR (Bell only).*
*** Total for City of Gateway excluding the cities of Compton, Cudahy, and Paramount.*

In the City of Gateway, 31% of residential parcels include at least some building footprint that exceeds the lot coverage standards of the city or county jurisdictions in which they are located. Overall, 9% of the total residential footprint

is unpermitted space according to the lot coverage standard.[34] Of course, the 9% figure only represents the proportion of the building footprint that is out of compliance with lot coverage standards, or *only one zoning parameter.* Likely there are many other spaces on residential lots in the City of Gateway that comply with lot coverage standards but not with building codes or zoning requirements such as provision of off-street parking standards, setbacks, and others.

It should also be noted that the 9% figure is likely a low estimate, since only buildings with 400 square feet or more of footprint are included in the GIS layer used for the analysis. On the other hand, it cannot be known for certain how much of the building footprint included within the 9% figure is unpermitted housing, as opposed to other uses, such as car parking, workshops, etc. Nevertheless, interview results suggested that in the City of Gateway, space on residential lots used for purposes other than housing is under pressure from the relentless housing demand, and has become increasingly scarce in recent decades.

Several of the extreme results shown in Table 5.3 (above) are worthy of note. Bell, and three of the four unincorporated Los Angeles County jurisdictions (with Willowbrook not far behind) have, perhaps not surprisingly given their poorly functioning local government (Bell) and understaffed code enforcement (LA County), the highest rates of lot coverage noncompliance. They also lead in terms of the rate of lot coverage noncompliance.

Conversely, it is not surprising that the City of Bellflower has the lowest average lot coverage and the second lowest rate of lot coverage noncompliance, given that this jurisdiction has the highest median family income in the City of Gateway (ACS 2007-2011). Seemingly much more surprising is the hardscrabble City of Maywood, where the average lot coverage of 41% barely trails the leader, Huntington Park at 42%; this is not surprising. But Maywood has the lowest rate of lot coverage noncompliance in the City of Gateway at 4%. This is explained by Maywood's exceedingly high lot coverage standard of 65%, which applies in all residential zones in the city. This could be an indication of a rare case where city zoning ordinances have been crafted or modified with local on-the-ground realities in mind. Most other zoning ordinances impose lot coverage standards that have the effect of placing a high proportion of residential properties in an extralegal status.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described the seven predominant modes of extralegal housing on residential properties, and argued that they make a major contribution to an urban form of horizontal density in the City of Gateway and elsewhere in the

[34] The cities of Compton, Cudahy, and Paramount have no specific lot coverage standards in their zoning ordinances. They have other standards that would have the effect of limiting lot coverage, but to evaluate them against on-the-ground conditions would have required complex analyses involving building and parcel geometries that are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The aggregate figures presented here—i.e., 31% of residential lots and 9% of total building footprint noncompliant with lot coverage standards—exclude these three cities.

region. This is the *physical* expression of the informal market in the City of Gateway. In the next chapter, I turn to a description of the *processes* that animate the market: how property with extralegal space is rented, financed, and sold.

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Chapter 6: "How It Works:" Inside the Informal Housing Market in the City of Gateway

> De facto rooming houses, many of which are nominally illegal, constitute the majority of apartments in Chinatown. Chinese landlords there generally rent to other Chinese, whom they pack into illegally divided houses or apartments with bedsheet partitions. The tenants live in incredibly crowded conditions, sharing kitchens and bathrooms in poorly maintained buildings, but entire families often pay only $400 to $500 a month rent. You could see the owners as slumlords, but you could also see them as providing a social service. And as I was about to find out, if you buy the building, you become your own private nonprofit housing agency.
>
> - Gary Kamiya, *Cool Gray City of Love* (p. 87)

Informal housing is provided in the City of Gateway through a process that can be viewed as a *market.* While it lies partially outside of formal regulatory, taxation, and economic systems, the informal housing market has its own distinctive logic. Much of what makes the informal market in the City of Gateway distinct from the myriad others that scholars have described in other parts of the world concerns the specific ways in which the informal housing market intersects with formal, government-regulated processes.

The social welfare scholar Robert Fairbanks wrote a 2009 book entitled *How It Works: Recovering Citizens in Post-Welfare Philadelphia* (Fairbanks 2009). It is a comprehensive account of the informal system of "recovery houses" that has arisen in Philadelphia to mediate the contradictions between an austere welfare system and high levels of need for shelter, food, and support among the city's population of recovering addicts. In similar fashion, this chapter describes a different informal housing market, in this case the one operating within residential properties in the City of Gateway. With apologies to Fairbanks, its aim is to shed light on this market in order to begin to uncover "how it works."

Overview and plan for the chapter

In some sense, the phrase *informal housing market* is misleading, because in reality it consists of at least three separate markets. One is the market for extralegal *rentals*, while another is for the *sale and purchase* of residential property that includes extralegal space. Both of these are described in this chapter. A third, the market for the *addition* of space to an already-owned residential property, is partially described in Chapter 5, but the possibilities for financing such

transactions—or rather, the predominant absence of such possibilities—are described here.[1]

See Figure 6.1 for a pictorial representation of the informal housing market as described in the discussion that follows immediately below. Its structure suggests both my effort to outline the structure of this market, and informs my discussion of "how it works." It is guided by three subquestions, each of which is introduced in turn below.

Following this introduction, this chapter opens with a section that deals with the component of the informal housing market that is, in effect, the engine for the entire system. This is the extralegal rental housing market. Demand for housing, and an impetus to supply it via extralegal modes, creates ripple effects that connect this section of the market with the others that are discussed later. The local state's interaction with the informal rental market is unpredictable and incomplete. The local state intervenes mostly via code enforcement, whose routine operation is described at length in Chapter 7 and whose politically-motivated episodic crackdown episodes are discussed in Chapter 8.

I discuss the extralegal rental market by drawing a distinction between *open*- and *closed-market* means of sourcing tenants. I pose the following subquestion concerning the rental market:

Chapter 6 Subquestion #1: Is extralegal housing cheaper than legal housing for the people who live in it?

Relying on results from a rental market analysis, I demonstrate that open-market extralegal rentals seem to provide a substitute for legal rentals that is, on average, cheaper for their occupants. I then present more limited evidence, stemming from interviews, that under some circumstances closed market rentals can offer far less expensive housing options than any available alternatives, but can also encompass highly exploitative arrangements as well. For closed-market rentals, the circumstances that surround them make all the difference.

The demand for the rental of extralegal housing ultimately drives the demand for homeowners or investors to purchase properties that include extralegal housing. Unlike the extralegal rental market, the extralegal property sales market interacts with the state in a deterministic manner. This suggests the second subquestion for this chapter:

Chapter 6 Subquestion #2: How do properties with extralegal space get bought and sold?

The interaction of the state with the property sales market for extralegal space happens in two ways. First, some jurisdictions in the City of Gateway (and others elsewhere in LA County) insert themselves into the process of home sales via a

[1] Chapter 5 deals with the *physical* nature of the addition of space to residential properties. This chapter deals with the non-physical market process of *financing* the addition of such space.

category of local laws sometimes known as *presale inspection ordinances* (referred to here in shortened form as *presale ordinances*). The opportunity for cities to do so exists because of the almost ubiquitous official recordation of real estate transactions in the United States, and the almost complete absence of totally extralegal property *transfers*. Presale ordinances and their observed effects are discussed in their own section of this chapter.

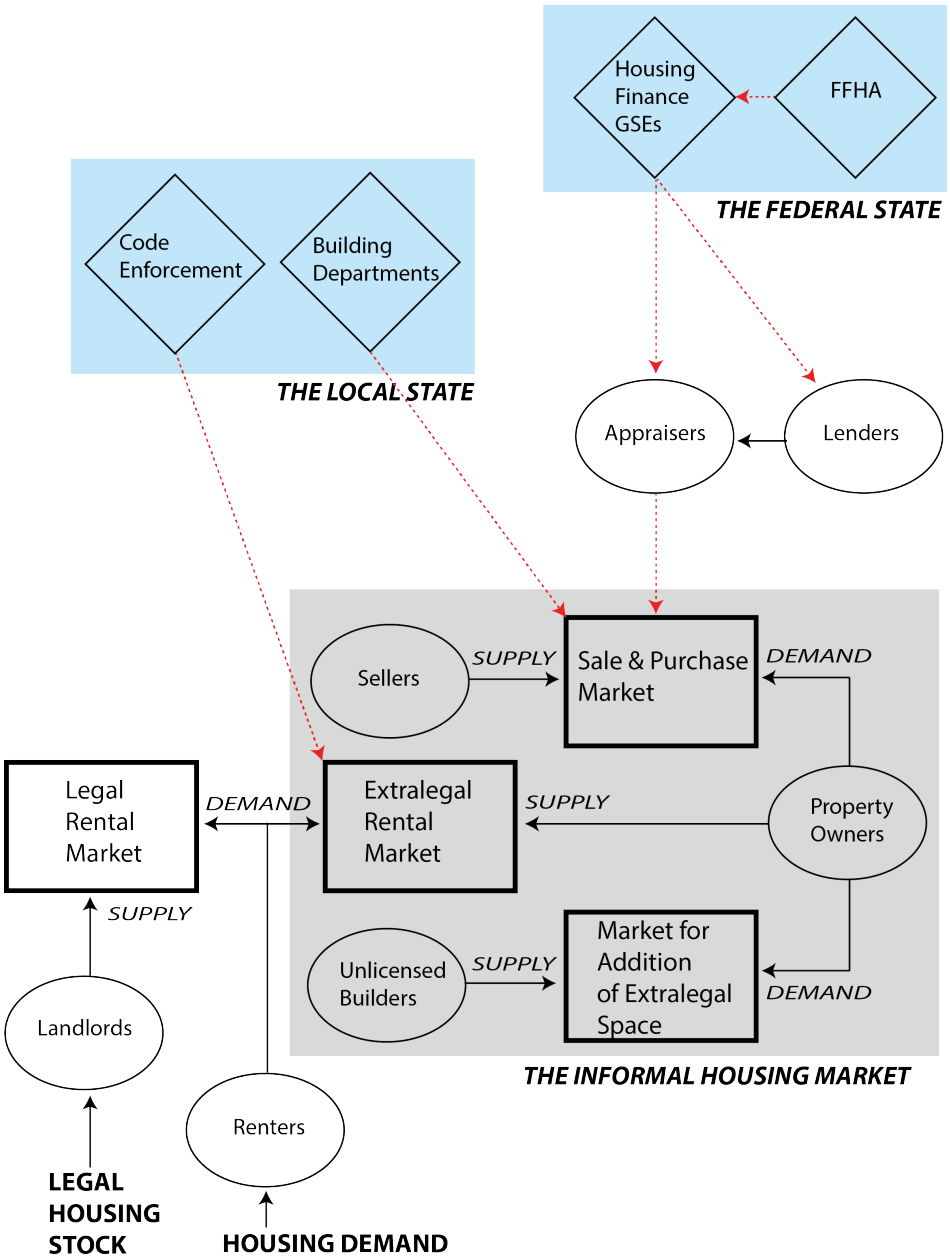

Figure 6.1. A graphical representation of the structure of the informal housing market. Its relationship to the formal housing market, the mortgage finance system, and local and federal governmental entities are shown. Red arrows indicate instances where constraints via governmental regulation or intervention affect the informal housing market.

The next section describes the other point of intersection of the extralegal property sales market with the state. This occurs as a byproduct not only of the near-absence of off-the-books property sales, as noted above, but also of the need for the vast majority of homebuyers, particularly prospective owner-occupants, to obtain mortgages. Due to the ways that the US mortgage finance system is structured, *appraisers* are a category of professionals who have had a great deal of influence in permitting extralegal spaces on residential properties to "slip through," or not, as the case may be, in the course of property sales. The details of this role are described. Recent federal policy changes, starting in 2008, that have altered this role, and the possible consequences, are described as well.

The next section of this chapter presents the results of hedonic regressions of a data set of property sales transactions from the City of Gateway between 2011 and 2014. The regressions are designed to address the third and final subquestion of this chapter:

Chapter 6 Subquestion #3: Does extralegal space have any observable value, whether positive or negative, in the residential property sales market?

The results presented here suggest that extralegal space does not systematically add, nor subtract, value from residential real estate in the area. The implications and possible explanations for the regression results are explored.

The penultimate section of this chapter deals with the third submarket that is part of the overall market for extralegal housing. This is the market where homeowners and investors *add extralegal space to properties they already own.* The physical arrangements they deploy to do so, and some of the aspects of the business relationships they use are discussed in Chapter 5. In this section, the discussion is limited to exploring whether rental space can be easily added in incremental fashion using formal credit. In short, the answer is no, for reasons that are described.

Methods used in the chapter

This chapter's quantitative methods rely on two data sets. These are:

i) The Open Market Rental Data Set
ii) The Property Sales Data Set

The Open Market Rental Data Set is built from online advertisements for rental properties in the City of Gateway. It is not large enough to allow for hedonic analysis of the rental market, and it does not allow for extralegal or other types of rental properties to be compared against each other in terms of prevalence. It is, however, useful for developing a portrait of the rents that prevail within different housing quality submarkets (Rothenberg, Galster, Butler and Pitkin 1991), and in particular for comparing the position that open-market extralegal rentals occupy within the market vis-à-vis other types of open market rentals. Full details of the methodology for building the Open Market Rental Data Set are presented in Appendix 6-1.

The Property Sales Data Set is comprised of online records of completed residential property sales in the City of Gateway from early January 2011 (the earliest available) through early January 2014. It builds on a methodology first developed by Mukhija (2014), who used it to compare the prevalence of extralegal space on single family residential properties in the different sections of the City of Los Angeles. Here, the data set is detailed enough to use as the input for a set of several hedonic regressions. It is also separately used, in a different portion of this chapter, to test the proposition that presale ordinances are associated with lower rates of completed residential sales transactions that include extralegal space. The complete methodology for the creation of the Property Sales Data Set is provided in Appendix 6-2.

I also used qualitative methods to inform the results described in this chapter. One of these was a review of the text of the presale ordinances of the seven City of Gateway jurisdictions that had them at the time of writing in May 2014. Finally, interview findings from a variety of informants are relied upon throughout this chapter. They provide insight into many of the different answers to questions about the informal housing market and "how it works." In addition, they constitute a source of data, the only one available to me, for rents of closed market extralegal rentals. From interviews I learned of 16 specific extralegal units with known locations, rents, and quality attributes, of which 11 were located in five different City of Gateway jurisdictions. While these data are decidedly not randomly sampled nor systematic collected, they are is what is available, and provide some useful insights.

Extralegal Space and Rentals: a Market Study

Subquestion #1, posed at the beginning of this chapter, concerns whether extralegal housing is cheap for the people who live in it. The rental market study provides qualified evidence that the answer is yes. As suggested in the introduction, there are likely some market dynamics at work that cause at least some occupants of extralegal spaces to pay high rents in relation to their level of quality. However, the results shown here support the contention that, on balance, and more often than not, extralegal space, even when rented on the open market, costs its occupants less than other types of rental opportunities.

Open market rentals

The results of the Rental Market Analysis show that relative to other types of housing available in the City of Gateway, one- and two-bedroom extralegal units that are widely advertised, or *open market rentals*, are, generally speaking, modestly cheaper than the alternatives (Table 6.1). While results should be interpreted with caution, due to the relatively low number of data points, the available data for these two unit types suggest that median rents for extralegal units are lower than for the next cheapest alternative, apartments in commercially-operated (5 unit or larger) buildings that lack amenities such as swimming pools and fitness centers. The same pattern also holds for rents at the 75th percentile. Interestingly, it does *not* hold at the 25th percentile. (A visualization of the rent data for one-bedroom apartments in Table 6.1 is shown below in Figure 6.2, and for all three unit size categories in Figure 6.3 later in this chapter.)

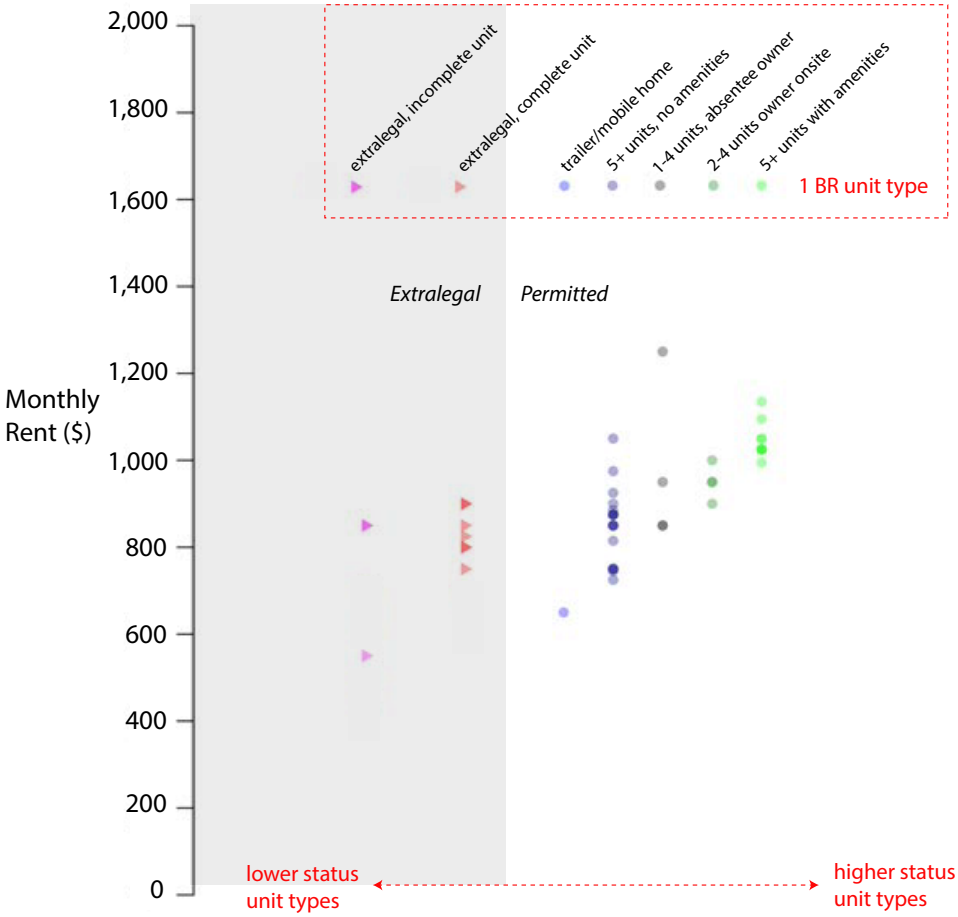

Figure 6.2. A visualization of the rents of one-bedroom apartments in the Open Market Rental Data Set. Note that data points are overlaid with transparency; thus, where circles (representing legal units) and triangles (extralegal units) representing rents appear darker, this is because more than one data point is plotted in the same location.

Table 6.1. Open Market Rental Data Set summary. A summary of all of the observations of the Open Market Rental Data Set, categorized by unit type (studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units).

Studio (0 BR) Apartments

Building Type	Number of observations	Avg size (sf)	Rent (25th percentile)	Median rent (50th percentile)	Rent (75th percentile)	Avg rent/sq. ft.
5+ Amenities	0	-	-	-	-	-
2-4 Onsite	0	-	-	-	-	-
1-4 Absentee	0	-	-	-	-	-
5+ No Amenities	4	415	$625	$661	$709	$1.61
Extralegal	6	420	$650	$693	$763	$1.65
0 BR Total	***10***	***418***	***$650***	***$650***	***$723***	***$1.63***

1 BR Apartments

Building Type	Number of observations	Avg size (sf)	Rent (25th percentile)	Median rent (50th percentile)	Rent (75th percentile)	Avg rent/sq. ft.
5+ Amenities	10	642	$1,025	$1,045	$1,050	$1.63
2-4 Onsite	4	606	$938	$950	$963	$1.62
1-4 Absentee	4	598	$850	$975	$1,025	$1.66
5+ No Amenities	21	531	$750	$847	$875	$1.61
Extralegal	10	641	$800	$808	$850	$1.35
1 BR Total	***49***	***588***	***$850***	***$891***	***$970***	***$1.57***

2 BR Apartments

Building Type	Number of observations	Avg size (sf)	Rent (25th percentile)	Median rent (50th percentile)	Rent (75th percentile)	Avg rent/sq. ft.
5+ Amenities	19	895	$1,295	$1,334	$1,395	$1.51
2-4 Onsite	13	886	$1,200	$1,280	$1,400	$1.46
1-4 Absentee	14	944	$1,080	$1,294	$1,513	$1.40
5+ No Amenities	40	829	$1,123	$1,234	$1,309	$1.53
Extralegal	11	870	$1,150	$1,206	$1,263	$1.39
2 BR Total	***97***	***825***	***$1,150***	***$1,225***	***$1,395***	***$1.48***

What explains these patterns? The reason for extralegal units being cheaper—for example, by 22% for one-bedrooms at the 25th percentile, by 15% at the median, and by 8% at the 75th percentile—vis-à-vis units in large buildings with amenities such as swimming pools or workout facilities seems clear enough. Extralegal units, without exception, lack access to such amenities. Extralegal one- and two-bedroom units also seem to be cheaper, albeit by a lesser margin, than units in 2-4 unit properties where the landlord lives onsite. It may be that the presence of an onsite landlord, along with the quiet atmosphere that prevails on many of the residential streets that contain such properties, may lead to them fetching a premium on the rental market. While extralegal units can also have those desirable attributes, presumably their lack of legal permitted status offsets them.

The closest substitute for one- and two-bedroom extralegal units on the open market, at least in terms of rents, seems to be apartments in large (5 units or more) buildings with no amenities. For both one- and two-bedroom apartments, these actually rent for less at the 25th percentile. As numerous interview respondents told me, and as Davis (1992) noted in his discussion about the "six-pack tenements" of Cudahy, which also exist in Maywood, Bell, and in other nearby cities, densely-built, aging apartment buildings of 1960s and 1970s construction vintage offer cheap, usually unsubsidized, albeit poorly-maintained and sometimes unsafe housing to their tenants. Thus, it appears that extralegal housing is not the only bottom-end option for renting on the open market in the City of Gateway. However, because multifamily construction plummeted beginning in the late 1980s and never recovered, the supply of poorly-maintained, aging apartment buildings is likely insufficient for the demand, which has created a void partially filled by open-market extralegal units.

What accounts for the low rents of extralegal housing rented on the open market? Is it the small sizes of these units, their low quality, a combination of these factors, or something else? From these data, it is not possible to definitively tell. Extralegal one- and two-bedroom units appear to rent for less per square foot than units of any other type, including their closest substitutes in large buildings with no amenities. This suggests that extralegal apartments, while not necessarily systematically smaller than other types of apartments, rent for less per square foot because of their lower quality or their extralegal status or both. But this finding must remain speculative, given the very high percentage of the extralegal rental listings for which I had to impute interior floor areas (see Appendix 6-1).

With only 10 observations, it is even more difficult to draw conclusions about studio apartments. As with one- and two-bedroom apartments, the rents for extralegal studios differ little from those for large multifamily buildings with no amenities, the only other category in which studios appear. However, the very absence of advertisements for studio units is in itself telling, for two reasons.

First, studios simply do not appear to be plentiful in the City of Gateway, which perhaps is unsurprising given the large family sizes and high number of children in the area, as described in Chapter 4. As Eric Klinenberg (2012) has observed, single-person living in a fully-equipped studio apartment (as opposed to a Single Room Occupancy building or rooming house or other downscale arrangements for single people) is an unheralded emblem of modernity, and

requires a certain amount of affluence that is in relatively short supply in the City of Gateway. Second, to the extent that there is some demand for studio-apartment arrangements, it may be that they are undersupplied by the formal market, leaving an opening for the extralegal market to fill. This would therefore be an example of the informal market filling a void left by the private, formal market for a particular *type* of apartment, and not simply for low-cost apartments, although the latter dynamic is very much in evidence as well. Obviously, further study would be needed to provide more support for this proposition.

Closed market rentals

An unknown but certainly substantial share of extralegal living spaces are not advertised on the open market, and therefore do not appear in the Open Market Rental Data Set. These are *closed market rentals*, i.e., rentals that are not openly advertised, whether online, or via other means such as flyers at local stores.[2] Not surprisingly, it is very difficult, and maybe impossible, to systematically collect data on closed market rentals. However, at least some useful information both about how and why they are rented, and about how much they rent for, emerged from interviews I conducted with various informants.

Rentals can be held off the open market for different reasons. In some cases, landlords of extralegal quarters know that code enforcement officers are monitoring local websites, such as Craigslist, for evidence of unpermitted units. This is particularly true in the minority of jurisdictions with proactive, rather than reactive, enforcement.[3] For instance, Veronica Lopez, the Code Enforcement Manager of South Gate suggested to me that in that city, only extralegal landlords lacking in savvy were so foolish as to advertise their units online, although this nonetheless occurred regularly. In such instances, advertising via "word of mouth" becomes a means of evading detection and interference from the local state.

In other cases, landlords prefer for the extralegal spaces on their properties to be occupied by relatives or friends. This can arise from a desire to help family members, particularly those who are facing difficulty. For instance, Roberto (introduced in Chapter 5) described how during his childhood his mother rented some of the family's five units in Florence-Firestone to relatives newly-arrived from Mexico, or to others who had lost jobs or been evicted from housing or experienced other misfortunes in Los Angeles.

Another reason that landlords often prefer renting to people they are related to or who they already know is that in some cases the inherent awkwardness imposed by extralegal living arrangements is ameliorated when there is a pre-

[2] Here I am using the term "rental" in the broadest sense to include cases where no rent is charged. Even in such cases, there a tenant-landlord relationship of sorts exists, even between family members, because of the power differential that exists between the two parties, whether legally enforceable or not.

[3] The distinction between proactive and reactive enforcement is discussed extensively in Chapter 7.

existing degree of trust between the landlord and the tenant.[4] For instance, as noted in Chapter 5, disputes over responsibility for utility payments, such as what an interview respondent named Sandra experienced in Willowbrook, can be avoided by renting to people the landlord trusts. In addition, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, lacking rent control protections everywhere in the City of Gateway and with relatively few other legal remedies, disgruntled tenants sometimes resort to using a weapon that can be devastating for their landlords: anonymously reporting their extralegal unit to the authorities. Avoiding such a scenario is another common reason for many landlords to keep their unpermitted living spaces off the open market, and instead select tenants that are personally recommended to them.

The flipside of renting to friends and family is almost always collecting less rent than one otherwise would on the open market. Much of this is due to basic sympathy and family loyalty. For instance, when I was shown a tiny back yard shed inhabited by a single elderly man in Willowbrook, barely big enough for his bed, I was told that the man paid the landlord, living in the main house several yards away, only when he was able, and then only up to $200 per month. While the living conditions the elderly tenant faced were rudimentary in the extreme, the landlord likely could have earned considerably more for renting out his back yard shed to a stranger. Another example illustrates this point in reverse: the father of an interview respondent named Eduardo (described later in this chapter) deliberately did *not* rent the legal above-garage apartment he had constructed on his property, because he knew that he would be able to collect full market rent only if he rented to tenants with whom he had an arms-length relationship.

In another, albeit less extreme, example, an informant named Donaldo[5] recalled that during his childhood his father, an immigrant from Jalisco, relied exclusively on informal means for finding tenants in the extralegal spaces on the properties he owned in the South Bay city of Hawthorne. Donaldo recalled his father telling him, "If you find a good tenant, charge a low rent." Donaldo's father believed that tenants were more likely to stay for long periods if they were charged reasonable rents. Mixing self-interest with altruism, Donaldo's father also took pride in giving fellow immigrants a "leg up." In some cases, as with the family's first tenants, identified through word of mouth at a local *carnicería,* this approach did not succeed, as that family (the butcher, his wife, and their child) only stayed for one and a half years. In other cases, however, it did, as with tenants, a Salvadoran immigrant couple who moved into an extralegal rental in their early 20s, who proceeded to stay for 10 years, and eventually attained professional success, with the husband going on to become the vice president of a major corporation.

In other cases, extralegal units are first created by their owners to help family members, but then are later made available to a wider pool of prospective tenants. For instance, Hilda McCall of the Harbor Gateway section of South Los Angeles (introduced in Chapter 5) originally built a garage conversion to help a

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[4] See Marris (1996) for an analysis of the difficulties posed by "sharing" in housing, above all involving kitchens and bathrooms.

[5] Not his real name. Today Donaldo is a transportation planner in another city on the West Coast.

daughter in need. She only rented it to a non-relative after a neighbor approached her on behalf of an acquaintance who needed housing. Thus, a transaction that at first was internalized entirely within McCall's family was later extended to a wider, albeit still closed, market. Referrals often work in the opposite direction, as well: for instance, when Donaldo's father received requests to house people for whom he had no vacancies, he frequently referred them to his numerous relatives elsewhere in Hawthorne who were also operating extralegal units.

It would be a mistake to assume that closed market rentals are always leavened by altruism or loyalty on the part of the landlord. The highly exploitative mode of the single family house converted to a bunkhouse, described in Chapter 5, makes this clear. Also, Veronica Lopez recounted an instance in South Gate where a landlord purchased four 12' x 12' storage sheds from Home Depot, installed them in his back yard, and rented them to single men. While the sheds had individual electrical service, the men had to cook on hot plates and share a bathroom attached to the exterior of the main house. For this, they were charged an exorbitant rent of $1,500 per month apiece. The landlord was relying on deception to command such rents, taking advantage of newly-arrived immigrants who lacked familiarity with the local rental market. Such cases make it plain that any attempts to change policy to grapple with the ambiguities and complexities of informal housing in the City of Gateway would need to account for the large variation of practices, lying on a spectrum from wholly exploitative to entirely altruistic, with many ambiguous points in the middle, that exist within the category of "extralegal." In closed market rentals, where at least the potential exists for tenants to lack the information they gather when they go through an open market search process, context is everything.

Davis (1992) describes another mechanism by which a closed market rental can cost more than an open market and legal rental. He noted that in Bell Gardens in the 1980s and early 1990s, absentee landlords charged a rent premium in return for accepting cash, rather than checks or money orders, from their tenants, as is the typical practice in the formal property management economy. While such practices could be construed as an instance of landlord greed, seen another way they could be viewed as landlords filling an economic niche, of vital importance to unauthorized immigrants and other "unbanked" individuals, left vacant by the formal housing market. In any case, his observation further demonstrates that a wide variety of outcomes, in terms of tenant costs, can occur with closed market processes.

Rudel (1984), in his study of legalized secondary unit housing in the city of Babylon, Long Island, noted another, non-monetary but very important effect of closed market housing search processes: racial discrimination. He found that African Americans were disproportionately unlikely to be rented secondary units by the city's predominantly white landlords vis-à-vis their share of the city's population and their occupancy of the city's overall rental stock.[6] It is entirely possible that similar dynamics are at work in informal housing market in the City of Gateway,

[6] Rudel's study focused entirely on legalized secondary units. However, because they were in buildings small enough (i.e., under 5 units) for federal Fair Housing laws to be inapplicable, similar dynamics might be expected to be present in closed market rentals of extralegal units in Los Angeles.

with African Americans likely the group impacted the most, but I lack the data to evaluate such a proposition.

Figure 6.3 shows the rents of closed-market extralegal living spaces (shown as squares) compared to open-market extralegal units (triangles) and open-market permitted apartments (circles). While the open-market extralegal units are, generally speaking and as discussed earlier, generally cheaper than open-market legal units, the closed-market extralegal quarters appear to be cheapest of all.

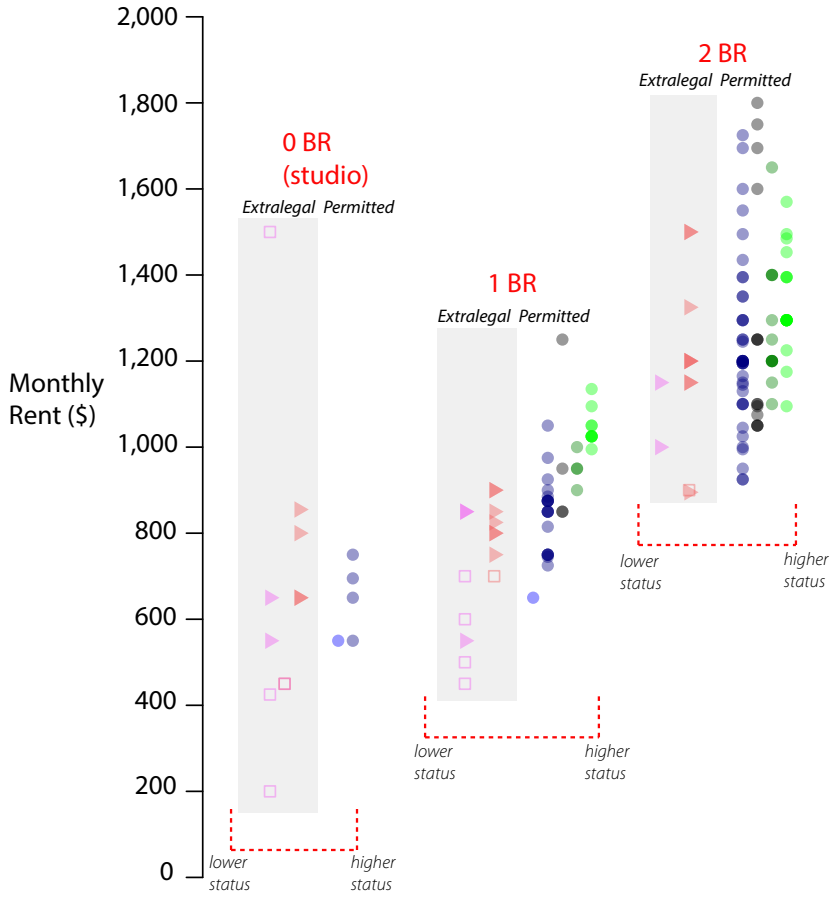

Figure 6.3. A visualization of the entire Open Market Rental Data Set. Data points are depicted as solid-colored triangles, for extralegal units, and circles, for legal units, as well as closed market rentals sourced from interviews, shown as open squares. As in Figure 6.2, all data points (including the closed market rentals) are shown with transparency; darker colors indicate instances where multiple data points overlap.

Unlike the open-market units, the closed-market units shown in Figure 6.3 are not systematically sampled, but rather are instances of specific extralegal units that I learned about in the course of conducting interviews for this dissertation. (The complete set of these units, also including those located elsewhere in LA and Orange Counties, is summarized in Table A6-1 in Appendix 6-1.) Thus, while the trend that emerges here of closed-market units *generally* (though, as noted earlier,

by no means always) being considerably cheaper than all other rental alternatives is supported, this evidence should be considered more suggestive than definitive. As with all extralegal phenomena, data for closed-market rentals is difficult to obtain, and this information should be weighed in tandem with the full set of other qualitative and quantitative findings from this dissertation. Even so, when one considers evidence of the rapid growth of the informal housing market at the same time that legal housing production collapsed (Figure 4.11 in Chapter 4), the results here contribute to a consistent story about the housing market in the City of Gateway.

Presale Ordinances

In the course of conducting interviews, I learned of a mechanism that some Los Angeles County cities have introduced in an attempt to disrupt or at least influence the sales of residential properties with extralegal living space: presale inspection ordinances, or *presale ordinances.* Presale ordinances vary considerably by jurisdiction, but they all impose an obligation by the seller of a residential parcel to seek (and pay for) a report from the city's building or planning department for the property before it can be legally sold. The report discloses, to varying extents, any extralegal conditions that exist on the property. Because of requirements under state law that sellers of residential property disclose any adverse conditions that exist on their properties to prospective buyers, the report becomes part of the information that a buyer is legally entitled to receive about a property, in addition to other typical disclosures such as termite reports, seismic evaluations, and others. As will be discussed below, cities in some cases impose additional requirements on sellers and buyers that go beyond simply the disclosure of information.

As Veronica Lopez, Code Enforcement Manager of the City of South Gate told me, presale requirements are intended, at least in part, to provide a measure of consumer protection to the complex process of homebuying. To the average prospective homeowner, understanding what physical conditions are legal and which are not, and the implications of the latter, can be bewildering. As Lopez noted,

> You will go and buy a car, go to several lots, drive several versions of it, test drive everything, take it to a mechanic, yet you put buying a home in the hands of someone [a private building inspector typically hired by buyers in home purchase transactions] you've only met once? This is the most expensive purchase you will ever make, and it will hang around your head for thirty years.

As we will see in the remainder of this section, presale ordinances are varied in their design and contested, with uncertain but likely substantial effects on the market for the purchase of extralegal property.

Coverage and scope of presale inspection ordinances

In imposing presale report requirements, cities are effectively taking advantage of the robust land sales recording mechanisms that exist in Los Angeles, and in the United States in general. Even though, as we have seen throughout this

dissertation, extralegal rental *housing* is widespread throughout the City of Gateway, extralegal property *sales* are mostly unknown.[7] Because each property sale is an event in which information about residential properties is recorded in an official database—in this case, maintained by the Los Angeles County Recorder—such a transfer becomes an opportunity for the local state to impose its regulatory will on property owners in a way that is effectively impossible via routine code enforcement or even heavy-handed crackdowns (for reasons discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively). While code enforcement and crackdowns are typically limited in the extent of their application, or even somewhat randomly enforced in the case of complaint-based code enforcement, presale ordinances are universally applied within the borders of cities that mandate them. Such an opportunity for the local state to disrupt informal housing does not exist in locales throughout the world where, unlike in Los Angeles and the US as a whole, the extralegal *sale,* and not just *occupancy*, of residential property is common.

The enforcement of presale ordinances unfolds in several ways. First, in all cases, a property seller who fails to disclose a city-mandated presale inspection report to a buyer is at risk for being sued by the buyer following the sale. In such an instance the buyer's real estate agent could also be legally liable. Second, for property sales in which the buyer will be seeking a mortgage to finance the purchase, lenders have an interest in assuring that all applicable laws, including presale inspection ordinances, are adhered to. The appraisals that they rely upon are more likely to account for extralegal conditions if these are enumerated in a presale inspection report furnished to the appraiser, a pivotal figure whose role in the financing process is discussed at length later in this chapter. Finally, at least in the case of the City of South Gate, sellers have the option of recording a document with the LA County Recorder that records the buyer's obligation to correct any extralegal conditions noted in the presale report. Such a document will be brought to light during the routine title search that precedes property sales, at least those in which mortgage lenders are involved. Between these different mechanisms, compliance with a presale inspection requirement is much closer to universal than is adherence to applicable zoning and building codes after the property has been purchased and occupied.

While presale ordinances, at least if administered comprehensively, have the potential to eventually affect all properties within a given jurisdiction, their effects only go so far. This is because they cannot, on their own, halt the creation of extralegal space on properties after they are sold. By their very design, presale requirements only exert leverage on the owners of properties that are being readied

[7] One potential, and powerful, reason for an informal transfer of residential property was a consequence of California's voter-approved Proposition 13, passed in 1978. Under Proposition 13, properties are only reassessed for taxation purposes when they are transferred or sold. However, under the subsequent Propositions 58 (passed in 1986) and 193 (passed in 1996), homeowners can in many circumstances transfer their properties to children or even grandchildren without triggering tax reassessments. Thus, major reasons to informally transfer property as a result of Proposition 13 now no longer exist. See http://assessor.lacounty.gov/extranet/guides/prop58.aspx.

for sale. Presale inspection ordinances can, however, force the removal of such spaces before a property is sold or shortly after it is bought, or at least disclose extralegal conditions to would-be buyers, depending on the jurisdiction's particular requirements. Thus, while they do not stop the extralegal rental market, they at least increase the costs for some landlords to do business in that market.

Presale inspection ordinances in the City of Gateway

While presale inspection ordinances have become common in the City of Gateway, they did not originate there. In Los Angeles County, at least, according to Veronica Lopez, the Code Enforcement Manager of South Gate, Monterey Park in the San Gabriel Valley was the first city to adopt a presale ordinance. Owing to the intense controversies that have erupted over land use there, including such extralegal practices as the unpermitted subdivision of commercial storefronts, and not incidentally coinciding with the rise of Monterey Park as perhaps the first suburban Chinatown outside of Asia (Fong 1994), it is altogether unsurprising that such a local policy innovation originated from there. Equally unsurprising is that the practice was adopted by jurisdictions in the City of Gateway.

According to Alex Saab, a real estate agent and attorney active in the City of Gateway who also serves on the City Council of the adjacent City of Downey, the adoption of presale inspection requirements has been contested. Saab told me that he personally opposed such ordinances because he viewed them as overly intrusive. Seen this way, presale requirements could be seen as an infringement of the "my home is my castle" view of residential property ownership. Saab further noted that the Downey Association of Realtors, a well-organized consortium of real estate agents active in Downey and in other surrounding Gateway Cities municipalities (including those in the City of Gateway), has taken official positions against presale ordinances, and lobbied to contest or at least weaken them where they have been proposed. Saab cited instances with which he was familiar in which residential property purchase contracts had been abandoned, often because sellers lacked sufficient money to make the necessary repairs identified by the presale reports as needed to get their properties ready for sale.

Today, presale ordinances exist in seven of the 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions. Lynwood adopted its law as long ago as October of 1986, while Bell enacted its presale ordinance as recently as September of 2008. Notably absent from the list (Table 6.2) are the four unincorporated communities; adoption of a presale requirement is likely complicated by the geographically discontiguous and scattered character of political representation in Los Angeles County (as will be discussed in Chapter 8). Two of the three other communities lacking a presale ordinance are Bellflower and Paramount, the highest-income and a moderately high-income city, respectively, among City of Gateway localities. It is possible that these factors have played a role in thwarting the adoption of presale ordinances in these cities, compared to others where struggling homeowners have viewed them as a means of protecting their property values.

Table 6.2. City of Gateway jurisdictions classified by whether they have presale ordinances, and if so what type.

Jurisdictions with Intervention-Oriented Presale Ordinances
Incorporated cities
Bell
Huntington Park
South Gate

Jurisdictions with Information-Oriented Presale Ordinances
Incorporated cities
Compton
Cudahy
Lynwood
Maywood

Jurisdictions Lacking Presale Ordinances
Incorporated cities
Bellflower
Bell Gardens
Paramount
Los Angeles County (Unincorporated)
East Rancho Dominguez
Florence-Firestone
Walnut Park
Willowbrook

Variety among presale inspection ordinances in the City of Gateway

As suggested in Table 6.2 above, the presale ordinances adopted by the seven City of Gateway jurisdictions that have them vary in their stringency. In all cases, the fees that sellers must pay are comparatively modest, ranging from a minimum of about $60 in Compton and South Gate to as much as $224 in Lynwood.[8] The real disjuncture among the ordinances resides in what they require of sellers.

In Compton, Cudahy, Lynwood, and Maywood, presale ordinances appear to be primarily intended to ensure that homebuyers have adequate information regarding extralegal conditions on the properties they are purchasing. They are best thought of as *information-oriented.* For instance, Compton requires that homebuyers sign an affidavit acknowledging that they have read and understood the required report. These ordinances do not include requirements that the sellers or buyers actually correct the extralegal conditions, although buyers might be wary about purchasing a property with extralegal conditions documented in an official city-generated report.

[8] These fees are from an information sheet that one of my real estate agent informants gave me, listing the various presale ordinances in Los Angeles County cities and their associated fees.

Bell, Huntington Park, and South Gate go further. Their presale ordinances require that sellers either correct any extralegal conditions prior to a sale, or that purchasers do so within a given interval following their possession of the property. They are *intervention-oriented.* In Huntington Park, "major violations" must be corrected within only two months following the transfer of a property, with a re-inspection required after the work has been completed. Thus, these three cities use their presale inspection process not simply to ensure that buyers are adequately informed about the risks (including code enforcement actions) that accompany purchasing properties with extralegal conditions, but to try to eliminate those conditions altogether.

Among the three cities with the most interventionist presale requirements, South Gate was universally characterized by my respondents familiar with such ordinances as the strictest in the local area. While Veronica Lopez told me that South Gate was careful to avoid emulating Monterey Park's initial practice of requiring interior inspections, which was later rejected there as too intrusive and too risky for the municipality, South Gate has nonetheless made its presale ordinance stricter since its initial adoption in 1996.[9] Where exceptions used to exist, as with an exemption of probate sales from the presale inspection requirement, these loopholes have subsequently been closed. In addition, South Gate's ordinance is the only one among the seven in the City of Gateway that specifically requires that sellers that opt to not correct extralegal conditions on their property record a document against their title with the LA County Recorder. This ensures that the obligation will burden the title of the eventual homebuyer.

Do presale report mandates have a measurable effect on sales?

My interview subjects, such as Alex Saab, a different (unnamed) realtor, and Veronica Lopez of the City of South Gate, who spoke about presale requirements were emphatic that they have an effect on the market, regardless of their opinions about their wisdom. Here I test this proposition. Using the Property Sales Data Set, it is possible to check whether jurisdictions with presale requirements are associated with a lower proportion of sales of residential properties that are reported to include at least some extralegal living space.

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[9] Interior inspections can pose risks for municipalities because of the legal liability they could incur in the event that an inspector fails to note a condition, such as a faulty electrical outlet, that later causes a fire or other disaster. Veronica Lopez told me that this risk is best borne by the private-sector home inspectors who are typically hired during the home purchase process. However, some cities' presale ordinances, such as Huntington Park's, have language that explicitly states that building inspectors can opt to do interior inspections as part of a required presale inspection if they determine, from exterior visual cues, that there are likely significant extralegal conditions inside a main dwelling structure. At the same time, presale ordinances typically provide for the interiors of accessory structures, including sheds or garages, and as distinct from the main houses, to be routinely inspected as part of a presale inspection.

As can be seen in Table 6.3, 9.7% of sales in the database that took place in non-presale jurisdictions had listings that reported extralegal living space, as compared to only 6.7% in cities with presale ordinances. The difference is relatively modest, but noteworthy from a statistical standpoint: a chi-square test shows that it is significant, with a p-value of less than 10^{-5}. In addition, it is notable that the jurisdiction widely noted as the strictest, South Gate, has the lowest rate of sales listings with extralegal space included.

Table 6.3. The proportions of home sales in the Property Sales Data Set reported to include at least some extralegal space, and that are short sales, by City of Gateway jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction with Presale Ordinances	Sales in Database	Share of Sales of Properties with Extralegal Space	Short Sale Share
Bell city	211	13.3%	23.7%
Compton city	1,808	5.3%	15.3%
Cudahy city	47	12.8%	19.1%
Huntington Park city	266	11.3%	28.6%
Lynwood city	625	7.7%	22.1%
Maywood city	156	11.5%	30.1%
South Gate city	862	4.8%	25.4%
Total	*3,975*	*6.7%*	*20.5%*
Jurisdictions Without Presale Ordinances			
Bellflower city	800	7.8%	22.0%
Bell Gardens city	145	10.3%	25.5%
Paramount city	372	9.1%	25.5%
East Rancho Dominguez *	211	7.6%	18.0%
Florence-Firestone *	521	14.2%	21.3%
Walnut Park *	139	10.1%	23.7%
Willowbrook *	554	9.2%	14.4%
Total	*2,742*	*9.7%*	*20.8%*
Overall Total	**6,717**	**7.9%**	**20.6%**

Could it be that distressed market conditions in certain areas during the time period of the data set drove up the proportions of properties with extralegal space? Some interview respondents noted that foreclosures and short sales are particularly likely to include extralegal space. However, the evidence here does not support this contention. First, the proportion of listings that are extralegal that are short sales, 25%, is only modestly higher than the overall proportion of listings that are short sales, or 21%. There is a weak correlation (Pearson's r of +0.27) between jurisdiction-level extralegal and short sale shares, but the overall short sale percentage for presale and nonpresale jurisdictions is almost identical.

What to make of these results? First, it may be that jurisdictions that have presale requirements are already more likely to crack down on extralegal housing.

This is the case for South Gate, as will be discussed in Chapter 8. Also, sellers in presale jurisdictions could simply withhold information from their listings that would make the extralegal conditions plain, so as not to discourage interest from potential buyers.

But it is also quite possible that the presale ordinances are having the effects that those who drafted them intended, particularly where they are most strictly applied, as in South Gate.[10] After all, considering city estimates from the 1980s that fully a quarter of South Gate's population lived in extralegal converted garages, South Gate's low rate of property sales with extralegal space is remarkable (Chavez and Quinn 1987). The effects could include encouraging property sellers to remove extralegal space before they list their properties for sale. For instance, I noticed that many listing remarks for properties in presale jurisdictions pointedly noted that all renovation work had been done with permits and that a "clean" presale inspection report would be furnished to an interested prospective buyer.

Other effects of presale ordinances could be unintended. These could include discouraging parents from selling or transferring their properties to their children, for fear that they would have to undertake costly repairs or compromise the use value of extralegal space. People seeking to purchase extralegal properties may be able to do so more cheaply, all else equal, within non-presale jurisdictions. Additionally, given all of the evidence throughout this dissertation that the extralegal rental market is alive and well in the City of Gateway, and the evidence in the following section that extralegal rentals seem to often provide bargains to renters in an area where they are scarce, it may be that presale ordinances ultimately do little to fundamentally disrupt this market. For a landlord with the intention of renting out extralegal space, purchasing a "clean" property and then expending money to add extralegal living quarters, rather than simply purchasing a property that already has a converted garage or other unpermitted space in place, it may be that the biggest effect of the presale ordinance is to simply increase the cost of doing (extralegal) business.

The Role of Appraisers in Financing the Purchase of Properties with Extralegal Space

In *Cool Gray City of Love,* Gary Kamiya's book-length exploration of the geography, history, and culture of San Francisco and their intersections with his own life, he recounts purchasing a property with a single family house in the city's exclusive Nob Hill district, where such structures are generally astronomically expensive in the few instances in which they exist at all. How did a writer, such as Kamiya, with a modest income manage to own and occupy a single family house in

[10] Bell in recent years has been practically synonymous with rampant municipal corruption. Given the scandals, detailed in Chapter 8, that have beset the city in the years since its presale ordinance was passed in 2008, it seems entirely plausible that administration of the new, toughly-worded law has been compromised by mismanagement or outright malfeasance. Huntington Park, too, has significant experience with municipal corruption revelations in recent years, albeit less dramatic than in Bell.

such a place? The key was his willingness to assume the role of onsite property manager for a back house on the property that legally had three units but that had long ago been converted into an extralegal rooming house, now sheltering 20 people. As Kamiya wrote, "I wasn't overjoyed by the prospect of becoming an involuntary slumlord, not to mention being locked in forever to collecting rents that were only four times more than the water bill, but I decided that it was worth putting up with it to buy a house" (Kamiya 2013, p. 88).[11]

Chapter 5 introduced an interview informant named Roberto, whose mother coped financially with her husband's death during Roberto's childhood by selling her suddenly unaffordable single family house in Watts and purchasing a property with five dwelling units, two of them unpermitted, in Florence-Firestone. In the case of Roberto's mother, as with Kamiya, extralegal landlordism made it possible for her to "reach" to a property that was otherwise economically unattainable.

But given that people of modest means in the United States almost always must borrow to afford to purchase homes, how was it possible in these two cases for the owners to do so? How did they obtain mortgages secured by properties with clearly extralegal conditions on them, plainly visible to anyone who cared to look? This section aims to provide at least the outlines of an answer to that question. It also describes how that answer has changed due to recent revamps of federal housing finance policy, and the implications for the informal housing market in the City of Gateway.

The key role of appraisers

As I interviewed two real estate agents and a lender, it quickly became apparent that appraisers play the most important role in determining what price a prospective buyer will be capable of paying for a residential property with extralegal living space, and often whether the buyer will be able to purchase the property at all. Appraisers, by assigning a monetary value to a residential property that is relied upon by the mortgage lenders that hire them, make decisions about what aspects of the property increase its value and which decrease it. This value has a direct bearing on whether a given intended purchase of a property can take place, since a low appraisal can constrain the amount of the mortgage that the lender is willing to make. If a prospective buyer has entered a purchase contract with a seller, and in the course of applying for a mortgage the lender's appraiser finds the property to be worth considerably less than what the seller is offering it for, the seller may face a choice between reducing the price for the property or letting the purchase contract lapse.

A Lakewood-based appraiser told me that the guidebook that imposes the norms of the profession, Uniform Standards of Appraisal Practice, is unambiguous in its stipulation that appraisers should consider the "highest and best use" of a property, and that legal permitted status is a required element of that concept. And yet decisions that an appraiser faces about how to deal with extralegal conditions

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[11] One important factor in Kamiya's situation was the tenants' protection under San Francisco's rent control ordinance, which then as now covered extralegal as well as legal units. No City of Gateway jurisdiction has a rent control ordinance.

that exist on a given property are in many cases not straightforward, and require the exercise of considerable discretion. A different appraiser that I spoke with, also based in Lakewood, made clear his personal distaste for non-code or –zoning compliant conditions. If he sees, for instance, an obvious garage conversion in the course of performing a residential appraisal, he assigns it no value and in fact reduces the appraised value by the "cost to cure," or the estimated cost of restoring the garage to its original intended function as storage space for automobiles.

However, a real estate agent I spoke to cited an example of a case that might be more ambiguous. If a property had a garage conversion, but the required covered off-street parking had been replaced by the addition of a carport, conditions might not "scream out" to an appraiser that there were any zoning or code violations, even if other irregularities aside from noncompliance with parking requirements existed. In general, appraisers do not have access to building permit records or other information that would allow them to clearly ascertain the permit status of a given improvement on a residential property. The major exception is where they have been furnished presale inspection reports, but as discussed earlier, these are only required in some jurisdictions, and have varying levels of comprehensiveness.

The second Lakewood appraiser made an important observation: when appraisers lack information on compliance with zoning or other codes, they frequently rely on their visual assessment of the quality of construction of an improvement. Thus, a well-built but non code-compliant addition, such as that depicted in Figure 5.3 in Chapter 5, might contribute positive value to an appraisal of a property, while one that appears to be ramshackle or amateurish in its construction quality is much less likely to do so. Although there are certain well-known visual markers of unpermitted status, such as a lack of code-required closets in rooms claimed in property listings as bedrooms, in other cases the appraiser has to simply rely on his or her visual assessment of whether a given condition is permitted or not.

The two appraisers that I spoke to noted that unscrupulous members of their profession exist, as in every profession, although such people are in the minority. During past residential real estate booms, such as those of the late 1990s and the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, there have been structural incentives that have rewarded inflated appraisals. Because appraisers are hired by lenders, and lenders are compensated on the basis of the number of loans they originate,[12] in the past there have been pressures for at least some lenders to select appraisers that they knew would overlook extralegal conditions on a residential property and produce higher appraisals than a more scrupulous appraiser would have done. In

[12] As has been extensively documented, in the last two decades it has become rare for mortgage lenders to keep the loans they originate on their balance sheets, unlike in decades past prior to the financial industry deregulation reforms of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Instead, most mortgages are sold shortly after origination for the purpose of bundling them into pools from which securities are created and later sold. As a result, the business, and therefore incentive structure, of mortgage origination has become increasingly unmoored from the performance of the underlying mortgages. See, for example, Newman (2009) for an overview.

these cases, these dynamics made it possible for the buyers of such properties, presumably working with the "right" lenders, to be qualified for a mortgage commensurate with the agreed-upon purchase price and thus for the sale transaction to move forward. Cases like these suggest a mechanism by which informality in housing could be, ironically, perpetuated and transmitted to a new owner via the formal property ownership and finance system.

A change in federal policy towards appraisals in 2008 and its effects

Starting in 2008, a change in federal policy dramatically changed the relationship between lenders and appraisers. All of my interview respondents who spoke to me about the sometimes cozy arrangements between some lenders and appraisers that had existed in the past—two real estate agents, two appraisers, and a mortgage lender—noted 2008 as a major turning point. This policy change was aimed at curtailing the inflated appraisals that by then were widely pinpointed as a factor in inflating the overheated residential real estate market of the mid 2000s, and in exacerbating the crash that followed immediately thereafter.

One of the side effects of this policy change, according to my informants, has been that today extralegal space, or at least space that is obviously extralegal due to its visual appearance, is much less likely to contribute to an increased appraisal than it was before 2008. In fact, in many cases the "cost to cure" an extralegal condition will result in a downward revision to a property's appraisal. While this has always been an element of the professional norms of the appraising profession, the ability for lenders to select appraisers willing to overlook these stipulations appears to have been markedly curtailed.

In March of 2008, Fannie Mae, a Government-Sponsored Enterprise (GSE) that issued 46% of all single family mortgage-related securities in the US in the 2009,[13] entered into an agreement with the New York State Attorney General's office and the predecessor agency of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), which starting in September of that year became the federal overseer of Fannie Mae and its peer GSE, Freddie Mac. Under the agreement, Fannie Mae agreed to adopt the Home Valuation Code of Conduct (HVCC). The HVCC applied to all mortgages on 1-4 unit properties made on or after May 1, 2009.

The HVCC stipulated that

> 1) Any employees of the lender tasked with selecting appraisers for the list are independent of the loan production staff; and (2) the loan production staff is not involved in selecting appraisers off the list for particular appraisal assignments. (Fannie Mae 2009, p. 4.)

The intention was to create a "firewall" between those who approve loans and those who select appraisers. The HVCC thus was designed to disrupt the moral hazard of collusion between lenders and appraisers, whose

[13] Source: Fannie Mae quarterly annual results report, fourth quarter 2013. http://www.fanniemae.com/resources/file/ir/pdf/quarterly-annual-results/2013/q42013_release.pdf

individual interests had in the past been served by overly high appraisers to the detriment of the resulting mortgage's adherence to sound underwriting principles. It appears to have had a major effect: for instance, a South Bay-based mortgage lender with whom I spoke told me that when he works on a loan application, he is never even told the name of the appraiser that produces the appraisal report that he relies upon.

Following its adoption, the HVCC became intensely controversial among appraisers, lenders, and real estate agents nationwide. These interests organized to ensure that the HVCC would "sunset" upon the adoption of the sweeping Dodd-Frank federal financial reform legislation, which was signed into law in July of 2010. However, while some provisions of the HVCC were overturned, the basic principle of the firewall between loan "production" and the hiring of appraisers was kept intact. This is evident in the "Appraiser Independence Requirements" currently in effect as part of Fannie Mae's *Selling Guide*, which outlines the demands that Fannie Mae makes of lenders originating mortgages that meet Fannie Mae's requirements for loan purchase and eventual securitization (Fannie Mae 2010). Freddie Mac, at the time of writing, maintains a similar policy.

What are the effects of these changes? Because they are relatively recent, it is difficult to know. Later in the chapter I present evidence that extralegal space does not increase the value of residential properties, although whether this is a result of the changes to appraiser selection procedures, and whether this is a change from prior to 2008, remains unclear.

One of the real estate agents with whom I spoke noted the marked increase in recent years of buyers of residential properties paying entirely in cash as prices have begun to rise and inventory to shrink following the bottoming out of the market following the beginning of the Great Recession. Likely a major factor is the overall decrease in credit availability amidst generally tightened underwriting standards and regulation, of which the post-2008 appraiser selection procedures are one component. Many of the all-cash buyers are investors either looking to "flip" a property, or repair and upgrade it before quickly reselling it, or hold it for the long term as an absentee-owned rental property.

The real estate agent told me, and one of the appraisers confirmed, that few of the investors purchasing 1-4 unit properties are interested in maintaining extralegal conditions on a property they purchase. Where these conditions exist, they seek to eliminate them as soon as possible.[14] Thus, the very homebuyers that would be in a position to purchase properties with extralegal space—those paying all cash and thus bypassing the scrutiny of

[14] This should not be taken to imply that professionals who earn their living from real estate uniformly eschew extralegal housing modes. Chapter 5 recounts cases that show otherwise. Rather, investors looking to *purchase* residential property appear to avoid extralegal practices. What happens later, post-purchase, can be a different matter altogether.

mortgage lenders and appraisers—appear to be uninterested in doing so.[15] Meanwhile, the "mom and pop" buyers, such as Roberto's mother, who once sought to buy a property with extralegal space in order to make the economics of the purchase work, now appear to have more obstacles in their path than was formerly the case.

These obstacles are not necessarily insurmountable. The South Bay-based lender told me that the underwriter in his department has some discretion to treat unpermitted improvements documented in an appraisal as "deferred maintenance" in certain cases. This lender might be willing to make such an exception where there are "mitigating factors," usually indications that the borrower is a good credit risk. Executives trust in-house staff to make these sorts of judgment calls, while they would not show a similar level of deference to a mortgage broker that had brought them a prospective client. Nevertheless, such favorable treatment in the post-HVCC era seems to hinge on the financial strength of the borrower. Likely the overall effect is for purchases of properties that include extralegal living space to be less feasible for the typical working-class, City of Gateway homebuyer than was once the case.

Extralegal Space and the Property Sales Market: a Hedonic Analysis

This section addresses Subquestion #3, posed in the introduction to this chapter: does extralegal space have any measurable value on the property market? In other words, in economic terms, does the value created by the market for the *rental* of extralegal rental housing carry over into a market that is distinct but intertwined, namely the market for the *sale and purchase* of 1-4 unit properties with extralegal space? The answer is not clear. The vigorous informal market would tend to suggest that it would, but as discussed earlier in the chapter, presale requirements and underwriting practices changed in the wake of Dodd-Frank act in the opposite direction.

This section presents results from the hedonic analysis of the Property Sales Data Set, introduced earlier in the chapter. These results do not support the hypothesis that extralegal living space on residential parcels affects, either upward or downward, property values as established by the sales market.

Representativeness of data

As can be seen in Table 6.4, the sales in the Property Sales Data Set are disproportionately concentrated in certain portions of the City of Gateway. Relative to their share of 1 to 4 unit buildings, Compton, East Rancho Dominguez, and Willowbrook have a high proportion of home sales represented. Conversely, Bell, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, Maywood, and especially Cudahy are under-represented.

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[15] In a north Orange County city that I visited, I was told by informants that it is common for Vietnamese immigrants to use pooled credit arrangements within family groups in order to purchase residential properties entirely with cash.

Table 6.4. Summary statistics for the Property Sales Data Set.

	Average	Min	Max	SD	*Share of units in 1-4 unit buildings (2007-2011 ACS)*
Sale Price (dep. var.)	$255,046	$295	$2,330,000	$86,264	
Case Shiller index	178.7	159.5	214.8	17.5	
Location dummies					
Bellflower city	11.9%	0	1	-	11.4%
Bell city	3.1%	0	1	-	5.2%
Bell Gardens city	2.2%	0	1	-	6.0%
Cudahy city	0.7%	0	1	-	2.6%
Compton city	26.9%	0	1	-	15.0%
Huntington Park city	4.0%	0	1	-	7.0%
Lynwood city	9.3%	0	1	-	8.5%
Maywood city	2.3%	0	1	-	3.9%
Paramount city	5.5%	0	1	-	6.5%
South Gate city	12.8%	0	1	-	14.3%
East Rancho Dominguez	3.1%	0	1	-	2.1%
Florence-Firestone	7.8%	0	1	-	9.3%
Walnut Park	2.1%	0	1	-	2.5%
Willowbrook	8.2%	0	1	-	5.7%
Subtotal	*100.0%*				*100.0%*
Property and sale characteristics					
Interior area (sq. ft.)	1,394	384	15,000	653	
Bedrooms	3.18	1	23	1.33	
Bathrooms	1.79	1	20	0.93	
Parcel size (sq. ft.)	5,782	1,382	39,600	2,344	
Age (years)	68.3	1	129	18.8	
Parking spaces	2.51	0	20	1.80	
Garage dummy	81.2%	0	1	-	
Single family house dummy	81.7%	0	1	-	
Short sale dummy	20.6%	0	1	-	
Extralegal characteristics					
Extralegal rooms (not included)	0.070	0	9	0.359	
Extralegal rooms (included)	0.033	0	4	0.244	
Extralegal bathrooms (not included)	0.030	0	4	0.192	
Extralegal bathroom (included)	0.011	0	2	0.117	
Separate extralegal unit dummy	1.9%	0	1	-	
Converted garage dummy	0.8%	0	1	-	
Detached extralegal space dummy	1.7%	0	1	-	

These patterns could have a couple of explanations. First, the over-represented cities are three of the only four jurisdictions in the City of Gateway where a majority of housing units are owner-occupied (Walnut Park is the fourth; see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4). They could have therefore been particularly prone to a churning sales market in the period leading up to the Great Recession, when foreclosures, in LA as in the nation as a whole, were mounting and many homeowners who escaped foreclosure nevertheless sold short or otherwise under duress. The under-represented cities, with much lower homeownership rates, presumably had many more properties, even 1 to 4 unit ones, held by investors, who would have been buffeted from the adverse conditions in the sales market by the tight rental market conditions that existed from early 2011 to early 2014.

Model results: Case Shiller, property and sale characteristics, and location dummy variables

Keeping in mind the aforementioned possible distortions from the geographic distribution within the data set, the results of the regression (Tables 6.5 and 6.6) are relatively straightforward to interpret. If we consider the results of Model 1, which uses a Spatial Error Model (SEM) and is run on the entire data set, we see that the Case Shiller coefficient and all of the property and sale characteristic coefficients are significant and have the expected signs, with the possible exception of the single family dummy, which is discussed below. If we assume that Median Family Income (MFI) in a jurisdiction is a proxy for the quality of municipal services, and if, following Tiebout (1956), we further assume that municipal services are capitalized into property sale prices, then the location dummies' coefficients mostly behave as expected, with three major exceptions. (See Table A6-2 in Appendix 6-3 for details.)[16] The coefficients for Model 2, which is identical to Model 1 but for its use of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) rather than SEM, are substantively the same.[17]

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[16] Two of the three major exceptions are Compton and East Rancho Dominguez, both of which have much more negative location dummy coefficients than the rank order of their MFIs, as compared to that of other City of Gateway jurisdictions, would suggest. One likely contributor is the prevalence of high-cost home mortgages, a well-known risk factor for subsequent foreclosures and overall housing market distress. According to federal Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data, East Rancho Dominguez, Willowbrook, and Compton rank in the top three among City of Gateway jurisdictions for high-cost mortgages, as defined by HMDA, per 1,000 1-4 unit existing properties during the boom period of 2004 to 2006, ranging from 79 to 84. By contrast, this same indicator ranges from 16 (Bell Gardens) to 60 (Lynwood) in all other City of Gateway cities, with a countywide average of 39. (Source: http://www.foreclosure-response.org/maps_and_data/hmda_downloads.html.) The third major exception is Bell, whose location dummy coefficient is much less negative than its low MFI would suggest. Bell was likely insulated from the worst of the foreclosure crisis by its extremely low homeownership rate.

[17] Because Model 1, unlike Model 2, addresses spatial autocorrelation (as discussed in Appendix 6-2), its results are perhaps more trustworthy. However, there is so little difference between the coefficients and significance levels between Models 1 and 2 that analyses based on their respective sets of coefficients lead to essentially the same conclusions.

Table 6.5. Results from the four hedonic regressions on the Property Sales Data Set. Sale price is the dependent variable in each case. Details about the four models are provided below in Table 6.6.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Case Shiller index	$1,110	***	$1,108	***	$1,199	***	$1,046	***
Location dummies (1)								
Bell city	-$58,692	***	-$57,640	***	-	***	-$8,543	*
Bell Gardens city	-$57,980	***	-$57,330	***	-$59,225	***	-	
Cudahy city	-$78,699	***	-$73,880	***	-		-$24,788	***
Compton city	-$110,860	***	-$110,100	***	-		-$60,837	***
Huntington Park city	-$65,489	***	-$63,650	***	-		-$15,840	***
Lynwood city	-$74,322	***	-$73,770	***	-		-$23,591	***
Maywood city	-$66,952	***	-$65,710	***	-		-$17,407	***
Paramount city	-$58,034	***	-$56,850	***	-$55,763	***	-	
South Gate city	-$49,489	***	-$48,570	***	-		-	
East Rancho Dominguez	-$106,490	***	-$104,300	***	-$103,140	***	-	
Florence-Firestone	-$113,740	***	-$111,700	***	-$111,220	***	-	
Walnut Park	-$55,344	***	-$55,360	***	-$53,462	***	-	
Willowbrook	-$120,980	***	-$120,400	***	-$119,620	***	-	
Property and sale characteristics								
Interior area (sq. ft.)	$29	***	$31	***	$26	***	$32	***
Bedrooms	$13,335	***	$13,660	***	$13,597	***	$12,102	***
Bathrooms	$9,265	***	$9,141	***	$15,915	***	$5,746	***
Parcel size (sq. ft.)	$5	***	$5	***	$5	***	$3	***
Age (years)	-$269	***	-$265	***	-$265	***	-$234	***
Parking spaces	$3,422	***	$3,480	***	$3,374	***	$3,263	***
Garage dummy	$14,490	***	$16,150	***	$17,567	***	$12,164	***
Single family house dummy	-$13,544	***	-$10,590	***	-$10,367	*	-$15,299	***
Short sale dummy	-$41,439	***	-$41,640	***	-$41,455	***	-$40,437	***

Table 6.5 continued on next page

Table 6.5 continued from previous page

Extralegal characteristics								
Extralegal rooms (not included)	$3,093		$3,160		$2,667		$3,711	
Extralegal rooms (included)	-$15,172	***	-$15,560	***	-$16,166	**	-$13,791	***
Extralegal bathrooms (not included)	$342		$725		$1,383		-$894	
Extralegal bathroom (included)	$2,003		$2,694		-$3,581		$8,230	
Separate extralegal unit dummy	-$9,871		-$9,378		-$12,982		-$4,005	
Converted garage dummy	-$8,981		-$9,593		-$3,941		-$13,208	
Detached extralegal space dummy	-$671		-$2,112		$1,549		-$4,200	
Intercept	$24,912	*	$17,250	*	-$12,042		$220	

(1) Location dummy base case is location within Bellflower city for Models #1, #2, and #3, and South Gate city for Model #4 only.
*Significance: ***<0.001; **<0.01; *<0.05*

Table 6.6. A description and summary statistics for each of the four hedonic model runs on the Property Sales Data Set.

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Type	Spatial Error	OLS	Spatial Error	Spatial Error
Observations included	All	All	Non-presale jurisdictions only	Presale jurisdictions only
Model characteristics				
Observations	6,717	6,717	2,742	3,975
Adjusted R-squared	-	0.695	-	-
Log likelihood	-81,822	-	-34,042	-47,308
First quartile residual	-$21,391	-$21,814	-$24,916	-$19,090
Median residual	$3,975	$3,604	$2,398	$5,007
Third quartile residual	$23,119	$23,709	$24,250	$22,146
Lambda	0.25***	-	0.21***	0.28***

*Significance: ***<0.001*

That the coefficient of the single family dummy is negative in addition to being strongly significant could be construed as surprising, given the longstanding conventional wisdom in US cities and suburbs that single family houses occupy the

apex of the status pyramid among housing types (Perin 1977; De Neufville & Barton 1987). In the City of Gateway, the evidence from all four model runs suggests that at least from 2011 to 2014, a house configured as a (legal) multiunit property was more valuable in the market than the same house arranged for occupancy by a single family. This result seems to be a consequence of the seemingly insatiable demand for rental housing that appears to exist in the City of Gateway. It is an indirect but nonetheless notable indication of the strength of the demand for rental housing on residential lots, which is fulfilled by extralegal as well as legal housing arrangements.

Model results: extralegal housing variables

Unlike all of the independent variables discussed above, none of the seven variables pertaining to extralegal space, save for one, are statistically significant in Model 1. The presence of extralegal rooms and bathrooms not included in the bedroom and bathroom counts and square footage of the listing; bathrooms included within the listing attributes; fully-equipped extralegal apartments, complete with kitchens, bathrooms, and separate entrances; converted garages; and freestanding extralegal spaces does not appear to systematically result in higher or lower sales prices.

The one exception is extralegal rooms *included* within the listing's reported square footage and in some cases within its bedroom count. This coefficient for Model 1 is significant and negative. It has a similar absolute value to the coefficient for listed bedrooms (also significant), but the opposite sign.

This result suggests that in the typical listing, if a certain amount of interior square footage is reported, but the verbal description reports that some of it is in the form of extralegal space, homebuyers' willingness to pay for the property appears to decrease by about the same amount for an extralegal room as they would be willing to pay for a permitted bedroom. On the other hand, if a property's reported interior square footage is entirely comprised of permitted space, any additional space reported to be unpermitted in the property's verbal description seems to, on average, do nothing to increase prices upwards or downwards.

One further test is to run the SEM for jurisdictions that do not require pre-sale jurisdictions (Model 3) and compare the results against those in jurisdictions that do (Model 4). If the average buyer valued pre-existing extralegal space, but were prevented from taking advantage of it only in jurisdictions with presale requirements, then we would expect the coefficient for included extralegal rooms to be sharply less negative in Model 3 than in Model 4. However, the coefficient is *more* negative in Model 3 than in Model 4, and roughly the same as a percentage of the average sale price (5.6% versus 6.0%, respectively), a result that does not support this hypothesis. Other model runs that attempted to differentiate jurisdictions with intervention-oriented presale ordinances (as enumerated earlier in Table 6.2) versus those without them yielded similar results.

What conclusions should we draw from these findings? Collectively, they suggest that extralegal space is not valued in the residential property sales market. The results do not provide evidence that presale requirements are a leading explanation for this result, although we did see earlier in the chapter that presale

jurisdictions tend to have fewer sales listings. The regression results suggest that presale requirements are not, by themselves, eliminating the *value* of extralegal space in the sales market, although they might be decreasing its *prevalence* in the sales market.

Another possibility is that the federal policy reforms to appraisal practices of 2008 have had enough of an effect that extralegal space has lost its value in the property sales market. If this were the case, presales requirements would be redundant in having this effect, which might explain the results cited above. The results here are consistent with this proposition, and with what I was told by the appraisers I spoke with, as described earlier. A true test of whether the adoption of the HVCC has had the effect of eliminating the value of extralegal housing, however, would require running regressions that include sales data dating to before 2008. This would be valuable and interesting, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

One more point is worth making: the results from the hedonic regression models, on their own, do not support the contention that extralegal space is necessarily *devalued* in the property market. For instance, none of the extralegal attribute variables were significant *and* negative, aside from the number of extralegal rooms included in the listing's official square footage and bedroom count. That variable's absolute value is effectively identical to that for the coefficient for the number of listed bedrooms—the former plus its standard error are barely less than the latter. If included extralegal space were actively harmful to property values, one would expect its coefficient to be significantly more negative than the bedroom coefficient is positive.

What could this mean? If, despite presale requirements in some parts of the City of Gateway and the effects of Dodd-Frank everywhere, extralegal space still does not significantly decrease property values, it could be that buyers are segmented between those that value extralegal space in purchased properties and those that do not. In other words, it could be that residential properties that include extralegal space, and those that do not, occupy separate housing submarkets (Rothenberg *et al* 1991). It is also possible that some homeowners who might otherwise choose to sell their properties with extralegal space elect to retain ownership of their properties, and perhaps continue collecting rent from them.

All of this must remain speculative and tentative. Overall, the highest-level point to be taken from the hedonic modeling results are that the effects of extralegal space, which emerge strongly from the analysis of the rental market presented earlier in this chapter, are not palpable in the property sales market. Whether this has long been the case, or has been made so by the 2008 federal appraisal policy reforms or some other factor, is an important question but cannot be answered from these results.

Obstacles to Financing the Construction of Added Living Space on a Residential Property

For a landlord seeking to rent out extralegal space, purchasing a property where such space already exists is not the only possible strategy. As discussed above, doing so has likely become sharply more difficult in recent years. Another

option is for the landlord to add the space herself. But one of the major obstacles to doing so becomes how to pay for it.

Even for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are fully permitted, the US mortgage finance system as currently constituted does not make financing their installation easy. Brown and Watkins (2012) show that because of guidelines imposed by the GSEs, as well as by HUD, which oversees FHA loans popular amongst low-income homebuyers, properties consisting of single family houses with ADUs are treated by appraisers in a fundamentally different manner than duplex, triplex, or four-plex properties where none of the units are considered to be "accessory" or otherwise subordinate to the main unit or units. ADUs, unlike the non-owner occupied units on a multiunit owner-occupied property, are not allowed to contribute to the income that a homebuyer can use to qualify for a loan.

By contrast, according to the South Bay-based mortgage lender introduced earlier, owners of 2-4 unit properties are allowed, under Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac guidelines, to claim 75% of market rents towards their incomes. Thus, because of how ADUs are treated in underwriting guidelines, it is effectively impossible for a homebuyer to borrow in order to purchase a house with a legal ADU, or for a homeowner to refinance an existing property in order to build one, unless she already has income or assets that can secure such a loan. This disparate treatment of houses with legal ADUs, on the one hand, and legal 2-4 unit properties, on the other, becomes a structural disincentive for people of modest means to fulfill market demand for rental housing by adding living space on their properties through legal channels.

It would be a mistake to assume that no incremental addition of permitted dwelling units on residential properties occurs in the City of Gateway. The father of an interview respondent, Eduardo,[18] provides one example. Eduardo's father, a Mexican immigrant, arrived in South Gate in the 1970s and eventually succeeded in purchasing a single family house from a departing white family. Once Eduardo and his sister had finished high school, their father decided to pursue the construction of a rental property to the rear of the single family house where he and his wife had raised their children. Time was running out to do so, because the city was on the verge of downzoning an area that included the family's parcel, which would remove the possibility of legally adding a second house.

Because of his extensive relationships with local contractors, Eduardo's father was able to construct a fully-permitted, three-bedroom, two-bathroom back house over a two-car garage for only $180,000, versus the $220,000 that it otherwise would have cost. With its new construction, central air conditioning, and location on the less crowded east side of South Gate, with good freeway access and immediate proximity to South Gate's enormous and well-equipped main city park (described at the beginning of Chapter 4), Eduardo's father today commands $1,800 in rent per month for the apartment over the garage. Eduardo and his sister live in the house where they grew up, and manage the family's rental property at the back of the lot for their father, who now lives elsewhere in South Gate.

[18] Not his real name.

To finance the $180,000 construction cost, Eduardo's father cobbled together a combination of sources, including his own savings, a loan from Eduardo, and a home equity line of credit of about $50,000 from a major bank using the original family home as collateral. Because of his aversion to paying debt to a bank rather than to his own family, he has used only about half of the line of credit and preferred instead to take a loan from his son, so that the interest payments would accrue to the benefit of a family member.

Eduardo's father was able to finance the construction of the back house because he had established himself financially over decades in the United States. Even though 75% of the $1,800 rental income payment would be more than enough to support payments on a 30-year mortgage, at the home equity line of credit's interest rate of 4.64%, with a loan amount of over $260,000, this option would not have been open to him. This is because the apartment's status as an "accessory" dwelling would not have allowed its rental income to be counted as income for the purposes of leveraging a mortgage.

Clearly, Eduardo's father used frugal and conservative decision-making in arranging the financing of his rental property, which appear to have served him well. But there are likely many would-be landlords of legal properties who are not able to pursue formal financing, and therefore permitted construction, of extra dwellings on their properties, even though in many cases the rents the new units would command could easily support the loans needed to finance them. It is not unreasonable to suppose that these dynamics result in many such people instead turning to extralegal modes to construct such living spaces. Without the scrutiny of lenders demanding permits, a major motivation for homeowners to seek them for their incremental construction is lost. Instead, building without permits reduces construction costs through the use of non-code compliant (and therefore cheaper) building techniques and labor costs through the use of unlicensed contractors or friends and relatives. Meanwhile, incremental building, which is much better suited to unpermitted than permitted construction, allows landlords to overcome their lack of access to credit by building portions of their planned project as cash becomes available (Giusti and Olivares 2012).

Conclusion: the Informal Housing Market in the City of Gateway in Global Perspective

It is worthwhile to consider the portrait of the informal housing market sketched in this chapter, and its points of comparison and contrasts with other informal housing markets distant in space and in time from the City of Gateway, both in the US and in other countries. Such an exercise reveals that a peculiar informal housing system has arisen in the City of Gateway, and likely, elsewhere in Southern California and perhaps in select other US and Canadian metropolitan regions. This system has an odd mixture of characteristics that are found in other places, but combined in a way that, to my knowledge, is unique and that has not been well-documented to date.

The first defining characteristic of the informal housing system in the City of Gateway is that *residential property owners, including those with extralegal property,*

have relative security of tenure. Unlike in the classic accounts of auto-constructed communities formed through land invasion on the outskirts of, say, Mexico City or Brasilia, property owners in the City of Gateway almost always hold unambiguous legal title to their land (Turner 1977; Holston 1989). While the literature is by now replete with accounts of other means of informal land ownership, from the conversion of communally-held *ejido* lands in Mexico to the unauthorized subdivision of agricultural lands in Egypt to create suburbs for the wealthy, these mechanisms are largely unknown in Los Angeles (Ward 1999; Soliman 2004). Generally speaking, the discrepancy between who claims ownership of a given residential property and what is recorded on the property's title at the LA County Recorder's Office is nonexistent.

The second characteristic is a direct corollary of the first: in the City of Gateway, *informal housing rests upon a foundation of formal property ownership.* Of course, extralegal housing with entirely informal land tenure, such as homeless encampments and recreational vehicles parked curbside on residential streets, certainly exists throughout Southern California. But such housing is subject to shutdown by the authorities at any time, and thus has an inherently temporary quality. By contrast, the informal housing that endures in the same location for years or even decades in the City of Gateway is effectively sheltered by the rights and privileges that attach to formal homeownership in the US.

Third, unlike in the homestead subdivisions of peri-urban Texas, City of Gateway *homeowners have full access to the mainstream US mortgage finance system*. Degraded credit instruments such as Contract for Deed are essentially unknown there (Ward 2004). This is a marked change from the conditions under which many areas of the City of Gateway originally suburbanized in the early 20th century, when settlers there, as in similar areas, relied on auto-construction, credit-pooling, and labor-sharing as strategies to cope with their low incomes prior to the advent of the modern mortgage system, which extended credit to (white) working class homeowners beginning in the New Deal era (Nicolaides 2002; Harris, 1999). In the contemporary City of Gateway, because homeowners hold secure title to their properties, and because (unlike in Texas homestead subdivisions) they live in communities where the standard suite of infrastructural services are universally available (if sometimes of questionable quality), they have at least the potential ability to access the mainstream US credit system.[19]

Fourth, in the City of Gateway, *the state interacts with the informal housing market in a fragmented manner* that mirrors the structural fragmentation long observed as a defining characteristic of the US multi-tiered, federal governmental

[19] While it would be a grave error to assert that contemporary City of Gateway homeowners have not suffered as a result of the systemic characteristics of the US mortgage finance system, including the proliferation of subprime and other high-risk mortgages, these struggles have not arisen as a consequence of widespread informality in City of Gateway communities. Instead, they are shared with other groups of vulnerable American homeowners: those with low incomes, people of color (above all African Americans), the elderly, and women, including people from all such groups who live in areas where the informal housing market is barely in evidence.

system (cf. Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988). As we have seen in this chapter, local governments—but only some of them—insinuate the scrutiny of their building departments into the property sale process via presale ordinances. Simultaneously, as will be shown in the next chapter, the local state—usually through a code enforcement arm housed in a separate division from the building department—conducts what amounts to episodic and limited harassment of the extralegal rental housing market. These actions appear to influence and shape the informal housing market, but they do not suppress it. They do, however, contribute to its unique physical expression, as we saw in Chapter 5.

Meanwhile, the federal state has altogether different influences on the informal housing market, and ones that are entirely uncoordinated with the efforts of local governments to interrupt this market. Acting through the two large quasi-governmental housing GSEs, the federal state effectively (albeit unintentionally) encourages the addition of extralegal living space to residential lots by impeding the ability of homeowners to finance the incremental construction of legal secondary units on their properties. More recently, since 2008, the federal state's reform of appraiser selection, imposed on the GSEs through the entity that regulates them, may have impeded the ability of homebuyers to purchase properties that include extralegal space.

Fifth, and last, in the City of Gateway, as in the US in general, *the state functions with a relative lack of corruption.*[20] There are certainly major exceptions: as discussed in Chapter 8, jurisdictions within the City of Gateway, including South Gate, Huntington Park, Bell Gardens, and (most recently) Bell, have had a well-documented history of blatant cronyism and official malfeasance. However, as will be argued there, unlike in some other parts of the world, corruption is not needed to explain the existence or the functioning of the informal housing market, since it also unfolds in areas that lack corruption. Furthermore, corruption in the City of Gateway has tended to be contained within particular cities, and its most blatant excesses have been restrained over time by various mechanisms, including high-profile press coverage, recall elections, threatened state government dissolution of municipalities, criminal prosecutions, and others. The City of Gateway lacks examples, such as those common in Mediterranean Europe, where entire extralegal communities have been constructed in circumvention of official planning controls as a result of connivance by corrupt public officials, in some cases, such as near Naples,

[20] This claim, while it may seem extravagant, is intended to be relatively narrow. For instance, the influence of campaign donations on local, state, and federal government in the US is well-documented, and can be seen as a widespread example of quasi-corruption. In addition, the very structure of cities such as Vernon (as discussed in Chapter 4) could be reasonably seen as inherently corrupt. I make no counterclaims to such assertions here. Instead, I simply note that the machinery of local, state, and federal government in Southern California function relatively unimpeded by interference from corrupt officials, at least by comparison to many of the locations around the world where informal housing processes have been well-documented in the literature. The integrity of the processes that structure this machinery is structured or managed is a separate question altogether. The larger point remains (and is asserted in Chapter 8) that corruption of public officials is not needed to explain informal housing processes, City of Gateway style.

with the blatant involvement or even sponsorship of organized crime networks (Allen *et al*. 2004, De Leo 2011).

What we are left with, then, is a system whose existence is somewhat odd. In the City of Gateway, land tenure is secure. Homeowners have access to formal credit. Government, by and large and over time, tends to function in its intended manner. And yet an extensive informal housing market rests squarely on a solid foundation of uncontested formal land ownership. This chapter has been an early attempt to describe this system and reveal "how it works." Chapter 9, the conclusion to this dissertation, will seek to grapple with the larger implications. First, however, in the next chapter we examine the important role of the local state in intervening in the extralegal rental market via code enforcement.

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Chapter 7: Code Enforcement and the Informal Housing Market in Southeast Los Angeles

In a participant-observer account of a year and a half spent on the police force in Baltimore, the sociologist Peter Moskos describes the complexities and contradictions of being a patrolman in a precinct, with a population of 45,000, in which 20,000 arrests occurred in one year (Moskos 2009). With open-air illegal drug markets in operation on street corners throughout the area, and with a police department incentivized by the federal government's decades-long War on Drugs to deploy harsh, punitive policing tactics, Moskos recounts the futility and arbitrariness of selecting people for harassment or arrest by the police. Why pick one person and not another? Moskos' book details the set of constraints and incentives that each officer relies upon to answer that question for herself.

Along the way, Moskos' account makes it clear that even if heavy-handed policing is ultimately powerless to *stop* open air drug dealing in East Baltimore, it certainly *influences* how it unfolds. When a police car arrives at an active drug dealing street corner, the members of the "crew" working there scatter. An elaborate hierarchy and division of labor within drug crews ensure that cash is never found on the same person as crack cocaine or heroin, thus making police efforts to demonstrate criminal intent for organized drug dealing surprisingly difficult to achieve in a courtroom, despite its blatant obviousness for all to see in the public realm. Weapons are stashed in the wheel wells of nearby cars rather than on dealers' persons so that the daily police frisks of suspects standing on drug dealing corners seldom turn up illegally carried handguns. On occasion, drug crew members even call the police department's anonymous hotline to report corrupt police officers who pocket seized drugs or cash for their own use. Given all of this, it would be a profound mistake to assume that because even heavy police pressure cannot stop widespread open-air drug dealing in East Baltimore, that the presence of law enforcement there makes no difference (ibid).

As we have seen throughout this dissertation, in the City of Gateway there are tens of thousands of unauthorized apartments and other living spaces, along with countless permanent yard sales, front yard clothing bazaars and auto repair shops, and metal recycling plants, all of which are prohibited by municipal ordinances. But unlike the myriad well-documented cases throughout the Global South or in the United States, some of them discussed in Chapter 2, where autoconstructed communities flourish in the absence of the state's enforcement apparatuses, in the City of Gateway extralegal housing and other economic activities take place *in plain view* of the people employed by the state's (in this case, the local state's) enforcement functions. As with drug dealing in East Baltimore, the market for informal housing is shaped by the local state's (unsuccessful) efforts to suppress it. The aim of this chapter is to describe how.

Smart (1999) offers a five-part classification scheme that seeks to differentiate the reasons that illegal and extralegal activities persist in the face of

continued action by the state to suppress them.[1] Drug dealing in East Baltimore fits into his category of *market persistence*, in which the continued demand for a good or service undermines the state's efforts to control the market. This explanation fits in some ways with unauthorized housing units, which are also, after all, subject to continual demand and officially prohibited by land use codes enacted and enforced (at least occasionally) by the local state. But Smart's category of *ambiguous persistence* fits better: it includes "cases where an activity is illegal, but usually tolerated, or only occasionally and situationally repressed" (ibid., p. 104). His distinction between market persistence and ambiguous persistence maps closely onto the distinction between illegal activity (eg., crack dealing) and extralegal activity (eg., installing an unpermitted addition to a house).

Smart goes on to note that for activities, such as unauthorized housing processes, that fit into the ambiguous persistence category, "the response of toleration is related to the transaction costs of monitoring and controlling very large numbers of small-scale transactions" (ibid., p. 104). This chapter aims to demonstrate, in detail, that in the course of carrying out these myriad "small-scale transactions," as Smart calls them, in the course of their duties, City of Gateway code enforcement officers inadvertently shape the informal housing market along the way. As we will see in Chapter 8, the striking absence of issues concerning informal housing from the local political sphere can be in part explained by Bayat's (2000) notion of the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary;" in a curiously parallel way we will see in this chapter that code enforcement quietly encroaches on the informal housing market until it assumes a shape quite different from what it would in the absence of enforcement. Lipsky, in his seminal study of "street-level bureaucrats," a category that includes code enforcement officers, observed that "when taken together the individual actions of … [street level] workers become, or add up to, agency policy" (Lipsky 1980, p. 3). Thus, by examining the actions and beliefs of code enforcement officers, we gain insight into the local state's *de facto* policy towards the informal housing market, even if it cannot be found in any written documents.

Accounts of code enforcement work in planning and related disciplines have been largely nonexistent. For instance, Mahler's (1995) study of the *encargado* system of informal housing provision via subleasing to immigrants in impoverished pockets of Long Island describes landlord and tenant motivations and patterns of behavior but makes no mention of code enforcement. One notable exception is Valverde's exploration of the relationship between diversity and municipal law in Toronto (2012). But the portion of Valverde's study that deals with code enforcement has a somewhat narrow focus on the difficulty of interpreting ordinances, such as noise laws, and their relationship to cultural understandings in modern cities.

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[1] Smart's schema does not make the distinction, as I do, following Castells and Portes (1989), between *illegal* and *extralegal* (or *informal*) activity. (See the preface and Chapter 2 for fuller discussions.)

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Another notable exception, and one perhaps more similar to my project in its focus on an informal housing market, is by Fairbanks (2009). His comprehensive description of the so-called "recovery house" movement in Philadelphia devotes a portion of a chapter to answering the question, "Why does Philadelphia's code enforcement department not close down the network of recovery houses, even though it would be relatively logistically simple for it to do so?" Fairbanks' ultimate explanation most closely matches the third type of persistence of illegality (or in this case, extralegality) in Smart's (1999) five-part schema, *managed persistence*. Here, the state benefits from the extralegal activity and makes at most token efforts to control it. In the case of recovery houses in Philadelphia, their continued existence in spite of their noncompliance with zoning codes saves the city's elected leaders from the embarrassing spectacle of 5,000 to 10,000 recovering drug addicts suddenly being made homeless (Fairbanks 2009). Thus Philadelphia code enforcement managers fail to shut down an informal housing market simply because they effectively never try to do so. In the City of Gateway, the story is entirely different.

Plan for the chapter and methodology

In the remainder of this chapter, I put forth a set of propositions about the relationship between code enforcement work and the informal housing market that have emerged from a dialogue between my empirical work in Southern California and pre-existing academic studies. The propositions build on each other in a logical sequence. In other words, a proposition, if true, would serve to bolster the next claim, which in turn would bolster the next, and so forth. Along the way, as findings emerge from the propositions about how code enforcement in the City of Gateway shapes the informal housing market there, I highlight them. In the conclusion of this chapter, I summarize and reflect upon these findings.

While, as previously mentioned, relatively little scholarship has focused on code enforcement, I rely in this chapter on pre-existing scholarship on "street level bureaucrats," or other government workers who have daily contact with members of the public as representatives of the state's efforts to discipline them or ration benefits (Lipsky 1980). The literature on police work is a particularly relevant comparison, since patrol officers, like code enforcement personnel, are charged with enforcing compliance with the law, and interact with the public while out in the community and away from their headquarters. Both the congruencies and divergences between code enforcement and police work are illuminating and are highlighted throughout this chapter. In addition, the predominant *recipients* of code enforcement and policing differ in ways that are revealing. Many of the findings in this chapter derive from a juxtaposition of homeowners, members of a relatively privileged group that interact most with code enforcement officers, with young, low-income men of color, who have borne the heaviest burden of intensive policing, particularly as the nationwide "War on Drugs" gathered force over the past several decades.

Finally, my own empirical contribution is derived from two primary sources. The qualitative component consists of a series of interviews and "ride alongs" with

code enforcement officers, both within the City of Gateway and in nearby locations. In addition, I joined an online forum for California code enforcement officers, which enhanced my understanding of the profession. The second, quantitative, aspect is a survey of code enforcement officers from throughout Southern California. (Both methods are described in Chapter 3.) Findings from these sources are considered in tandem, and in dialogue with the literature on police and other street-level bureaucrats.

Officers Face Numerous Constraints on their Enforcement of Codes Against Residential Property Owners

In theory, one might expect that code enforcement in residential areas would be a simple matter. After all, it would seem, the physical configurations of 1-4 unit properties, and the uses to which their owners put them, either comply with zoning codes or they do not. This would then suggest that property owners whose properties are out of compliance would face swift consequences in the form of fines or sanctions brought by code enforcement officers, and that they would therefore have a strong incentive to conform to the relevant codes.

In practice, the code enforcement officers charged with enforcing compliance with zoning and other codes face a multitude of constraints that, at a minimum, reduce the number of cases that they can address and, in some instances, prevent them from bringing enforcement actions altogether, even where a clear violation exists. These constraints are reviewed below in turn.

Protections for people occupying private space

In police work, the 1968 Supreme Court case *Terry v. Ohio* has for decades given police departments legal cover for a broad interpretation of the circumstances under which their officers can stop and search people in the public realm whom they suspect of engaging in criminal activity (typically the carrying of weapons or other contraband such as illegal drugs). (Moskos 2009.) As Herbert (1996) perceptively notes, much day-to-day police patrol activity unfolds via the exertion of power over human bodies in space, as in, for example, telling a drunken individual to "move along," ordering the occupants of a loud party in a park to scatter, or forcibly detaining a suspected criminal on a public street and bringing him to a confined space, i.e. a jail. So-called "*Terry* searches" provide police officers with a versatile and powerful tool with which to control and influence the movement and conduct of individuals whose bodies are physically present in the public realm.

In code enforcement, by contrast, most or all enforcement activity is directed against persons occupying private spaces to which they have privileged access, if not outright ownership. In code enforcement work, as in police patrol work, gaining entry to private property without the occupants' consent in cases where there is no imminent threat to health and safety entails securing a warrant from a judge, a time- and paperwork-intensive procedure.[2] While it is certainly true that it is often

[2] It is certainly true that some police patrol work takes place on private property, as when police are called to close down a loud house party, for example. Conversely, in some

possible for code enforcement officers to suspect a code violation, such as a garage that appears to be inhabited,[3] on the basis of what they can see from the public street, in other instances even investigating the suspected condition (deriving, for instance, from a complaint from a neighbor) requires gaining access to private property.

What is more, code enforcement officers must abide by an *expectation of privacy in the private realm*, which means that they cannot act on conditions that they see if they see them using vantage points that are considered intrusive. For instance, if a code enforcement officer were to visually gather evidence of an improperly inhabited garage by peering over an 8' fence while standing on a milk carton in a neighboring yard to which she had been granted access by the property owner, a judge would rule that the officer had violated the suspected homeowner's expectation of privacy. This would result in the judge refusing to grant a warrant to enter the offending property, thus preventing the officer from acting on her hunch. For similar reasons, code enforcement officers cannot rely on satellite imagery from such widely available sources as Google Maps as a legal basis for initiating an enforcement action, even if visual evidence of extralegal conditions is obvious when seen using such tools. (This is made abundantly clear in the aerial photography and Sanborn map analysis summarized in Chapter 5.)

All of my interview respondents reported that in the majority of instances, homeowners willingly grant access to their properties to code enforcement officers who request entry. However, a sufficiently determined, hostile and empowered homeowner can greatly increase the time and difficulty of an enforcement action brought by a code enforcement officer. One of the effects of these dynamics, in addition to increasing the burden on code enforcement officers and their departments, is to ensure that a large share of the extralegal buildings and occupancy conditions on private residential properties in the City of Gateway are out of view as seen from the public street. Thus, in a very real way, the expectation of privacy that constrains code enforcement work is a major driver towards the *horizontal density* that characterizes the urban form of vast swathes of urban Southern California, including the City of Gateway. (For more discussion on the broader implications of horizontal density, see Chapter 5.) Put differently, code enforcement affects the physical shape that the informal housing market takes on the ground.

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jurisdictions code enforcement officers are called upon to enforce prohibitions or regulations on activities that take place in the public right-of-way, such as street vending. Nevertheless, most patrol officers have the majority of their interactions with community residents in the public realm, while code enforcement officers work mainly, and in some jurisdictions entirely, on private property.

[3] Several of the code enforcement officers detailed to me some of the "tricks of the trade" that they use for identifying garages and other outbuildings that they suspect are inhabited. These include blatant signs such as vents and satellite dishes on the sides of garages and sheds, and obstructions in the driveways leading to garages. More subtle clues include garage door handles that have been caulked or painted over, chandelier-style lights visible through garage windows, and bathroom shower-style windows (generally placed high on a wall for privacy) installed on a garage.

Physical danger

Code enforcement work, in addition to requiring the "emotional labor" needed to constantly deal with sometimes wary or hostile members of the public, entails an element of physical danger (Hochschild 2012). In this regard, it shares some similarities with police work, an occupation that carries a high rate of physical injury or worse. Patrol officers must be constantly aware of their surroundings, particularly when on patrol in high-crime areas, because the greatest sources of danger tend to arise unexpectedly amidst apparent calm and placidity (Herbert 1996).

While code enforcement work is certainly considerably less dangerous than policing, some of its risks are similar. Code enforcement officers, including those operating in high-crime areas, spend hours per day driving, usually alone, and in some cases in their personal vehicles, in residential areas during times when there are few people on the streets. In addition, most carry neither weapons nor police radios that would allow them to quickly call for assistance in the event of danger.[4] They are called upon to confront homeowners, or worse, people on their properties with unknown relationships to them, who in some cases are hostile to and suspicious of representatives of the local government. The hidden conditions that they seek to investigate can sometimes yield unpleasant surprises. Two LA County code enforcement officer described to me the feelings of claustrophobia and menace that they experience as they drive down narrow alleys, flanked by (unpermitted) high fences, in Florence-Firestone and Willowbrook (Figure 7.1).

Some code enforcement departments and divisions have responded, in recent years, to threats to officers' safety by formalizing interdepartmental arrangements that both increase safety and improve interagency cooperation. For instance, starting in the late 1990s in unincorporated East Los Angeles in response to dangers posed by local gangs, Los Angeles County began to dispatch multiagency groups, known as Nuisance Abatement Teams (NATs), to visit the most problematic, and potentially hazardous, properties. Today NATs operate in all unincorporated areas, even those with relatively low crime rates. On a visit to a property for which access to code enforcement officers has been denied and violations are suspected, sheriff's deputies (i.e., the local police for Los Angeles County) or District Attorney investigators will, for the sake of the safety of the other team members, make the first entry into a property. Once they deem it to be safe, they are followed by a building inspector, a health inspector, a code enforcement officer, and in, some cases, an animal control officer.

[4] Some California code enforcement officers, particular those employed by public safety departments, carry police radios, batons, handcuffs, and tasers, although this is relatively uncommon. In at least one case, in the City of Compton, code enforcement officers employed by the LA Sherriff's Department carry handguns on duty. But in most jurisdictions, code enforcement officers are unarmed.

Figure 7.1. An alley in unincorporated Willowbrook, flanked by high, unpermitted fences. Even in daylight, such spaces can carry an atmosphere of desolate menace for the code enforcement officers who traverse them. (Photo by the author.)

The NAT teams are viewed as a successful model by the code enforcement officers that I interviewed. While I rode along in Florence-Firestone with a code enforcement officer who works in the area, and as we passed a group of five young men dressed in the colors and attire of a local street gang, he remarked, "Gangstas, just chilling on the corner. That's why we work with the DA investigators, because five guys hanging out on a Friday morning looking like gangstas—that's no good." Even so, unexpected dangers can still emerge even with police protection at hand. For instance, a different LA County code enforcement officer that I interviewed recounted having once been bitten by a loose pit bull, one of many present on a property he was visiting with a NAT. The dog had to be shot by one of the sheriff's deputies who was present, and the officer with the bite had to be immediately taken to the hospital to receive painful injections to ward off the risk of contracting rabies.

The effect of the dangers that code enforcement officers sometimes face is that investigating certain problem properties is inadvisable, or at the very least more difficult. For instance, one code enforcement supervisor that I interviewed stated that he orders all of his subordinates, with no exceptions, to leave Florence-Firestone by 4:30 pm, because of gang-related conflicts endemic in the area. He also asks all of the officers that he supervises to report their whereabouts to him at the beginning and the end of each day, for reasons of concern over their well-being. Where NAT teams or similar arrangements are needed—as is the case for 90% of the visits to properties carried out by the aforementioned supervisor's officers—large amounts of municipal government resources, in the form of time expenditure

by a multitude of highly trained personnel, must be deployed. Paradoxically, this means that in precisely the locations where the unmet backlog of properties demanding code enforcement is at its highest, it is hardest to clear.

The need to follow proper procedures

A code enforcement officer's ability to take action against a noncompliant homeowner is constrained by the need to follow sometimes onerous procedures. A quote from an LA County officer about the sequence of steps he follows when enforcing a restriction on an unauthorized housing unit on a residential property makes this clear:

> Our cumbersome enforcement process itself is a constraint for us. We send a first NOV [Notice of Violation] typically giving 30 days to abate [i.e., for the homeowner to remove the offending unauthorized unit.] Next we send a certified Final Order giving 15 days to abate plus an additional 15 day appeal period. Now the violation has continued [past the original 30 day notice period] for 30+ days. We continue to do rechecks and if the vios [violations] remain we send a certified Noncompliance Fee notice giving 15 days to pay [the] $704 fee. By the way, anytime a certified notice is returned undelivered we have to recreate it and post it at the property. More time drag. Now the case has been open for 45+ days. Whether or not they [the homeowners] pay, they still have to abate, and if they don't we send a DA Referral notice. But now we have to write a lengthy report to the DA and include all the evidence, all the while trying to juggle new complaints, other cases, and the multitude of other planning projects we handle. So cases can drag on because violators don't see swift action from DRP. These protocols are built into the zoning code so we have no choice but to follow. Violators have the advantage.

Procedures also impede officers' efforts to build a case against the homeowner that could prevail in court. Although most cases end with voluntary compliance by the property owner and do not end with a court hearing, it is nevertheless vital for the officer to gather evidence in such a way that it would hold up if the case were to be contested. According to an attorney who specializes in law pertaining to code enforcement in Los Angeles, including in jurisdictions within the City of Gateway, photographic evidence "speaks with the strongest voice" in a courtroom, and is the most crucial for a code enforcement officer in building a case. Photos used for evidence must have been taken in the proper manner, including conformance with the expectation of privacy discussed above, to be admissible in court. For instance, code enforcement officers must receive permission from the property owner to take photos while standing on private property.

In many instances, however, photos are insufficient. In the case of unpermitted *uses* of space on a residential property, the code enforcement officer must painstakingly collect evidence showing unauthorized use of built space. An example from an affluent Orange County city recounted by a code enforcement officer, who works on a contract basis for various Southern California municipalities, makes this clear.

The officer received a complaint, from a neighbor, about a homeowner allegedly operating an unpermitted bicycle repair business out of the garage of his attached townhouse. The relevant question was whether the homeowner was in fact running a business, or simply acting as a bicycle hobbyist, as he claimed. He was savvy about how to, in the words of the officer, "game the system," realizing that the "burden of proof is on us [code enforcement]." Although the complainant sent the officer numerous photos purportedly showing unpermitted business activities, the officer realized that they did little to disprove the homeowner's steadfast claim that vehicles and bicycles seen in the vicinity of his garage belonged to his "biking buddies." Definitive proof that the homeowner's bicycle repair activities were profit-oriented, and thus unpermissible, rather than hobby-related and therefore allowed, was difficult to conjure. Upon assessing the state of the evidence, the officer eventually decided that it was not sufficiently compelling to persuade the District Attorney's office to bring the case to court, and consequently he closed the file.

Another code enforcement officer, working for LA County within jurisdictions inside the City of Gateway, noted that residents living in unpermitted garages are often well aware of the times during which code enforcement officers work—typically only regular weekday daytime hours, since the County limits the costs of paying overtime to its code enforcement employees. These residents exercise great caution when coming and going from their garage apartments during those times, while leaving and departing freely during other times. Another, more elaborate but still common strategem for evading detection of garage apartments involves building a finished wall several feet behind the garage door. From a distance, this gives the illusion that an open garage door opens into an empty garage.

The net result of the need to follow procedures, gather evidence that meets the needs of overloaded District Attorney staffers, and participate in the "cat and mouse" game played between code enforcement officers and property owners and their guests and tenants, is an inherent disadvantage for code enforcement. This stands in strong contrast to the decades-long "War on Drugs" policy regime imposed on states and local police departments by the federal government and abetted by a steady erosion of suspects' rights in a string of Supreme Court decisions, beginning with *Terry v. Ohio* but including numerous others. Whereas there has been a vast increase in the rate of drug-related arrests and imprisonment nationwide (Moskos 2009; Alexander 2012), code enforcement work continues, by and large, to labor amidst procedural restraints that significantly hold the volume of its activities in check.

County departmental balkanization

Another constraint to code enforcement activity in the City of Gateway applies only to its unincorporated jurisdictions in Los Angeles County, and not to the City of Gateway's incorporated cities. Whereas some of LA County's governmental functions, such as the public health system and the network of safety net hospitals, serve all of the county's approximately 10 million residents, including those that reside within incorporated cities, others are limited to unincorporated areas. Code enforcement falls in this latter category. As a result, some county code enforcement

officers work in territories scattered over long distances. What is more, coordination with other county departments is made difficult because county offices are distributed over a large area. By contrast, in a typical small city, including all of the incorporated cities within the City of Gateway, almost all municipal functions are combined at a single location, within a City Hall or in a municipal office building immediately adjacent to it.

This scattering of functions by territorial responsibility and department location has consequences. For instance, inspectors from LA County's Building and Safety department, which is charged with enforcing adherence to building codes, are required to check with code enforcement officers to ensure zoning compliance before they issue permits for residential additions or new structures on residential properties. Conversely, code enforcement officers sometimes must delve into records that physically reside at Building and Safety in order to determine whether additions to a residential property are permitted, since the county assessor's records (for the purpose of property taxation) make no distinction between permitted and unpermitted space. Physical separation of these departments makes such coordination more cumbersome than it would be in a typical incorporated city. For instance, LA County code enforcement officers working within the City of Gateway and working out of the county's location in unincorporated West Athens would face a 20 minute drive (assuming no traffic congestion) to reach Building and Safety's detailed records in downtown Los Angeles.

Until the late 1990s, Building and Safety frequently issued permits for apartments built within garages without checking for zoning compliance with the planning department (which contains the code enforcement section). Today, these permits are legally "vested" and cannot be rescinded, despite their lack of compliance with zoning regulations.[5] Thus, a legacy of past departmental balkanization has contributed to an enormous reservoir of legally ambiguous garage apartments that persists today. Ironically, the improved coordination between code enforcement and Building and Safety that occurred in the late 1990s as a result of computerization has made it impossible, in almost every case, for homeowners to obtain permits for even soundly built garage apartments, since they can virtually never obtain zoning permission from planning. This has therefore driven a sharp increase in the number of garage apartments that lack permits of any sort, thus further increasing code enforcement's workload.

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[5] In LA County, as in most incorporated cities in southeast Los Angeles County, conversions of existing detached garages to living quarters almost always conflict with the zoning ordinance's prohibition of inhabited space on the property's "side setback" (i.e., the portion of the property within a specified distance of its neighboring parcels on each side), and often the rear setback as well. Because the typical physical arrangement in the City of Gateway is for a single-family house's garage to be fed by a side driveway, with rare exceptions it is usually physically impossible for a garage apartment to comply with zoning. Garage conversions further violate the zoning code in many cases because they eliminate the covered parking required in residential zones in Los Angeles County and in most other Southern California cities.

The structural imbalances in code enforcement effectiveness between incorporated cities and LA County have consequences within the City of Gateway. While noncompliant conditions, including unpermitted housing units, exist in residential neighborhoods throughout southeast Los Angeles, what could be termed the most egregiously noncompliant conditions tend to accumulate within unincorporated areas. Ride alongs with LA County code enforcement officers provided several examples: second story residential additions in unincorporated Willowbrook, which are visible from the street and are almost unknown within incorporated cities; plainly visible unauthorized rear yard structures in Florence-Firestone; a makeshift, unpermitted retail store on a mostly industrial street in Willowbrook; and the sudden disappearance of unauthorized metal recycling plants as one crosses from the west side of South Alameda Street, in unincorporated Florence-Firestone, to the east side, in the City of South Gate (Figure 7.2). If we heed Ananya Roy's reminder to focus on the question of "what kind of informality?" instead of merely asking "formal or informal?" in urban scholarship, it becomes apparent that the dichotomy between LA County and incorporated cities influences the degree of adherence to official zoning codes (Roy 2005). In other words, whether a neighborhood in the City of Gateway lies in unincorporated LA County or within an incorporated city influences the very shape of its (extralegal) urban fabric.

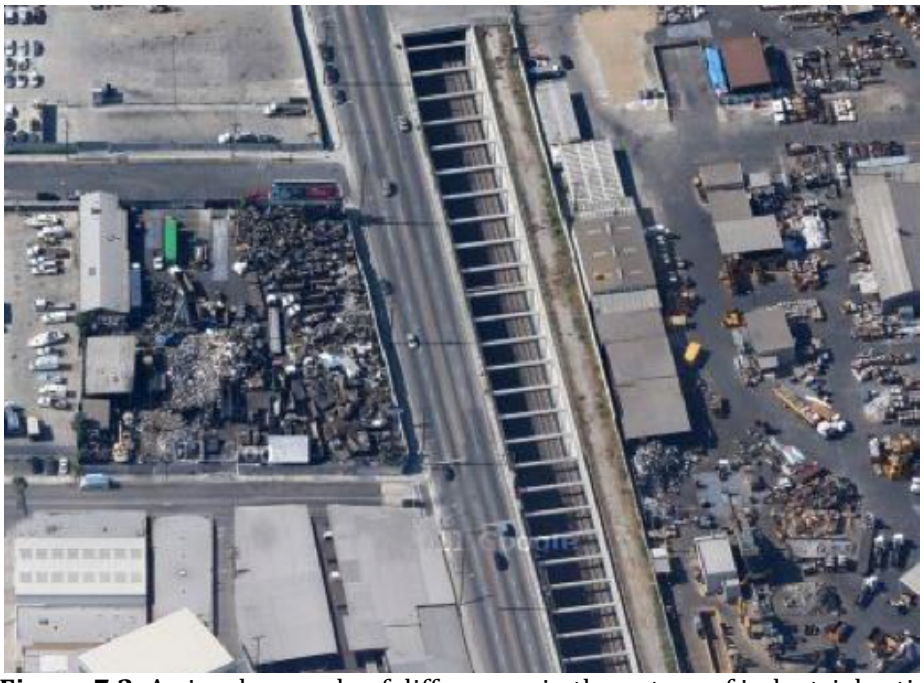

Figure 7.2. A visual example of differences in the nature of industrial activity across a municipal boundary line resulting from differing levels of code enforcement. Contrast the small, crowded, and non-zoning-compliant industrial business within Florence-Firestone in unincorporated Los Angeles County (left) with its large, spacious, code-compliant neighbor in the City of South Gate (right). (Source: Google Maps.)

Homeowners are a Relatively Privileged Group Within the Local Community

Herbert notes that "many analysts of the police have pointed out … an implicit class bias [built] into police patrol; because lower-class, often minority, people spend more time in public space, they receive more police attention" (Herbert 1996, p. 50). His observation sets up an instructive contrast with code enforcement, whose activities concerning residential property are entirely concerned with people occupying private, not public space. What is more, even within very low-income areas in the City of Gateway, such as unincorporated Willowbrook or the City of Bell, the people on the receiving end of code enforcement actions on residential properties are, relatively speaking, part of a privileged subpopulation: homeowners. Code enforcement, in that regard, therefore offers a striking contrast with police officers, and with street-level bureaucrats as a whole, in that the profession deviates from Lipsky's dictum that "the poorer people are, the greater the influence street-level bureaucrats tend to have over them" (Lipsky 1980, p. 6).

While many homeowners are low-income in the City of Gateway, and while in recent years many have come to have negative household wealth as a result of being financially "underwater" (i.e., owing more on their mortgages than their homes are worth), they still embody a set of privileges as seen within the context of their local communities. Unlike the overwhelmingly low-income people, mostly young men of color, swept up in the nationwide "War on Drugs," and filling the nation's burgeoning prisons over the past few decades as a direct result, the objects of much of the attention of code enforcement officers are often accustomed to a level of deferential treatment. Even aside from homeowner-driven local politics, which influence policies that affect residential neighborhoods, and which are discussed in Chapter 8, this simple fact has limiting effects on how code enforcement officers do their work.

The primacy of homeowners in North American communities is not restricted to the City of Gateway. The legal studies scholar Mariana Valverde has noted that "the welter of restrictive rules concerning the types of housing used by poor people and/or people who do not live in family households differs in its details from one municipality to another, but the moral-legal hierarchy that puts nuclear families living in single-family detached homes at the top is the same" (Valverde 2012, p. 118). She further points out that "the planning literature does not seem to have acknowledged that the key term 'residential,' in municipal law and municipal practice, means 'family living,' with other types of households being tolerated only if they can prove that they resemble or emulate a nuclear family" (ibid., p. 117). This has been true dating back at least as far as the seminal 1926 US Supreme Court decision of *Euclid v. Ambler*, which irreversibly laid the legal foundation for municipalities to regulate land use via zoning regulations.

Given this backdrop, one might assume that deviations from the "residential" (i.e. single-family detached house) ideal, including multiple units on the same lot zoned for single-family houses, or unrelated boarders sharing space with a nuclear or extended family, would be vigorously suppressed. But there are powerful and counterposed forces, also grounded in the mythical status of the homeowner of the

(allegedly) single-family house, that serve to deflect or even neutralize these tendencies. Foremost amongst them is deference towards the presumption that a homeowner accused of a zoning violation has the right to use her property in any way that she sees fit (what might be termed the "my home is my castle" doctrine). In Chapter 4, building on existing scholarship (principally Nicolaides 2002), I argued that deeply-rooted historical particularities dating back to the original subdivision and settlement of the City of Gateway a century ago make this ethos even stronger there than elsewhere in the United States. Thus, the widespread American tendency to vigorously maintain the "residential" neighborhood as a homogeneous enclave unsullied by multifamily properties is, in the City of Gateway, at least partially offset by deference to the (allegedly) offending homeowner's right to use her property as she chooses.

Furthermore, the preponderance of ostensibly "single family" houses (in terms of zoning if not in actual fact) in the City of Gateway predate the widespread incorporation of newly built small-lot single-family house subdivisions into *homeowners' associations (HOAs).* HOAs constitute a fully privatized layer of de facto sublocal government that rapidly spread throughout California and elsewhere, particularly fast-growing Southern and Western metropolitan areas, beginning in the 1970s (McKenzie 1996). A code enforcement officer familiar with many jurisdictions in Orange County stated that unauthorized dwelling units are highly unlikely to arise within subdivisions governed by HOAs, due primarily to the tendency of such entities to tightly enforce both their own restrictions and city zoning ordinances. But because only a miniscule portion of single-family houses in the City of Gateway are governed by HOAs, as indicated by the age of the housing stock (and as discussed in Chapter 4), the potential of HOAs to stiffen the spine of code enforcement efforts in this region is largely absent.

The deferential treatment that homeowners receive from the local state after being accused of zoning violations—either by neighbors reporting to code enforcement officers or by the officers themselves—manifests itself in several ways. First, every code enforcement officer with whom I spoke, both those operating within the City of Gateway and in Orange County, emphasized "compliance" as their typical objective in interactions with homeowners. As an LA County code enforcement supervisor put it, "we're not out there like parking attendants," i.e. they are not under pressure to levy fines or other punitive mechanisms on homeowners for every violation. Rather, fines and other coercive actions are just several means among many in service of the larger goal, which is for homeowners to bring their properties into broad compliance with applicable codes over a reasonable length of time. Behavior modification, rather than retroactive accountability for past transgressions, appears to be the typical watchword.

While code enforcement departments vary in their organizational cultures, generally homeowners are given repeated opportunities to bring their properties into compliance, with multiple warnings and lengthy periods between them. As mentioned earlier, these procedures are written into zoning codes. Under them, homeowners are not usually treated as presumptively guilty, as has been well documented with those most likely to be stopped, frisked, or arrested by the police in high-crime neighborhoods (Alexander 2012). There appears to be no equivalent

in code enforcement work to the "asshole," or the suspected lawbreaker who directly challenges the authority of a police officer and as a result invites retribution via extra-legal, and violent, "street justice," as recounted in a classic study of police work (Van Maanen 1978). The code enforcement officer has no practical means of harassing or physically harming a homeowner, even one that is highly disruptive to his neighbors, in the moment, and instead must patiently build a case against him and go through a sequence of legal procedures, often unfolding over months or even years, before any official punitive action, such as fines or jail time, can be imposed.

According to the aforementioned attorney who specializes in code enforcement legal work in and around the City of Gateway, there is an additional consideration for the minority of code enforcement cases that go to trial. Juries are likely to have at least some sympathy for a homeowner faced with enforcement actions impinging on how she uses her home, arguably much more so than in a typical case of, for instance, a young black man pulled over while driving his car and found to be in possession of a small amount of marijuana.[6] As a practical matter, it is frequently difficult for a District Attorney's office to prevail in a code enforcement case in court against classes of homeowners that are the most sympathetic to jurors, such as elderly widows or people with disabilities. For this reason, DA offices often refuse to pursue such cases, even where clear zoning violations exist, that are brought to their attention by code enforcement officers. And perhaps this is as it should be: as Lipsky notes, "Society seeks not only impartiality from its public agencies but also compassion for special circumstances and flexibility in dealing with them" (Lipsky 1980, p. 15). Whether or not such actions and inactions on the part of prosecutors are appropriate, they exert an influence on the shape of the informal housing market.

It is worth noting that there is no shortage of mechanisms that local governments, via the courts, can use to extract money from recalcitrant property owners in order to reimburse them for staff and legal costs and, in extreme cases, reimbursement for demolition or cleanup costs. According to the attorney active in code enforcement mentioned previously, judges have the authority to appoint receivers in civil court cases against homeowners.[7] The receiver oversees the process of extracting money from the homeowner or the homeowner's property, is compensated from the proceeds, and is therefore not a drain on the court's nor the local government's budget. The receiver has the authority to place a lien on the property. But that is not all: if a lien is not sufficient, cities can elect to garnish the

[6] As Alexander (2012) and many others have observed, most drug cases never go to trial, and are plea bargained before they do. This is partly because of the suspects' lack of access to adequate legal representation, but the fact that most accused drug offenders appear unsympathetic to juries surely plays a part in the leverage that prosecutors normally have to extract a plea bargain.

[7] According to my interview respondents, the vast majority of code enforcement cases that reach the courtroom are civil cases. Criminal charges are generally only pursued in extreme instances, such as when non code-compliant conditions on a property result in deaths in garage fires. Though such cases are rare, they have generated intense publicity in the Los Angeles region in recent decades, as discussed in Chapter 8.

homeowner's wages; report him to a credit agency; use a credit agency to attempt to collect the overdue fines and legal costs; enact a special property tax assessment on the property; or even intercept federal income tax refunds via a request to the Internal Revenue Service.

Alexander (2012) and others have noted that one of the mechanisms that has perpetuated and intensified the War on Drugs has been the ability for local police departments and state and federal law enforcement bodies to keep assets, such as cash, guns, cars, and even properties, seized from suspected drug traffickers, and use them or auction them to fund their own operations, even in the absence of a criminal conviction, through civil forfeiture. No analogue exists with code enforcement; in the small minority of cases that result in court-appointed receivers pursuing homeowners, the recovered funds, if any, are applied only to compensation of the third-party court-appointed receivers, payment of fines and reimbursement for legal costs, and, in the most extreme instances, repair or demolition of hazardous properties. Even then, no cost recovery occurs until after a trial has taken place, a stage that is reached only following a great deal of investment in staff time by the municipality.

The ability to extract funds from noncompliant homeowners, therefore, is far more limited than it is from suspected drug dealers, and does not facilitate an expansion of code enforcement functions. Even so, it does represent a fairly potent set of powers that local governments possess. At the very least, a lack of funds available for pursuing non-code compliant homeowners need not, in theory, be a constraint on local governments' efforts to force them to bring their properties into harmony with zoning and other codes. The fact that, according to all of my interviewees, such instances are relatively rare and generally reserved for the most egregious violators speaks volumes about the generally lenient treatment by cities of homeowners, particularly when compared to people accused of drug-related crimes.

Code Enforcement Suffers from Low Prestige

A consistent theme repeated by my code enforcement officer interviewees was the relatively low public profile and prestige of the profession, both among the public and when compared to other professions, such as planning and particularly police work. In a group interview with several Los Angeles County officers, all of whom had received master's degrees in planning from well-respected universities, the respondents all stated that "health and safety stuff"—in other words, the province of code enforcement—was considered mundane and beneath discussion in the academic settings where they had done their graduate studies. In addition, one of their colleagues was denied certification for the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) professional credential because code enforcement was deemed to not qualify as professional planning work by the American Planning Association (APA), which administers the AICP program.

A building inspector working for a predominantly working class city in Orange County noted that recruitment for code enforcement work can be difficult, particularly since City Council members and others frequently criticize enforcement officers for being too strict *or* too lenient. "It's like being a traffic cop," he noted. Too

much enforcement, and officers are accused of being overly punitive and out of step with community norms; too little, and they are accused of being insufficiently diligent and of allowing poor neighborhood conditions to fester.

Numerous discussion threads in 2012 and 2013 in an online forum for California code enforcement officers also revolved around the theme of low public visibility and prestige for code enforcement, and the need to better educate the public about the quality of life benefits that officers' work yield.[8] A quotation anonymously received via the Code Enforcement Survey from an officer employed by a mostly blue-collar city in Los Angeles County is revealing:

> This profession is highly political. I wish that I could speak to you more openly but we have been hit hard with layoffs and do not enjoy the same prestige or value that public safety has. We are at-will employees that must always remember that when carrying out our jobs. The general public does not understand that we ARE public safety as well. We enforce building codes, fire codes, health codes and are the only department that handles quality of life issues. We must always be aware of our public image, sometimes deal with the media, deal with irate citizens and inspect potentially dangerous properties alone. We do not receive the same training as public safety does.

As both a consequence and a cause of the low visibility of code enforcement, it is placed within highly varying institutional structures in Southern California cities and counties. As can be seen in Table 7.1, a summary of the types of departments in which respondents to the Code Enforcement Survey worked, there is no consistency about where code enforcement fits within a municipal government. Interview respondents emphasized that the character that code enforcement takes on within a given city depends greatly on the type of department within which it is housed. For example, code enforcement officers working within public safety departments are thought to frequently take on a no-nonsense, enforcement-oriented outlook.[9] By contrast, those working within community development or quality of life departments would be expected to take a softer approach. While such institutional flexibility allows code enforcement to be tailored to the individual character of a given city or county, it also contributes to an amorphous character to the profession, in which its mission and raison d'etre—in strong contrast to a police department, for instance—are poorly defined.

The low-visibility, low-profile nature of code enforcement has at least two consequences that influence many jurisdictions' inability to achieve widespread compliance with zoning and other codes, both of which are reflected in the previous quote from the officer working in a blue-collar LA County city. These are a propensity towards political interference, and chronic understaffing commensurate

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[8] The online forum is restricted to members of the code enforcement profession in California. I asked for, and received, permission to join the forum from the moderator while being open about my identity and my intentions as a researcher.

[9] Within the City of Gateway, only the Cities of Huntington Park and Paramount house their code enforcement functions within public safety departments.

with what would be needed if widespread code compliance were to be taken seriously by the political leadership. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

Table 7.1. Share of Code Enforcement Survey responses by type of department employing the respondent. The wide distribution of types of city or county departments housing code enforcement functions is apparent. Note that separate responses received from more than one officer working for the same jurisdiction are only counted once in this table.

Type of department	Share of survey responses (n=98)
Building	5%
Development Services	8%
Economic/Community Development	40%
Housing	1%
Housing and Neighborhood Development	1%
Planning	28%
Public Safety	4%
Public Services	2%
Public Works	3%
Quality of Life	6%
Resource Management	2%
Total	**100%**

Political interference with code enforcement

An officer who formerly worked for an incorporated city within the City of Gateway noted that city politicians interfere with code enforcement work to a far greater extent than they do with the police, whose independence from city politics tends to be jealously guarded, and demanded by voters. The attorney specializing in code enforcement work stated that a jurisdiction's enforcement approach depends a great deal on its political "temperament." In other words, the code enforcement profession appears to be seldom insulated from the political priorities of local elected officials. As the code enforcement officer working for a city in Los Angeles County quoted previously suggests, public safety functions such as fire and police departments, while not immune from political interference, are likely to be more protected as a result of their greater levels of prestige amongst the general public.

Political interference appears to be quite common based on results from the Code Enforcement Survey. Of 108 responses received from identifiable Southern California jurisdictions, 97 respondents answered a question about whether or not they would prefer for there to be more, less, or the same volume of enforcement activity taking place in their jurisdiction. Of the 97, 43% thought that current levels of enforcement were "about right," a majority of 55% thought that there should be more, and only 2% thought that there should be less. The 55% who thought that there should be more enforcement were then asked why there is not more: among these, the second and third most commonly stated reasons were pressure from elected officials and their staff (30%) and pressure from the leadership of the respondent's own department (13%). (See Table 7.2.) Thus, while it cannot be said that political interference is ubiquitous in Southern California, it certainly appears to be common.

Table 7.2. The reasons cited by Code Enforcement Survey respondents for why there is less code enforcement activity carried out by their department than they would prefer. Only respondents who had previously indicated that they would prefer to see more enforcement activity in the jurisdiction for which they work were posed this question. Respondents could select multiple answers, which explains why the responses do not add up to 100%.

Reason for less code enforcement activity than respondent would prefer	Share (n=53)
Lack of staff capacity	81%
Pressure from elected officials or their staff	30%
Pressure from department leader	13%
Prefer not to say	8%
Pressure from staff from other departments	2%
Other	25%

Efforts by elected officials to influence code enforcement activity take different forms, unfold for differing reasons, and have varying levels of legitimacy. For example, several Los Angeles County respondents cited Gloria Molina, a Los Angeles County Supervisor whose electoral district includes Walnut Park within the City of Gateway, as one politician who has made it clear that she wants enforcement efforts to soft-pedal enforcement actions against unpermitted dwelling units. Instead, her staff members have urged code enforcement supervisors within her electoral district to emphasize other priorities, particularly unauthorized metal recycling centers, auto shops, and other industrial uses with major air quality impacts on neighborhoods. Respondents believed that Molina is sensitive to a common perception among her voters that the local government should not harass homeowners nor take actions to reduce the low-cost housing stock, even at the cost of allowing unpermitted residential spaces to persist.

According to widely recognized best municipal management practices, elected officials should interact with the appointed city manager to make their priorities known, thus insulating code enforcement supervisors and officers from contact with them and leaving them free to do their work according to their official mandates.[10] In practice, as is widely known, local elected officials routinely meddle in specific planning efforts and projects and do not confine their influence peddling to high-level matters of policy (cf. Fulton and Shigley 2005). Intervention in code

[10] For example, a quote from the 1944 Model City Charter, Article II, Section 11: "Except for the purpose of inquiry, the council and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the city manager and neither the council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinates of the city manager, either publicly or privately." (National Municipal League 1944.)

enforcement matters, then, while no one's idea of a best practice in local governance, is neither unexpected nor abnormal. It does, however, greatly affect the shape that local code enforcement takes, and is consequential to the informal housing market in the City of Gateway.

Other forms of interference by politicians in code enforcement are more egregious but likely less consequential because they are more situational. One concerns favoritism for elected officials or their family members or associates. For example, an officer who formerly worked for an incorporated city within the City of Gateway reported that on two occasions, file folders pertaining to enforcement cases connected to properties owned by relatives of City Council members inexplicably vanished. When he mentioned the disappearances to his supervisor, each time he was warned to keep quiet about it. In both cases, the underlying code violations were eventually corrected, but with no administrative record to document them having ever existed.

Most egregiously of all, City of Bell Councilmember Nestor Valencia told me that there had been an extensive history in that jurisdiction of code enforcement being used as a tool—one of many—by past city council members and other corrupt city officials to discipline and threaten political rivals. Bell has become infamous in Southern California for political corruption and malfeasance, although similar dynamics are well-documented in other City of Gateway jurisdictions. (Political corruption and its effects on the housing market are discussed at length in Chapter 8.) Under such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine a code enforcement division operating according to any set of carefully delineated priorities or objectives.

While such conduct as that in the City of Bell, of the forms of political interference described here, is arguably the most troubling, it is also limited to particular jurisdictions undergoing bouts of political corruption during particular periods. Even if it or other misconduct connected to politicians' personal venality were to vanish, interference with code enforcement functions from elected officials would likely still persist as a result of the political incentives that spur city and county elected officials to placate their constituents.

Chronic understaffing in code enforcement work

As shown earlier in Table 7.2, by far the leading reason (cited by 81% of the respondents to this question) for a shortfall in enforcement as perceived by the officers themselves was a lack of staff capacity. As Lipsky (1980) demonstrated, chronic understaffing is a systemic feature of public bureaucracies, since public demands for public services tend to escalate in concert with the public resources available to provide them. For our purposes here, the questions are how large is this understaffing, what is its geographical pattern, and what are its consequences for the informal housing market?

A question in the Code Enforcement Survey asked respondents how many Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees, including both field-based code enforcement officers and supervisory staff, work in their departments. Although such data are prone to inaccuracy and mistaken impressions on the part of respondents, in the frequent absence of freely available personnel data for many cities they provide at least a picture of staffing levels for code enforcement departments. As can be seen in

Table 7.3, there is no clear pattern in the metric of residents in the jurisdiction per full-time code enforcement employee according to the jurisdiction's median family income[11], although as might be expected the poorest quintile of jurisdictions have on average significantly (32%) less coverage per capita than the richest quintile.[12]

Table 7.3. Staffing levels in the code enforcement departments that employ respondents to the Code Enforcement Survey. As is apparent, there is no clear pattern with jurisdiction median family income. Note that multiple responses from the same jurisdiction are averaged into a single data point in the shown in this table. Median family income data is from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey. (U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011c.)

Median Family Income quintile of respondent's Jurisdiction (2007-2011 ACS)	Average residents per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) code enforcement employee (thousands)	Number of jurisdictions
Lowest	27,200	10
2nd	17,900	20
3rd	28,000	14
4th	23,500	17
Highest	18,400	14
	Total	**75**

It is possible to engage in some informed speculation about the causes of the pattern observed. For instance, the low level of code enforcement staffing in the poorest quintile of jurisdictions seems unsurprising given these jurisdictions' overall level of distress, intense focus on the most pressing local issues, including violent crime and fiscal distress brought on by the Great Recession, and in some cases, propensity for egregious mismanagement and political corruption (as seen recently in the City of Bell). What at first blush seems counterintuitive is the high levels of staffing for second quintile localities—still places where most families are economically strapped—which exceed those for the highest-income jurisdictions.

Upon further scrutiny, the high level of staffing in second quintile jurisdictions can be assigned some plausible explanations. For instance, an interview with the code enforcement supervisor for the City of South Gate revealed that this city uses federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies to partially fund its code enforcement functions. Usage of CDBG funds for this purpose rests on a designation of a community as one suffering from blight. If we apply

[11] The urban historian Becky Nicolaides suggested median family income as an indicator of a jurisdiction's predominant socioeconomic makeup (Nicolaides 2013).

[12] While it was straightforward to look up the median family income for incorporated cities in the 2007-2011 ACS, assigning median family incomes (MFIs) to unincorporated areas covered was less straightforward. To do so, I relied on responses to a question in which I asked survey respondents what their territory was. From this, I assigned officers to Census-Designated Places (CDPs, or unincorporated communities) and then calculated an overall MFI as the population-weighted average of the MFIs for the CDPs covered by the officer. Where I could not reconstruct the officer's territory, I used the overall MFI for the entire unincorporated area of the county.

Pastor's (2013) typology of *Latino suburbs* in southern California (described in Chapter 4), a *middle class* or *working class* Latino suburb might be expected to prioritize code enforcement over affordable rental housing production as a use for flexible CDBG funds. By contrast, a *struggling* Latino suburb such as Maywood, with a recent history of solidarity-based local politics emphasizing the rights of its unauthorized immigrant inhabitants, might not (ibid.; Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido 2011).

As will be apparent in the following section, second quintile jurisdictions have levels of residential zoning noncompliance that are almost as high as the poorest cities and county jurisdictions, but likely with greater internal staff capacity and political support available to implement more well-funded, well-staffed code enforcement functions. It is therefore plausible that they combine the desire and the ability to deploy stringent code enforcement. In middle class and upper-middle class communities in the third and fourth quintiles, it could well be the case that decreasing levels of zoning noncompliance combined with the lack of eligibility of local CDBG funds for code enforcement purposes both reduce the urgency of code enforcement and eliminate a key mechanism for funding it. In addition, many third and fourth quintile communities have newer housing stock than first and second quintile jurisdictions, and therefore are more likely to have a higher share of housing units governed by HOAs.[13] As previously discussed, HOAs are much less likely than a city code enforcement department to tolerate unauthorized housing units in their midst.

Finally, while some fifth quintile cities are newer, exclusive residential suburbs with high HOA coverage, others are older communities that occupy extremely valuable locations, such as beachfronts, where the market pressures on homeowners to carve units from their properties and rent them to strangers for the highest possible rents is high.[14] It should be further noted that even if jurisdictions' code enforcement staffing differs to a lesser degree than expected on the basis of income, the nature of the functions they perform varies significantly. A well-staffed code enforcement department in a wealthy, suburban city with many palatial estates may strictly enforce minor code violations such as noncompliant paint colors on a house that a poor, crowded municipality in the City of Gateway would ignore in the face of attempting to cope with widespread unauthorized housing units, home businesses, metal recycling plants, yard sales, and other highly visible violations of zoning and other codes. In other words, a level of staffing that would be adequate for officers working in the wealthy city might appear totally inadequate to their counterparts in the poor city.

On the basis of the discussion above, we can surmise that in part due to the low profile of code enforcement, the departments that provide these municipal

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[13] The 27 first and second quintile cities represented in the responses to the question about department staffing levels have a housing stock with a median age more than five years older than that of the 30 third and fourth quintile cities. (US Census Bureau 2007-2011b.)

[14] See, for example, Hubler (1990a and 1990b) for examples of media coverage documenting this phenomenon in the affluent beachfront cities of Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach in the early 1990s.

services are frequently understaffed. Furthermore, we can speculate that the poorest jurisdictions are much more likely to be chronically understaffed than the richest. They are also more likely to contract out their code enforcement staff, with the consequence that people who perform these duties have fewer opportunities for advancement in their careers and less job security. Thus, for these reasons, where code enforcement is most needed—at least from the standpoint of those who wish for zoning and building codes to be strictly enforced—it tends to be least available.

In addition, the low profile of code enforcement likely contributes to these services being least available *when* they are most needed, at least from the point of view of people in favor of increased enforcement. Six respondents to the Code Enforcement Survey, all but one of whom were employed by jurisdictions in the first and second family income quintiles, volunteered, through written commentary, that their ability to do their work has been compromised, or soon will be, as a result of budgetary cutbacks connected to the Great Recession of the past five years. Hard choices during hard times by political leaders would be likely to favor core municipal functions, such as police protection, at the expense of seemingly optional "quality of life" expenditures, such as code enforcement. A quote from a code enforcement officer working in a low-income Los Angeles County city makes clear the likely effect on such communities:

> As the economy worsens [the planning and code enforcement departments] will continue to be excessively busy gaining control of [code violations] … Many [financially strapped homeowners] are walking away from [their houses] because they say they have no money since we now have interrupted their means to pay the mortgage [i.e., by forcing them to remove unpermitted units]. Adding structures and garage conversions are old news. Property owners are now subdividing their homes to rent the front half to a tenant and the back half to another. Or they are subdividing the rooms and adding multiple kitchens and restrooms. A home that [has] 3 bedrooms and 2 baths is now a subdivided home with 2-3 kitchens with closets converted to bathrooms, all in order to pay their mortgage. It will get worse.

In Low-Income Jurisdictions the Volume of Potential Enforcement Actions Overwhelms Capacity

A consistent and obvious theme that emerged from the interviews was that code enforcement officers, particularly those working in low-income areas, are faced with far more zoning code violations, even comparatively major ones such as garage conversions and unauthorized house subdivisions, than they can possibly address. Unsurprisingly, all of the factors discussed in this chapter up until this point that constrain the work of code enforcement officers contribute to this reality. This could be termed the "supply side" of what could be called the *code enforcement gap*, in which the "supply" of code enforcement capacity is greatly exceeded by the "demand" by local residents for enforcement to be done. But the demand side of the gap is equally formidable, especially within low-income jurisdictions. This is borne out by survey results.

In three questions in the Code Enforcement Survey, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of 1-4 unit properties in their territories for which i) at least one unauthorized dwelling unit was present; ii) overcrowding, as defined by any applicable local ordinance or state or federal law, occurred; and iii) non-compliant conditions (not just related to authorized dwelling units) of any sort were present. In Figure 7.3, the mean percentage of noncompliance estimates are shown according to the median family income (MFI) quintile of the city or unincorporated area in which the respondent worked. For all three questions, responses were well distributed amongst the five income quintiles. Response rates were relatively robust, though somewhat depressed for the question about overcrowding (with 74 responses compared to 89 and 91 for the other two questions); written feedback from survey respondents suggests that this is because many jurisdictions have no specific standards for what constitutes excessive occupancy of a residential space.

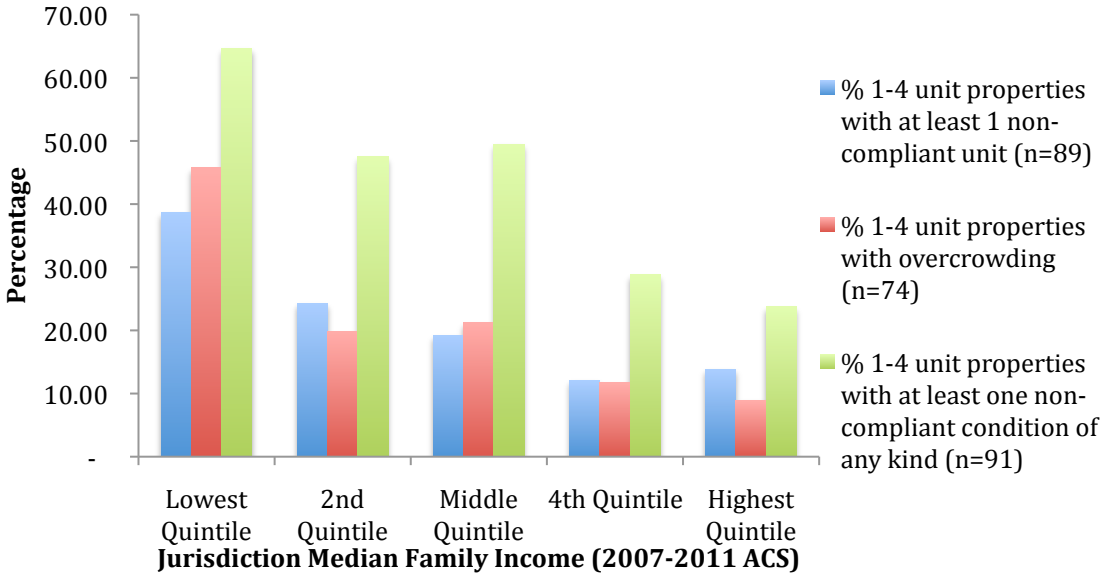

Figure 7.3. Percentages of residential (1-4 unit) properties estimated to have various non-code compliant conditions by jurisdiction Median Family Income. These figures are as reported by respondents to the Code Enforcement Survey. Multiple responses from the same jurisdiction are averaged together.

The results shown in Figure 7.3 (above) show a clear trend. While they are derived from estimates reported by code enforcement officers, and thus should be interpreted with due caution, there is nevertheless a striking downward trend in property non-compliance, measured in the three different ways, with increasing jurisdiction median family income.

To be sure, there are considerable fluctuations within each category. For instance, the average percentage of 1-4 unit properties with at least one

unauthorized unit in jurisdictions from the lowest median family income quintile is 39%, but the standard deviation is 27%, suggesting considerable variation.[15]

Pearson's r correlations between the estimated percentage of unauthorized units and other jurisdiction-level demographic and housing stock attributes demonstrate several statistically significant associations (Table 7.4). Many of these attributes, of course, are correlated with each other. But they do collectively begin to paint a picture of the types of cities and unincorporated areas in which unauthorized units seem to be most common: jurisdictions with large Latino population shares, low levels of owner-occupied housing, old housing stock, large numbers of immigrants who have difficulty speaking and writing the English language, and low MFIs.

Table 7.4. Correlations between the percentage of 1-4 unit properties estimated by code enforcement officers to have at least one unauthorized unit and jurisdiction-level population and housing stock attributes.

Jurisdiction-level attribute	Pearson's r correlation with estimated percentage of 1-4 unit properties with at least one unauthorized unit	p value
Average family size	+0.54	$< 10^{-8}$
Percentage Hispanic	+0.55	$< 10^{-8}$
Percentage of occupied units owner occupied	-0.25	< 0.05
Percentage of units built before 1960	+0.38	< 0.001
Percentage foreign born	+0.31	< 0.01
Percentage of population linguistically isolated	+0.47	$< 10^{-5}$
Median family income (MFI)	-0.34	< 0.001

The prevalence rates for unauthorized units, as well as other non code-compliant conditions, are very high in relation to the staffing levels that would be needed to address most of them via enforcement. Two survey questions sought to gauge this code enforcement gap in different ways, although the results are somewhat difficult to interpret. When asked what percentage of non-code compliant (for any reason) 1-4 unit properties they had addressed in any way in the last 30 days, the respondents (n=73) reported an average of 38%, a percentage that varies relatively little according to the income quintile of the jurisdiction. This suggests that the typical code enforcement officer has, at any given time, a backlog of just under two open cases concerning 1-4 unit residential properties for every one that she is actively pursuing in some way. Of course, this result tells us little about how large the officer's backlog is in relation to the *potential* number of cases. As will become clear in the next section, the vast majority of potential enforcement cases never gain the attention of the local code enforcement department.

The other survey question pertaining directly to the enforcement gap asked code enforcement officers to what extent staffing would need to be increased in

[15] Standard deviations are somewhat lower for the other four income quintiles, ranging from 20% for the second lowest down to 14% for the highest.

their department or division to substantially address their enforcement backlog. The average response was an increase of 123%, or more than a doubling of staffing. Again, the answers showed no pattern of variation by median family income of the respondent's jurisdiction. The average result is fairly close to being consistent with the response to the question described above (which would imply a needed increase of 163%), although the results from this question should be interpreted cautiously owing to a low response rate (n=49) and various written comments indicating that numerous respondents had difficulty interpreting the question. Still, this question's results add to the evidence from the previous section that code enforcement officers, including many working in high-income jurisdictions, feel overworked and unable to cope with the volume of potential enforcement cases that have been brought to their attention.

But what if code enforcement officers were charged with addressing non-code compliant conditions on *all* properties in their jurisdictions, not simply those that have been brought to their attention? How big would the enforcement gap be in that case? While it is not possible to answer this question definitively, a crude calculation using the prevalence rate of unauthorized units reported in the Code Enforcement Survey provides a ballpark estimate (Table 7.5).

This conservative estimate shows that if a hypothetical code enforcement department serving the entire City of Gateway were to focus on nothing but removing unauthorized dwellings, it could close down just over 8,600 per year. This would translate into more than three years of constant work to shutter the City of Gateway's entire current estimated stock of unpermitted units. This estimate—roughly a 208% increase in staffing capacity needed to close down all unpermitted housing in the City of Gateway—differs relatively little from the estimates of 123% and 168% constructed (via two different methods) from officers' responses to survey questions, as explained above.[16]

Of course, such a hypothetical effort to comprehensively suppress extralegal housing would necessitate ignoring all other enforcement priorities, including medical marijuana dispensaries and environmentally hazardous metal recycling plants, both of which are higher priorities to LA County elected officials according to code enforcement officers working for that jurisdiction within the City of Gateway. In addition, undoubtedly new unauthorized units would be installed during the crackdown period (although such a concerted crackdown would likely reduce the rate of formation of new dwellings). These results suggest that a total, or even substantial, disruption of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway is unlikely, barring drastic changes from present circumstances.

[16] The 123% estimate is likely lower because it pertains to the staffing increase that would be needed for officers to address enforcement cases *that have already come to their attention.* By contrast, the 168% estimate pertains to the total universe of 1-4 unit properties, including those with non-compliant conditions that have not been brought to code enforcement officers' attention. It is thus not surprising that the 168% estimate hews closer to the 208% estimate explicated in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5. Estimate of length of time needed for a complete code enforcement crackdown in the City of Gateway at current staffing levels. If a concerted crackdown on unauthorized units in the City of Gateway were to occur, how long would it take with current code enforcement staffing levels? According to the estimate below (which includes explanations of the methodology), it would take 3.1 years.

Row	Value	Quantity	Formula/Source
A	Housing units in City of Gateway	181,613	(1)
B	Estimated 1-4 unit properties in the City of Gateway	69,713	(2)
C	Unauthorized unit prevalence rate	38.6%	(3)
D	Estimated number of unauthorized housing units on 1-4 unit properties	26,909	B*C (4)
E	Population in the City of Gateway	708,671	(1)
F	Residents per one code enforcement officer	27,175	(5)
G	Hypothetical number of code enforcement officers in City of Gateway	26.1	E÷F
H	Assumed number of street-level code enforcement officers per manager	10	(6)
I	Hypothetical number of managers	2.61	G÷H
J	Hypothetical number of street-level code enforcement officers in City of Gateway (street level), rounded down	24	G-I
K	Rate at which code enforcement officers are assumed to address unauthorized units, per month	30	(7)
L	Rate at which hypothetical City of Gateway code enforcement officers could close down unauthorized units, per year	8,640	J*K*12 (8)
M	**Number of years needed to close down all unauthorized units in the City of Gateway**	**3.1**	

Sources/Justifications

1. Chapter 4.

2. GIS analysis using LA County geospatial data.

3. Average estimated by code enforcement officers for jurisdictions in first median family income quintile. Within the City of Gateway, the City of Bellflower is the only locality that is above the lowest quintile, and only by about $3,000.

4. Conservatively assumes no properties with more than one unauthorized unit.

5. Average staffing level for jurisdictions in first MFI quintile from Code Enforcement Survey.

6. Conservative estimate based on interviews with code enforcement officers.

7. Rough middle point between two estimates provided by Code Enforcement Survey respondents.

8. Assumes that 1) no additional unauthorized units are created during the crackdown period; and 2) all enforcement efforts are directed solely to closing down unauthorized units.

Van Maanen (1978) wrote about the intimacy with which a police patrol officer comes to know her beat. In like fashion, code enforcement officers told me, and demonstrated, that as a result of keeping their "boots on the ground" (in the words of one) they similarly develop a deep knowledge of the communities in which they spend the majority of their working hours. For this reason, the disparity

between the potential for enforcement of violations, including serious ones and what officers are actually able to address—what I have been calling the code enforcement gap— is, in many places at least, entirely apparent to those officers. In the words of one survey respondent commenting on an inability to enforce unauthorized dwelling units, "Solutions aren't always readily available—high housing costs drive the issue." This, of course, begs the question of how code enforcement departments and individual officers cope with workloads that are much greater than they can hope to keep up with.

Many Code Enforcement Departments Cope with High Caseloads and Political Pressure by Emphasizing Maintaining Order Over Enforcement

All of the code enforcement officers that I interviewed, in addition to a great many of the survey respondents providing comments, highlighted the distinction between "proactive" and "reactive" code enforcement. In proactive enforcement, code enforcement officers drive on pre-determined routes and visually inspect, from the public street, the properties in order to look for clues to violations. If any are found that are sufficiently apparent, officers open cases on them and pursue them. By contrast, reactive enforcement entails investigating complaints that are made by other agencies and by members of the public, typically on anonymous telephone tip lines.

Most code enforcement officers tend to view proactive enforcement as an ideal state, and reactive enforcement as a lamentable concession to the realities of limited staff time and, in some cases, pressures from elected officials to soft pedal enforcement action. For instance, one survey respondent from a city in San Diego County, when asked why her/his department is not able to achieve as much enforcement activity as s/he would prefer, stated that it is "mostly because we are not proactive in our approach to code enforcement. For example, in driving around the city I can see garage conversions on virtually every residential block. But if we do not receive a complaint we do not pursue it."

None of the foregoing is to suggest that all cities, or even all low-income cities, have solely reactive enforcement regimes. For instance, the City of South Gate's code enforcement supervisor stated in an interview that each morning she agrees upon routes for her four supervisees to drive in order to perform proactive enforcement.[17] In addition, the city manager of the City of Cudahy reported that the city's one code enforcement officer does some proactive enforcement, although he is likely limited in his ability to do so considering his sole responsibility for enforcement in an economically distressed, densely populated city of just under

[17] The City of South Gate came up in interviews with several respondents as a city with a reputation for its aggressive approach to cracking down on unauthorized units. It is also locally known for the stringency of its required pre-sale inspections (discussed in Chapter 5), which homesellers must pay for and obtain before they can complete a sale of their property. As described in Chapter 4, in the 1980s and 90s South Gate used even more aggressive, though less likely less effective, tactics to combine the then-rising tide of garage conversions. See, for example, Leeds (1996).

24,000 (US Census 2010). In the City of Los Angeles, code enforcement officers based in the Housing Department seek to visit every apartment unit in the city every four years, although single-family houses, even those with unauthorized units, are tellingly excluded from these inspections.[18] LA County code enforcement officers reported that they perform proactive work pertaining to certain nuisances, such as abandoned cars and debris left behind on private property as a result of illegal dumping, but that sheer volume compelled them to take an almost entirely reactive stance towards housing enforcement. Overall, reactive code enforcement, in most places and most of the time, is the norm for enforcement, particularly for single-family houses, and particularly in low-income communities.

The contrast between proactive and reactive code enforcement approaches is suggestive of the distinction Wilson (1978) made between *law enforcement* and *order maintenance* in police work. The first is concerned with, to the extent possible, enforcing the laws on the books. The latter is instead concerned with maintaining order and resolving disputes in the community, even at the cost of overlooking a multitude of infractions of the law.

In his in-depth research on 1960s-era police departments throughout the US, Wilson (ibid.) identified three styles of management of police departments: the *watchman style*, which emphasizes order maintenance; the *legalistic style*, in which strict law enforcement is the aspiration; and the *service style,* in which police intervene frequently but often not formally. Because, as discussed earlier, code enforcement officers have relatively little ability to intervene in disputes in real time, thus perhaps ruling out the service style as a viable option, the watchman and legalistic styles, representing reactive and proactive enforcement, respectively, seem to be the main poles in code enforcement work.

The legalistic, or proactive, style of code enforcement appears to be more common in communities that are affluent, or that at least have high homeownership rates. In communities in the midst of a dramatic rise in the prevalence of unauthorized units and other non-code compliant conditions, as occurred for example in South Gate during the 1980s, the continued application of the legalistic style leads to extreme political tensions, disruption of neighborhoods, an erosion of trust between neighbors and between citizens and their elected officials, and widespread frustration over the ineffectuality of crackdowns. (This and similar episodes that took place in the City of Gateway, the City of Los Angeles, and elsewhere will be discussed in Chapter 8.) More commonly, and in some cases following a period of turmoil, the watchman or reactive style is the path of political least resistance for elected officials.

What are the implications for a city of adopting a reactive stance towards code enforcement work? Such a policy by a municipality is tantamount to a prioritization of maintaining order in disputes between neighbors over ensuring widespread compliance with zoning and other ordinances that regulate land use. In a completely unintended way, this shapes the very informal housing market that an

[18] In the City of Los Angeles, single-family residential properties are inspected by the Department of Building and Safety, which does reactive enforcement.

order maintenance approach effectively concedes cannot be meaningfully suppressed.

Where code enforcement is reactive, complaints become a vehicle through which code enforcement officers paradoxically uphold the norms of the underground housing market. In my interviews of officers, I heard repeatedly of disgruntled tenants, whether dissatisfied about the condition of their extralegal apartments or in conflict with the landlord over payment terms, making anonymous calls to tip lines knowing full well that enforcement could lead to their dwelling—and perhaps a portion of the landlord's livelihood—being physically dismantled. Meanwhile, although complaints by neighbors are rarer than one would expect given the pervasive presence of unauthorized units, as shown in Figure , anonymous complaints are one way for neighborhood residents to police the boundaries of behavior on the part of their neighbors who are acting as extralegal landlords.[19] By helping discourage extreme behavior, complaints actually help reinforce the widely understood legitimacy of the informal housing market.

Code Enforcement Officers Have and Use Discretion, With Widely Varying Consequences

> Formally, the police are supposed to have almost no discretion: by law in many places and in theory everywhere, they are supposed to arrest everyone whom they see committing an offense or, with regard to the more serious offenses, everyone whom they have reasonable cause to believe has committed an offense. In fact, as all police officers and many citizens recognize, discretion is inevitable—partly because it is impossible to observe every public infraction, partly because many laws require interpretation before they can be applied at all, … and partly because the police believe that public opinion would not tolerate a policy of full enforcement of all laws all the time.
> -- James Q. Wilson, Varieties of Police Behavior (pg. 7)

In his seminal study of the conduct of street-level police patrol officers, *Varieties of Police Behavior,* the criminologist James Q. Wilson made the observation that police work differs from most other vocations in at least one key respect (Wilson 1978). He noted that the level of discretion that police officers have concerning how to go about their duties at any given moment actually *increases* with

[19] Although most complaints are received over anonymous tip lines, complainants sometimes reveal themselves, at times openly and at times discreetly, to code enforcement officers once they open a case and are seen in the vicinity of the property with the suspected violation. Complainants often take it upon themselves to feed information to a code enforcement officer that they think might help bolster the officer's case. In other instances, officers relayed educated guesses to me about the true identities of anonymous callers.

decreasing position in a city police department's hierarchy.[20] Out on the street, acting alone or with one partner, the patrol officer, although operating under a multitude of job-related, cultural, legal and other constraints, has considerable latitude in deciding where to drive or walk within her beat, whether and when to respond to calls that come over the police radio, whether to use force or restraint in an interaction with a particular suspected lawbreaker, and much else.

One could swap the words "code enforcement officers" for "the police," "cite" for "arrest," "violation" for "offense" and "infraction," and "codes" for "laws," in the quote from Wilson reproduced and make an accurate statement about the discretion that code enforcement officers have and use. While subject to the constraints described throughout this chapter, and under pressure from their supervisors to attain "productivity targets," code enforcement officers nevertheless have a lot of choice about which items on their typically long list of citizen complaints to address, and about how to handle cases with which they engage.

Moskos (2009) and others have remarked on the arbitrariness with which a police officer patrolling a high-crime neighborhood, particularly one with myriad open-air drug markets such as East Baltimore, selects people upon whom to crack down. In some respects, the extent to which a code enforcement officer "shoots fish in a barrel" (to quote one of Moskos' respondents) is even more extreme than is the case in police work, because of the differing nature of the legal foundations of policing as compared to code enforcement.

The legal studies scholar Mariana Valverde notes that state and federal law, which police officers are sworn to upheld, rest on the English liberal tradition of John Stuart Mill and other 19th century political philosophers. Their underpinning is the "harm principle," under which a society's people are presumed to be free to go about their business however they see fit unless they are actively harming others (Valverde 2012). By contrast, municipal ordinances in US cities are drawn from a much older, pre-modern legal tradition that dates back to medieval Europe. Here there is no presumption that a homeowner is free to use her own property, to cite the example that is of most concern here, in any way that does not demonstrably harm others. Municipal laws ordinances tend to have an intrusive nature that is antithetical to how state and federal criminal statutes are designed, and that for the most part would not be tolerated in statutes by the broader public.[21]

Indeed, homeowners' properties in many cases are officially regulated to an almost absurd extent. No one is more acutely aware of this fact than code

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[20] Lipsky (1980) makes the same point regarding street-level bureaucrats in general, and notes the contrast with most other types of organizations, in which the workers at the bottom of the hierarchy have the least discretion.

[21] I must acknowledge here the statutes, court interpretations of individual constitutional rights, and aggressive policing practices that have made the War on Drugs highly intrusive, to say the least, from the vantage point of its erstwhile (actual and suspected) enemy combatants. Many commentators, such as Alexander (2012), view these developments as a worrisome departure from the harm principle in state and federal law. Not surprisingly, as Alexander and others have pointed out, those who feel their coercive effect the most are disproportionately people with little political influence, i.e. young, low-income men of color.

enforcement officers. One survey respondent wrote "If I had to I could observe code violations just about anywhere." Another acknowledged the lack of responsiveness of laws on the municipal books to contemporary realities by stating, "There is an incredible amount of work to be done if we 'go by the book' but we know the zoning code is outdated, so we focus on what we can abate given the capacity we have."

In addition, the laws themselves as written provide little guidance about their relative priority. For instance, one survey respondent noted that "in our zoning code an inoperable vehicle is treated the same as a converted garage … although both are violations, they are very different cases to work through. The non-compliance fee is the same for both, when it should not be." As Lipsky observed, "the proliferation of rules and responsibilities is only problematically related to the degree of discretion street-level bureaucrats enjoy" (Lipsky 1980, p. 14). Code enforcement officers must instead turn to a mixture of guidance from management, experience, their personal beliefs, and judgment when deciding what to enforce, where, and how. In effect, much of the time they apply a variant of the harm principle when making decisions about which potential enforcement targets to focus upon. But then the dynamic changes once a specific enforcement action formally begins, at which point the full weight of municipal law is brought to bear at a particular location.[22]

One interview respondent described what could be termed a "Pandora's Box" aspect to a code enforcement action once it has been opened. When a property is formally visited by a code enforcement officer—particularly when operating as part of a NAT team, or similar configuration, as described earlier—the discretion that she exercised (at least to some extent, and certainly with certain constraints) when selecting an enforcement target becomes curtailed, because there is now an obligation to record and act upon every violation that is seen upon entry to a given property. Selective enforcement could have legal repercussions: for instance, if a city code enforcement department were to visit a basement apartment and note hazardous conditions, such as a lack of an adequate escape route to be used in the event of a fire, and not take prompt action to correct it, the local government could be liable in a lawsuit in the event of a subsequent fire, property damage, injury, or loss of life. It could thus be said that while the local state's gaze cannot be easily averted once it sees something awry, there is a great deal of discretion regarding where it chooses to look. "See no evil, hear no evil" is a viable option, and a reasonable way to proceed under the circumstances.

One of Moskos' (2009) striking findings about police work is the relative lack of personal venality that he found in Baltimore City police officers, contrary to TV

[22] This is not to say that homeowners will be punished for every single violation that has been recorded. As noted earlier, the general objective of code enforcement officers is to ensure that they broadly comply with the spirit, not the letter, of the law. But generally speaking, every violation that is visible will be recorded and noted, to be used as a starting point for working out an agreement with the homeowner to bring the property into broad compliance over time.

show portrayals and common citizen perceptions about police.[23] This was particularly the case considering the frequency with which police officers come upon large quantities of money or other valuables seized from suspected criminals, which they could pocket without anyone else knowing. One of his explanations for the general lack of corrupt behavior was the high value of police pensions, often worth millions of dollars upon an officer's retirement, and officers' reluctance to jeopardize receiving them. While both the temptations for and the incentives against corrupt behavior for code enforcement officers do not rise anywhere near the level of those for East Baltimore police officers, nevertheless I heard precious little in my interviews about malfeasance amongst code enforcement officers.

Even if personal venality is rare among code enforcement officers, other highly idiosyncratic factors that vary among individuals can be relevant to local residents. For instance, one LA County officer told me that he feels great personal distress when he sees the stray dogs that frequently roam the streets of an unincorporated section of the City of Gateway, and this influences the cases that he pursues. He also stated that he prioritizes violations pertaining to poorly constructed buildings over yard sales, because the former are much more likely to result in deaths or injuries. By contrast, an officer that had formerly worked in an incorporated section of the City of Gateway, and who had grown up there, expressed distaste for the now-common practice of residents planting vegetables in front yards, even though no code prohibits it. With a great deal of discretion in how they do their work, it is likely that such personal beliefs and feelings condition officers' interactions with homeowners and other residents, and which potential cases they choose to pursue.

Much hinges on the personal self-identification of code enforcement officers, including their class and ethnic background, as well as their professional training. For instance, the aforementioned former City of Gateway officer who worked in the city where he grew up noted that although his supervisor did not require, reward, or even directly allow it, he found ways to refer people, evicted from garage apartments and other unauthorized living space that he had closed down, to social services and nonprofits. Some of this stemmed from his childhood experiences in the same city, during which he recalled his father opting to not to raise rents on financially strapped tenants of long standing living in rental units he owned. While this officer initially thought that referring evicted apartment dwellers to social services might lead to him getting fired, he learned how to do it discreetly. In addition, he speaks Spanish, which allowed him to communicate with, and perhaps better identify with, many of the people he was evicting. In many cases, he found

[23] Moskos in no way intends to imply that heavy-handed policing in impoverished neighborhoods in Baltimore lacks major deleterious consequences for those communities' residents. He argues quite the opposite, taking pains to note the structural violence done by the War on Drugs and its local implementation on inner city neighborhoods and their inhabitants. But he lays the vast majority of the harm done at the feet of structural forces conditioning the interaction between police departments and local communities, and comparatively little at the feet of inherent character defects of the police officers themselves.

ways to give soon-to-be evicted tenants time to find alternative housing arrangements, even though he could have had them removed much sooner.

This officer pointedly contrasted his approach with that of many of his former colleagues, who embodied a much more hardline mentality. For example, they did not attempt to conceal their disdain for unauthorized immigrants, and often assumed, without evidence, that monolingual Spanish speakers were unauthorized, even though immigration status is irrelevant to code enforcement work.[24] This informant reported that many of these hardline colleagues appeared to be motivated by a fear of increasing levels of code noncompliance in their own home neighborhoods in other cities, often stating "I wouldn't want this [violation of zoning code] next to *me*" or something similar. To the informant, this was unwarranted: "There's the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Anyone who works within the letter of the law would have to be mean and cruel."

A great deal about the outlook of code enforcement officers depends on the professional culture embodied by the department that employs them. For instance, a group of LA County officers told me that the County made a policy change during the 1970s towards emphasizing the hiring of new officers with educational backgrounds in city planning. All of the members of this group had themselves received bachelor's or master's degrees in planning, which they said affected their overall approach to their work. They viewed themselves as community problem-solvers, rather than enforcers, and they noted the personal satisfaction they derived from helping address non-code compliant conditions that were affecting safety and quality of life in the communities where they worked. They emphasized the importance of public outreach and education, and sought to attain what they called "voluntary compliance." I saw this approach in action, as I watched one LA County officer patiently prod an elderly, impoverished widow to remove enormous stacks of recyclable materials from her front yard. He expressed optimism that the homeowner would eventually bring her property into substantial compliance with codes prohibiting debris from being stored in front yards, but was willing to allow the process to unfold over a period of months.

As discussed previously, and as shown earlier in Table 7., the institutional setting of code enforcement functions varies greatly by locality. One would expect a code enforcement division housed within a public safety department, alongside city police and fire departments, to use different hiring criteria and to impart highly divergent cultural norms and expectations for conduct compared to one situated within a quality of life department. As Wilson observed concerning police work:

> The patrolman is neither a bureaucrat nor a professional, but a member of a *craft.* As with most craft, his has no body of generalized, written knowledge nor a set of detailed prescriptions as to how to behave—it has in short, neither theory nor

[24] In a recent exception, a Dallas suburb passed an ordinance imposing criminal penalties on landlords who rent to unauthorized immigrants. As of the time of writing, the ordinance has been struck down by a federal appeals court, and its fate remains uncertain (Koppel 2013). The intrusion of immigration crackdowns into code enforcement, however, is recent and remains extremely rare, and in any case is unknown in Southern California.

rules. Learning in the craft is by apprenticeship, but on the job and not in the academy" (Wilson 1978, p. 283).

As with police work, one would expect that the decisions that code enforcement officers make regarding how to employ their discretion are strongly shaped according to the culture of their employer, although as we have seen diverse outlooks can also exist amongst the code enforcement officers working in the same department. What is quite clear is that whether a homeowner with a suspected or actual unauthorized unit experiences disciplinary action from the local state, and how it turns out, depend a great deal on where she lives. It may also depend a great deal on who happens to knock on her door.

Conclusion: How Code Enforcement Shapes the Informal Housing Market

Southeast Los Angeles looks nothing like the *colonias* found on the outskirts of small Texas border cities, let alone like the *favelas* that dot the peripheries and hillsides of Brazil's cities. The City of Gateway differs from other places with large informal housing markets in kind, not just degree, and the presence of code enforcement activity (which is largely absent, for different reasons, in *colonias* and *favelas*) is a substantial part of the reason. While code enforcement does not halt the informal housing market in southeast Los Angeles—far from it, as we have seen in this chapter—its pressure molds it into a shape that it would not otherwise have. Below I briefly summarize some of the specific ways in which this molding process unfolds.

First, code enforcement *affects the physical concretization of the informal housing market* in the City of Gateway. Garage conversions, backhouses, occupied sheds, and subdivided main houses, all of which are difficult to detect from the public street, are common. Recreational vehicles parked on residential lots and used as quasi-permanent housing, take advantage of the ambiguous status of vehicles, straddling the divide between housing and transportation. Other arrangements—such as filling in the front yard with living or commercial space and adding unauthorized floors to houses—that are commonly seen elsewhere in the world, and that are easy to see from the public realm, are much rarer, if not wholly unknown, in the City of Gateway. The result is the *horizontal density* that characterizes large swathes of the Los Angeles region, and which is particularly pronounced in the City of Gateway. Even though the area has a population density that matches that of famously urban cities, many of its blocks continue to project the image, as seen from the street, of rows of modest single family houses with modest front yards.

Second, extralegal housing in the City of Gateway *varies by degrees.* Where code enforcement is more robust, extralegal housing is not absent but takes forms that are less divergent from the idealized image of the street lined with single-family dwellings. For instance, several houses on a block may have garage conversions, or an unauthorized rear addition, or separate back houses. In areas with less enforcement, conditions become more extreme: on some streets in such areas, the majority of properties may have extralegal units, and many have more than one

apiece. More extreme methods of packing dwellings onto a property, and keeping their rents down, appear, such as the conversion of a former family house into a de facto bunkhouse, or the placement of sheds barely big enough for a single bed as sleeping quarters. (See Chapter 5 for a description of the different physical forms that extralegal housing takes in the City of Gateway.) The impacts on the local neighborhood become unavoidable rather than easily ignored: street parking is completely filled at night, water pressure in household plumbing fixtures becomes inconsistent, and sewer mains become overwhelmed and frequently break down.

Third, enforcement activity directed against the informal housing market in the City of Gateway *varies across municipal boundary lines.* In some cities, such as Bell following the recall of the entire former city council and the conviction of the former city manager, Robert Rizzo, for embezzlement, enforcement is weak; in others, such as Huntington Park, it is more vigorous (despite the almost identical median family incomes of the two jurisdictions). While enforcement is uneven within larger, more socioeconomically diverse cities such as Long Beach and Los Angeles, the incorporated municipalities within the City of Gateway are relatively small and in at least some cases quite homogeneous. Thus, in the City of Gateway, jurisdiction matters a lot; code enforcement outcomes are grafted onto the extremely fractured structure of local government. This effect is further magnified by the incorporated city-unincorporated county area dynamic, in which structural differences make delivery of all municipal services, including code enforcement, more spotty in unincorporated areas than they would otherwise be. The result is that like a fluid, the most extreme forms of extralegal housing, of the sort described in the previous paragraph, pool into areas that metaphorically lie the lowest from the standpoint of stringency of enforcement, and municipal government capacity more broadly.

Fourth, code enforcement functions in the City of Gateway paradoxically *help maintain the informal order of the informal housing market.* Because, as we have seen, most (though not all) code enforcement departments in the area prioritize order maintenance over truly comprehensive enforcement, property owners have a built-in incentive to maintain cordial relations with tenants and neighbors. As a result, in many cases a code enforcement officer enters the scene not as a result of the existence of extralegal housing arrangements, but after some sort of transgression of the informal norms underpinning those arrangements has occurred. The threat of attention from code enforcement then becomes a counterbalance to the power that landlords wield over tenants who lack the typical legal protections for renters, and to the power that landlords have to negatively impact the quality of life of their neighbors.

Fifth, as a result of a combination of agency (the discretion exercised by code enforcement officers) and structure (the departmental cultures that result in the hiring, training, disciplining, and socialization of officers), *culture and identity matter greatly in the interaction between code enforcement officers and landlords and tenants in the informal housing market.* How a landlord or tenant is treated may well depend on her immigration status, command of the English language, race and ethnicity, educational background and other factors in relation to the self-identification of the officer with whom she comes into contact. For instance, one Los

Angeles Times article from 2009 was suggestive of highly divergent perceptions about recent crackdowns on garage apartments between African American and Latino homeowners in Compton (Garrison 2009).

Finally, because the threat of code enforcement activity encourages landlords to keep their activities relatively clandestine, and to project the public image of an upstanding single-family homeowner, it helps *suppress organizing of extralegal landlords to advance their common interests in the public sphere.* This contributes to the dynamics discussed in Chapter 8, in which efforts to advocate the interests of extralegal landlords (and perhaps also their tenants), such as proposals to loosen the land use laws that officially prohibit their activities, are strikingly missing from local politics in the City of Gateway. This stands in marked contrast to the experience in many informal settlements in Latin America, many of which have wielded significant collective political clout through organizing of their residents, even though they initially lacked formal titles to their land.[25]

[25] For example, see Ward 1999 for a contrast of the high levels of political organization among *colonia* dwellers on the Mexican side of the Mexico-Texas border compared to the Texas side. See also Holston 1989 for an in-depth description of the political organizing that allowed informal settlements outside of Brasilia to gain formal recognition from the state.

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Chapter 8: The Curious Absence of Informal Housing from the Political Sphere in the City of Gateway and Its Causes

In January of 2014, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who at the time of writing represents a vast district that includes Willowbrook, East Rancho Dominguez, and Florence-Firestone, received unwelcome attention from the Los Angeles Times. A series of articles scrutinized recent county-funded security personal upgrades to Ridley-Thomas's home office, at his property in Leimert Park in the City of Los Angeles. They revealed that the office was located in a garage that had been converted into habitable space without permits some 20 years before, before the Supervisor bought his home (Pringle and Leonard 2014a; Pringle and Leonard 2014b; Pringle and Leonard 2014c). Furthermore, the contractors hired by the county had performed their security upgrades without receiving a permit from the city. Ridley-Thomas came under withering criticism for having occupied extralegal space at his own home when only a year before he had upbraided county code enforcement via Twitter after visiting a converted auto mechanics shop that had burned, killing a mother and child (Pringle and Leonard 2014c). In addition, Ridley-Thomas had been instrumental, as a Los Angeles city councilmember almost two decades before, in launching a high-profile and ultimately failed effort to change city policy towards garage conversions, which had earlier killed eight people in two high-profile fires.

The episode concerning Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' home in Leimert Park largely receded from the media spotlight once Ridley-Thomas secured permits to bring his home office into compliance with city zoning requirements. The permits were for building a carport to replace the required covered parking the home office provided when it was a garage, and for demolishing a 94 square foot portion of the structure (ibid).

While, in the end relatively inconsequential, this incident is illustrative of several aspects of the local politics of extralegal housing, which is the subject of this chapter. First, extralegal housing is an issue that at times, particularly in the wake of well-publicized incidents, can cause tempers to flare, although for the most part it simmers beneath the surface of public discourse. Second, the public discussions that surround it focus on the personal culpability of those who maintain unpermitted space, and seldom delve into the structural conditions that bring it about as a widespread phenomenon. Finally, policy solutions focused on extralegal housing tend to focus almost exclusively on interrupting the market via enforcement and forcing compliance on the part of those who are found to be afoul of the law.

Plan for the chapter

This chapter begins by arguing that *law and order* is the predominant frame through which discourse on informal housing is channeled through the news media in the City of Gateway, contributing to the primacy of enforcement-oriented actions as largely the sole local policies that are pursued. Activism by those who benefit

from extralegal housing, which could provide alternative discourses and policies, is largely nonexistent. The next section explores the reasons specific to the City of Gateway for the narrow law and order discourse and the absence of activism surrounding unpermitted housing. Next ensues a discussion of the more general reasons that could apply beyond just the City of Gateway.

Afterwards, a section reviews four debates that occur on the local level that indirectly concern extralegal housing by dealing with its side effects. These are on affordable housing (via state-mandated Housing Elements), the degradation of water and sewer networks, on-street parking shortages, and school overcrowding. Finally, a brief conclusion summarizes this chapter's findings.

Methods

I have employed three primary methods in this chapter. They are as follows:

i) *Interviews.* I contacted the city managers and councilmembers of all 10 City of Gateway jurisdictions for which email addresses were listed online, requesting interviews. This resulted in interviews with city councilmembers from Bell and Huntington Park, as well as with the city manager and housing director of Cudahy. In addition, this process resulted in me being referred to the longtime code enforcement manager and chief building official of South Gate, both of whom had insights into South Gate municipal politics.

ii) *Newspaper coverage.* I searched online archives of the Los Angeles Times, Southern California's newspaper of record, for all stories dating back to 1985 that contained references to the 14 communities comprising the City of Gateway. Of these articles, I examined those that had relevance to extralegal housing and its political effects.[1]

iii) *Housing Element analysis.* I reviewed the latest available versions of the state-mandated and approved general plan elements, known as Housing Elements, that serve as statements of housing policy for California local governments for the 11 jurisdictions in the City of Gateway.

Law and Order as Informal Housing Discourse and Policy Motivation

For at least the past three decades, informal housing has received ample media coverage in the Los Angeles region, including within the City of Gateway. In a self-reinforcing cycle, these media reports have both chronicled and helped motivate the policy responses that local governments have taken towards

[1] It is certainly true that other publications have covered the local politics of City of Gateway communities. Systematically examining them, while undoubtedly valuable for future research, was beyond the scope of this project. During the time period I examined, many of these publications ceased publication or were absorbed into others, part of a major restructuring of local news coverage that occurred in southeast LA (Hogen-Esch 2011). I focused on the LA Times because of its longstanding role as the leading newspaper of record covering the entire Los Angeles region.

unpermitted living spaces and the people living in them. However, while news coverage has focused on a variety of places and from a variety of angles, in almost all cases there is an underlying frame of *law and order* that underpins how extralegal housing and its associated policy responses are presented. This, in turn, has constricted local governments' policy responses to extralegal housing to, in most cases, just two: code enforcement crackdowns and the imposition of presale requirements. The wider range of discourses and policy responses that could exist, and that indeed do exist in other parts of the world, simply are not in evidence from local media coverage, nor from the decisions that local governmental bodies take.

The purpose of this section is to document and describe the discourse of law and order as it relates to extralegal housing. It begins by reviewing the history, over the last three decades, of law and order discourse and policy actions by local government. Next, it dispenses with one possibly tempting but false explanation for the constricted discourse in the City of Gateway, namely political apathy among the most affected populations. This section closes with a brief discussion of what discourses about extralegal housing other than law and order might look like, and what policy responses *could* result from them, but largely don't in the current City of Gateway. The explanations for constricted law and order discourse are left to the next two sections.

Extralegal housing crackdowns since the mid 1980s: variations on a consistent theme

A review of Los Angeles Times newspaper articles concerning informal housing in the City of Gateway over the past three decades reveals a consistent pattern of local government *crackdowns.* A crackdown, in this context, refers to an instance where the decision-making bodies of local governments have instructed their code enforcement departments to, in some way, increase their enforcement actions against extralegal housing above and beyond the baseline of these departments' routine activities. Crackdowns can unfold via instructing code enforcement officials to emphasize enforcement against extralegal housing at the expense of other priorities; securing funding to add staff and other enforcement capacity; and through other means. Because they target homeowners, long thought of as members of the class of local citizens treated with the most deference, crackdowns merit explanation.

Crackdowns, ultimately, are the result of local political decisions that supersede the routine operation of code enforcement agencies—staffed largely by nonpolitical, civil service employees—that are described in Chapter 7. They are particularly feasible for local elected officials to implement in cities that are small, geographically compact, and that have at-large city council representation, as is the case for 9 of the 10 incorporated jurisdictions in the City of Gateway. In such places, there is a clear and visible connection between politicians' crackdown initiatives and observable results, while responsibility is simultaneously diffused among five city councilmembers.[2] While the motivations underpinning crackdowns vary, as

[2] The one exception among City of Gateway incorporated jurisdictions is Compton, which has its own city charter that provides for a directly elected mayor and four councilmembers,

recounted in the individual episodes recounted below, they all serve to reinforce the rhetoric of law and order.

In the City of Paramount, extralegal housing crackdowns were justified, beginning in the mid 1980s, as a means of fostering *economic development*. At the time, city officials were eager to help Paramount recover from population loss, deindustrialization, displacement as a result of the recent construction of the I-105 freeway, and the stigmatization resulting from a Rand Corporation report that had labeled Paramount as a "disaster area" suburb (Ryon 1985; Fernandez, Pincus, and Peterson 1982). As part of a strategy to lure investment to Paramount, elected officials approved a program that analyzed every property, whether commercial or residential, in the city for code compliance. Landowners, including homeowners, found to be out of compliance were summoned to appear in front of the Planning Commission (Ryon 1985).

In many ways, Paramount's actions recapitulated the aggressiveness of mid 20th century urban renewal, but using crackdowns in the stead of land seizures via eminent domain. The city's efforts were funded from combined general fund and locally-controlled federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies rather than federal urban renewal grants (L. Harris 1986). As the then-city manager bluntly stated, "In essence, what we're doing is forcing a business decision on the property owner" in the face of rising land values (Ryon 1985). Despite the heavy-handedness of the program, it appeared to enjoy robust support from homeowners, many of whom began to note the disjuncture between the rebounding commercial core of the city and their own dilapidated neighborhoods (L. Harris 1986).

The crackdown focused on extralegal housing, principally garage conversions and inhabited vehicles on residential lots, as well as junk, debris, and weeds. A retrospective article by the LA Times noted the long-term success of Paramount's efforts in fulfilling municipal economic development and fiscal revival goals (Sahagun 2007). Tellingly, it highlighted Paramount's White Picket Fence program, which by 2007 had been subsidizing, for decades, 75% of the cost for homeowners to replace their chain-link fences with one of the quintessential visual emblems of single-family suburban living. In this telling, visual and economic blight in Paramount had been steadily eradicated, over more than 20 years, of sustained and coordinated effort.

More recently, a similar focus on burnishing a troubled city's image appeared to motivate a crackdown underway in Compton in 2009 (Garrison 2009). Notorious nationwide for decades as a veritable metonym for gang culture and violence (Sides 2004), by the end of the first decade of the new century Compton had begun to enjoy a large and sustained drop in violent crime. With law enforcement no longer monopolizing local officials' attention, a crackdown on garage conversions now became feasible as a tool for local elected officials to upgrade Compton's battered

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each of whom represents his or her own district. Compton's switch to district elections did not occur until 2012. Los Angeles County has a five-member Board of Supervisors, each of whom represents a separate geographic territory. The unincorporated portions of the City of Gateway are included within LA County supervisorial Districts 1 (Walnut Park) and 2 (East Rancho Dominguez, Florence-Firestone, and Willowbrook).

image to outsiders, removing an obstacle to outside investment by removing a source of visual "blight" (ibid).[3]

Another common theme that underpins a law and order discourse in the justification of a crackdown is *safety.* For example, in the mid 1990s, South Gate received regional media attention amidst a high-profile debate on garage conversion policy in the City of Los Angeles that followed in the wake of a particularly devastating fatal garage fire (Leeds 1996). South Gate was portrayed as a small suburban city that, unlike Los Angeles, was politically committed to taking the actions necessary to disrupt the informal housing market that was the source of fire danger, whatever the consequences (Wilgoren and Gordon 1996).

South Gate's crackdown actions included allocating CDBG funds to code enforcement, as Paramount had done, and imposing substantial fines on homeowners of $1,000 to $5,000 for garage conversions, up from $75 previously. These steps allowed South Gate to issue 900 citations against garage conversions in a year (ibid; Leeds 1996). In addition, South Gate undertook the unusual step of instructing all city employees, and not simply code enforcement officers, to report any extralegal housing they observed in the course of their official duties (ibid). Safety emerges as the motivating force behind South Gate's aggressive crackdown actions. The Los Angeles Times quoted a code enforcement officer saying "The city has zero tolerance. There are lives involved here" (Leeds 1996).

In addition to economic development and safety, the third major contributor to law and order rhetoric is the promotion of a preferred spatial order, the *suburban ideal* (Purcell 2001). In a political dispute that arose in the City of Bell Gardens in the early 1990s, an attorney representing residents that had been the recipients of code enforcement actions estimated that substandard property notices were filed in Bell Gardens at a rate 10 times higher than in the City of Los Angeles (Griego 1991). Comments made by Bell Gardens' then-city manager, Claude Booker, emphasized the city's hostility towards absentee landlords, in favor of owner-occupants living the prototypical American Dream, presumably in single-family housing. A quote from Booker is revealing: "We are not trying to make a Beverly Hills here. We are just trying to make it a reasonably clean place to live" (ibid). Such rhetoric focused on cleanliness recalls Harris's (D. Harris 2007) argument that antiseptic imagery (not infrequently imbued with racialized meaning) was indispensible in constructing a paradigm of suburban domesticity in postwar America. In this case, a firm hand—law and order—was needed, according to the city's political boss, to restore the American Dream to a city where it was in danger of extinction.

In the cases reviewed above, the political motivations behind extralegal housing crackdowns differ, at least on the surface. Safety-related concerns, as in South Gate, bespeak some level of concern for the people living in extralegal spaces. In Bell Gardens, where the stated motivation was to restore the American Dream, there was perhaps a more outright hostility expressed by the city's leadership towards those who, by their economic status or the types of structures they lived in, were not deemed to be valued members of the community. Paramount and Compton

[3] African American versus Latino political tensions are also a crucial aspect of the Compton story. These are dealt with in the next section.

could be said to be intermediate cases in terms of official expressions of animus towards extralegal housing dwellers, where such people and their living spaces seemed to be viewed as impediments to economic development and recovery. Undoubtedly there was considerable crossover among these different valences. Regardless, what is most striking about these various cases is how irrespective of their unique circumstances, and of shades of either animus or concern towards extralegal dwellers, there is a consistent rhetoric of law and order. The need for the local state to undertake crackdowns, even at the cost of disruption to individual lives and to entire communities, is left largely unchallenged in local political discourse as reflected in media coverage.

The curious lack of housing activism in the City of Gateway

At this point, it is useful to contemplate what other discourses, other than law and order, might have been possible during the crackdown episodes reviewed above. Ward (1999) writes that in northern Mexico, unlike in Texas, *colonia* dwellers are often spoken of in mainstream political discourse as hard-working people who are exercising their best available, if less than ideal, options to procure housing for themselves and their families. By contrast, their counterparts on the US side are typically denigrated as unauthorized immigrants and thus not legitimate members of the community. In the City of Gateway's extralegal housing as in Texas homestead subdivisions, residents in actuality exhibit the full spectrum of citizenship status and duration of family ties to the region, from unauthorized to legal immigrant to first generation US-born to descendants of people who arrived in Southern California centuries ago.

In the City of Gateway, informal housing could conceivably be spoken of by political leaders as a perhaps lamentable, but unavoidable reality in the face of structural conditions such as low wages for blue-collar work and constrained land and housing markets. And if political leaders are in fact unwilling to deploy more expansive rhetoric of this sort, it is at least possible to imagine political constituencies of homeowners seeking to operate extralegal housing without encumbrance and dwellers of such housing seeking to protect their security of tenure forming coalitions and organizing to protect their interests in the local political sphere. This would allow extralegal housing to be discussed as the subject of pragmatic policies of considerably greater scope and imagination than crackdowns motivated by the imagery of law and order. And yet, by and large, in the City of Gateway this has not happened. The question then becomes, why not?

I will attempt to answer this question in the next two full sections of this chapter. I will begin here, however, by dispensing with one potential explanation that does not fit the facts. This is the trope, perpetuated in countless films, novels, and other media, that denizens of Los Angeles and its environs exhibit an attitude of apathy towards politics.[4]

[4] See, for instance, the comedic films *L.A. Story* and *Clueless*, which feature characters that exhibit a stereotypically vapid lack of awareness about political issues that is presented as an identifiably Southern California trait.

If a revivified politics of the working class can be said to exist in the United States today, encompassing a labor movement that has managed to partially offset decades of decline by organizing new sectors of the economy while forging links with increasingly organized and vocal entities that advocate for the rights of immigrants, then Los Angeles is arguably its center (Milkman 2006). Labor mobilization in LA, far from being damaged by its reliance on immigrant groups, as conventional wisdom once had it, has instead benefited from the strong home-country pro-labor traditions so many of the newcomers brought with them from Latin America to Southern California (ibid). LA saw the emergence of the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), which originated in the wake of a concerted effort by organized labor and other progressive groups to negotiate with the City of Los Angeles and private developers in advance of the Hollywood and Highland Center development in 1998 and the construction of the Staples Center arena in 2001 (Salkin and Lavine 2008). The CBA concept has subsequently spread to other parts of the United States (Wolf-Powers 2010). Perhaps the highest visibility triumph of the US labor movement in recent decades, the organizing of the janitors who clean high-rise office towers, also emerged in downtown Los Angeles.

Even if it is conceded that the stereotype of Angeleno political apathy is outdated, if it was ever accurate at all, one might assume that it applies in the City of Gateway, lying as it does in the long shadow cast by the parts of Los Angeles that are home to a host of globally recognized people, institutions, and places. To be sure, profound and interrelated issues of jurisdictional balkanization, corruption, and racial divisions (all discussed later in this chapter) and others are at work in the City of Gateway. Even here, however, a review of several historical episodes shows that under the right circumstances, genuinely grassroots, progressive social movements can and have blossomed in southeast LA County, and have achieved real results. While efforts to respond to blatant examples of municipal corruption, discussed in the next section, are particularly dramatic, examples of organizing around issues, and not just instances of official malfeasance, shows the capacity for grassroots activism in the City of Gateway that has arisen from time to time.

A particularly dramatic example comes from the tiny City of Maywood. Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido (2011) argue that in the previous decade, Maywood residents asserted their Right to the Suburb—a variation on Henri Lefebvre's concept of the Right to the City—in the wake of a series of incidents that revealed a system ostensibly for preventing drunk driving but in actuality designed to entrap unauthorized immigrants. Vigorous organizing brought to light a network of traffic checkpoints that took advantage of the lack of driver's licenses held by unauthorized immigrants, and used the stops as a pretext to impound their cars and return them only following the payment of extortionate impoundment fees (ibid). In 2002, for example, 1,800 cars were impounded, while only seven drunk drivers were caught.[5] The 2005 election of two new pro-immigrant city council members, joining an

[5] City of Bell councilmember Nestor Valencia told me that a similar system of traffic checkpoints existed at the same time in Bell. The Bell officials responsible, however, according to Valencia, were careful to keep the program sufficiently low in visibility so that it did not spark the furious counter-reaction that occurred over the city line in Maywood.

existing councilmember to form a pro-immigrant majority bloc on Maywood's council, eventually led to reforms that drastically scaled back the checkpoints, helped immigrants regain their cars, and eventually cleared the way for other pro-immigrant policies such as the official designation of Maywood as a Sanctuary City, in open defiance of federal immigration policies (ibid).

The City of Gateway has also witnessed triumphs for environmental justice advocates. Even in relatively conservative South Gate, for instance, a group of high school students led the successful opposition to a proposed power plant, even amidst California's electrical power crisis around the turn of the millennium, an episode which brought the Golden State unwelcome national attention (Brodkin 2009). The campaign led to a split within historically pro-union South Gate, with the high school students explicitly foregrounding issues of disparate racial impacts, while the power plant proponents allied with more traditional union interests that had long sought to downplay racial divisions (ibid). More recently, revelations that a battery recycler had allowed lead to leach into soils, potentially affecting residential neighborhoods in Maywood and elsewhere, has spurred considerable grassroots activism to pressure the company to clean up its site, even though it is located in the City of Vernon, where local political accountability is effectively non-existent (Garrison 2014).[6]

While instances of progressive, grassroots activism in the City of Gateway related to *housing* are harder to find, they do exist. They are probably more likely to unfold in what Pastor (2013) labels *struggling* Latino suburbs, such as Maywood, where the possibilities for a politics of solidarity amongst renters, unauthorized immigrants, and other marginalized groups are at their greatest. Meanwhile, the more conservative *working class* Latino suburbs, such as South Gate and Bellflower, are unlikely to see such outcomes. This distinction explains, for instance, a rent strike carried out by tenants living in legal apartments that occurred in the struggling Latino suburb of Maywood in 2001 (J. Y. Stewart, 2001). In Cudahy, pro-renter politics have translated into city policy. There, the Housing Rehab Program allows tenants residing in poorly-maintained buildings with uncooperative landlords to tap into city-controlled CDBG funds to allow the city to directly hire contractors to make repairs, bypassing the landlord and assuring the tenants' continued tenure, according to City Manager Hector Rodriguez.

The nature of local politics in struggling Latino suburbs also explains a concerted and ultimately successful effort by activists to repel an attempt to comprehensively downzone Bell Gardens in 1990, which would have rendered a great deal of legal housing extralegal, and resulted in the removal of much existing extralegal housing (Fulton 1997; Davis 1992; Griego 1991). This incident is singularly revealing about the relationship between informal housing and local politics, and is treated in greater detail below.

But what is far more typical in the City of Gateway is a striking *absence* of grassroots activism addressing informal housing issues, or any housing-related issues at all. For instance, according to Veronica Lopez, Code Enforcement Manager of South Gate, that city has steadily downzoned residential land from multifamily to

[6] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Vernon's organization as a single-purpose industrial city.

single-family districts over the last three decades. Nothing resembling the counterreaction to the proposed downzoning that occurred in Bell Gardens has been in evidence there, despite its profound effects on security of tenure and use value for thousands of extralegal unit dwellers and homeowners, respectively.

Given that grassroots, progressive activism capable of countering or at least contesting a law and order discourse clearly exists both in Los Angeles in general and the City of Gateway specifically, it remains to be explained what characteristic of *housing* issues explains their predominant absence from the local political realm. Before I answer that question, I briefly discuss what shape local governmental actions flowing from an alternative discourse on informal housing might take if such a discourse were in fact in evidence.

What could informal housing policies look like?

Because local policy efforts that grapple with, in any way, informal housing in the City of Gateway are almost exclusively confined to crackdowns and, in some cities, presale requirements, an observer could be forgiven for believing that these are the only mechanisms available to local elected officials. A planner with familiarity with the work of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the MPO that represents the five-county LA region as well as inland Imperial County, noted a lack of instances where regional localities have pursued other policies towards secondary units or other types of extralegal housing, apart from isolated counterexamples such as the cities of Riverside and Sierra Madre. But before turning, in the next section, towards explanations for this state of affairs, it is a worthwhile exercise to briefly detail some of the policies that City of Gateway jurisdictions *could* pursue towards extralegal housing if their leaders so chose. These include the following:[7]

> *Amnesty programs.* Amnesty programs are efforts by local governments to encourage homeowners with extralegal housing units on their properties to pursue their legalization. Generally speaking, they involve establishing a set of enticements for homeowners, such as temporary exemption from zoning requirements and reduced or waived utility connection and other impact fees, for a limited time to encourage them to come forward with their extralegal units. The jurisdiction in California with the most success with amnesty programs has likely been Daly City, which legalized a total of 1,009 unpermitted Accessory Dwelling Units in the course of three periods spanning from 1983 to 2000 (Cabansagan 2011). A City of Malibu summary table from 2012 identified five other California jurisdictions that had implemented amnesty programs in the previous decade, though the highest number of units retroactively permitted

[7] I have omitted enacting rent stabilization ordinances, the politics for which are extremely difficult for those that support them. There have been proposals to extend such ordinances, where they already exist, to cover extralegal housing. In the City of Los Angeles, this was suggested by the Department of Housing Preservation and Production (HPPD) to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of the LA City Council (City of Los Angeles 1991b). Ultimately, this effort failed.

was 50 in unincorporated Marin County. The only Southern California jurisdiction among the five was the City of Ventura, which at the time had received 21 applications (reported in @Home in Menlo Park 2013).

Progressive compliance. Ward (2014) writes about the usefulness of *progressive compliance* principles for Texas colonias. These principles acknowledge that gradual physical improvements to non-building code compliant housing are more beneficial to all involved than no improvements at all. They pragmatically acknowledge that current practices effectively demand an "all or nothing" effort and expenditure to comply with building codes that can discourage or deter homeowners from making incremental efforts to improve their extralegal spaces. While City of Gateway jurisdictions offer programs, such as Cudahy's Housing Rehab Program discussed above, that can be used to help homeowners upgrade their homes, under federal guidelines any extralegal spaces must be removed. Although cities are constrained in their ability to operate independently of the California Building Code, to date efforts to experiment with progressive compliance have not taken place in Southern California.

Rezoning. In addition to temporary amnesty programs, local governments have the power to permanently alter their local zoning ordinances so that many present and future living spaces that are extralegal could shift to a legal status. Among the parameters whose revision would carry the greatest impact are requirements for off-street parking, side and rear building setbacks, limits on the number of separate dwellings on a lot, and building height limits. Maywood is a rare example of a City of Gateway jurisdiction where at least one zoning parameter, lot coverage, is currently set to a level, 65% in the R-3 zone (which covers all residential land in the city; see Table A5-2), that matches closely with existing conditions on the ground.[8] In almost all other cases, major changes in the ordinances of cities and of LA County would be needed for most extralegal housing in residential areas to be legalized. Santa Cruz is typically cited as the California city that has taken the strongest actions towards making the production of legal secondary units in residential zones more feasible via rezoning (Antoninetti 2008). After this occurred, the annual number of Accessory Dwelling Unit building permits in Santa Cruz quadrupled (ibid). It should be noted that rezoning is, in addition to typically being politically contentious, time consuming and expensive, particularly from the standpoint of a small city. This is because rezonings are discretionary actions that necessitate environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In cases where rezonings trigger the need for a consultant to draft a full-blown Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the process could unfold over years and easily cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Such costs, while relatively trivial for a large city such as Los Angeles, are formidable for a small, cash-strapped municipality in the City of Gateway.

Outreach and counseling. Even if locally applicable zoning and building codes make it theoretically possible for homeowners to legalize their extralegal living spaces, and even if amnesty programs exist to encourage them to come forward, in some cases these elements might be insufficient if efforts are not made to contact recalcitrant homeowners. These would serve to help them navigate confusing regulations and procedures, and to help address their concerns. Such outreach would be particularly important in the City of Gateway, where language and cultural barriers, including a distrust of government common to many immigrants from Mexico and Central America, were emphasized by many of my interview respondents. (See also Quinones 2007.) Even in the comparatively affluent city of Santa Cruz, outreach efforts, and not simply rezoning, were regarded by city officials as important aspects to the success of a package of policies intended to increase the production of permitted Accessory Dwelling Units (Antoninetti 2008).

Data gathering. For a thoughtful policy concerning extralegal housing to be drafted, data on the true extent and nature of such housing within the City of Gateway's jurisdictions would need to be gathered. And yet, such data largely do not exist. As is explained later in this chapter, data gathered as part of the state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process on secondary units are mostly not helpful for formulating policy on this type of housing. In the ultimately unsuccessful City of Los Angeles garage apartment legalization effort in 1997 discussed later in this chapter, lack of data was cited by key city staff as a major reason for their reluctance to recommend the proposed policy changes (cf. City of Los Angeles 1991a). However indirect and laden with assumptions the various methodologies presented in this dissertation to measure the extent and nature of extralegal housing in the City of Gateway may be, little other data of this sort exists. Much more is needed.

Perhaps most fundamentally of all, a public debate on the most thoughtful policy approaches towards informal housing is a precondition for implementing one of the policies listed above, or combinations thereof, or other alternatives to code enforcement crackdowns and presale requirements. With law and order as the dominant discourse, the space for other discourses to support other policy alternatives is arguably constricted.

The upshot of limited discourse and constrained policy options towards informal housing is typically a posture of *resignation* expressed by political elites. A quote from Leonard Locher, Maywood's then-city manager, from a 1990 LA Times article exemplifies this outlook:

> I have lived on my street 28 years, and when my widowed neighbor moved out, a family of five adults and six children moved into the same small house. That's the pattern on every block, and frankly we've lost the battle on uncontrolled growth. We don't have any strategy for the future (J. Stewart 1990).

A comment from LA City Councilmember and Public Safety Committee chair Laura Chick on the mid-1990s proposal to create an amnesty program for converted garages, discussed later in this chapter, has a similar tone:

> What it comes down to is, which Paul do you rob to pay Peter. We're getting down to just trying to deliver the most basic, essential, maintenance-of-life services. I've got to deal with dollars and cents. I'm really very skeptical that we're going to be able to take strides on this (Wilgoren and Gordon 1996).

The journalists of the article from which the above quotation was taken synthesized and expressed a similar tone of resignation distilled from the various elected officials and experts with whom they had spoken. They portray informal housing policy as a vessel navigating between Scylla and Charybdis, a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" proposition:

> Even if there were enough inspectors to survey every structure, politicians and experts said the shadow market of illegal dwellings presents a more complicated challenge: If enforcement were stepped up, where would garage-dwellers already teetering on the brink of homelessness go? (Wilgoren and Gordon 1996).

Statements such as the foregoing evince an ambivalence towards unfurling the ramifications of a law and order frame and the associated policy of crackdown, but do nothing to question the law and order frame itself or to ask if other possibilities might exist. In other parts of the world, informal housing and other economic self-provisioning activities have been alternately hailed as the triumph of independent-minded self-builders (Turner 1977) or heroic entrepreneurs (De Soto 2000), or lamented as part of a set of structural forces that force the poor towards the metropolitan periphery (Holston 1989) or marginalize them based on their tenure status (Perlman 2009). The point is not that there is a commonality amongst these perspectives; indeed, there is not, and the variation between them and countless others is great.

But what is striking is the narrowness of the debate on informal housing in the City of Gateway, even in the region of the US that today has perhaps the most dynamic constellation of activist groups working on a host of issues of concern to the working poor. The next section puts forth a number of explanations specific to the City of Gateway for why this is the case.

Explaining the Absence of Informal Housing From the Local Political Sphere: Factors Specific to the City of Gateway

As I discuss in Chapter 4, one of my foremost reasons for selecting the City of Gateway as my case study area within Los Angeles County was that the incorporated cities that comprise it are geographically compact and relatively socioeconomically and (in most cases) ethnically homogeneous. Compared to much larger, more heterodox cities such as Los Angeles or Long Beach, I expected informal housing to be an issue that would resonate within the local political sphere, due to its ubiquity

and the absence of big city political issues, such as those surrounding airports, seaports and sports stadia, that compete for voters' attention.

Much to my surprise, as I have indicated repeatedly in this chapter so far, I found informal housing to be mostly absent from the local political sphere. It did not appear to garner much local media coverage, nor to be mentioned by candidates for city council elections, nor to be the focus of grassroots activism. While, as explained in the previous section, the rhetoric of law and order and accompanying crackdown and presale requirement policies have been in evidence at times, even these limited perspectives on the informal housing issue seemed to peak during the 1980s and 1990s, and to have receded since. While the City of Compton, as noted earlier, is a partial exception, this may be due to some of the interracial political dynamics that exist there that are peculiar to that city. In most of the rest of the City of Gateway, informal housing appears to be a silently ubiquitous but little commented-upon fact of daily life. Typical is what Huntington Park Councilmember Rosa Perez told me: the issue of extralegal housing did not arise even once in official forums during her campaign, which culminated in her election in 2011.

On the surface, this is surprising. In the small Central Valley municipality of Parlier, set amidst the farmlands of Fresno County, one of the first orders of business for a new, all-Latino city council that swept a municipal election in 1972 was to enact sweeping changes in the city's policy towards informal housing (Buckley and Littmann 2010; Kissam 1998). Even as similar demographic changes have unfolded within the political representation of most jurisdictions in the City of Gateway—in some cases gradual, and in other cases sudden—an equivalent shift has not happened in these places.

This section is the first of two that seeks to explain the absence of informal housing from the political sphere. My assertion that this is true has two components. First, generally speaking, informal housing in recent times in the City of Gateway is not directly discussed in the local political sphere at all. Second, when it is discussed, it is mostly within the narrow frame of law and order, and even constricted discourse of this sort has been in decline since the heyday of the 1980s and 1990s. In this section, I examine several factors that are particular to the City of Gateway, while in the next I look at more generalizable factors applicable to the urban environs of metropolitan Los Angeles and perhaps to other conurbations in the US. The factors specific to the City of Gateway are fragmented governance, municipal corruption, and racial succession and conflict in local politics. These are described in turn below.

Fragmented governance

The City of Gateway is politically fragmented in the extreme. This geographically contiguous area, with just under 709,000 residents in 2010, is divided into 14 separate cities and Census-Designated Places (CDPs), which collectively range in population from just under 16,000 (unincorporated Walnut Park) to about 96,000 (the City of Compton). While the historical conditions that originally gave rise to this local governance structure, described in Chapter 4, have receded into the past, there is a considerable degree of durability to the current municipal lines.

Recent attempts by the City of Compton to annex portions of East Rancho Dominguez, to its east, and job-rich Rancho Dominguez, to its south, encountered stiff resistance from residents of the unincorporated areas (Jennings 2013). Despite a strong sense of local pride and identity, efforts to incorporate East Los Angeles in recent years have failed, in large part due to requirements imposed by the state of California in 1992 for municipal fiscal self-sufficiency (Hogen-Esch 2011b). This suggests that even if residents of the City of Gateway's four unincorporated areas desired cityhood, achieving it would be difficult to impossible. Recently, the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission entertained the idea of forcing disincorporations or mergers of Bell, Cudahy, and Maywood, in addition to the adjacent job-rich cities of Vernon and Commerce, but knowledgeable local experts saw little chance that such an action would actually take place (Flores 2013).

Political fragmentation arguably diminishes voter engagement, and reduces the chances that already-complex and contentious issues such as informal housing will get a hearing. One pathway by which this occurs is household mobility. Saul Bolivar, Housing Director of Cudahy, made the following observation about his city: Cudahy "is a stepping stone for too many people. They get a little equity [due to the appreciation of their homes] and then they're out of here." Meanwhile, the people who stay, in such a low-income, renter-dominated city, are the ones who cannot afford to leave. Bolivar noted that even some of the city council members would leave the city if they were not required to remain while they served out their terms. Thus, a city such as Cudahy is constantly losing the people who might otherwise eventually become its most engaged, influential citizens. If we imagine that the City of Gateway were a unified jurisdiction, perhaps more households that move would remain within the city boundary and continue to contribute to local politics.

In an area with fragmented boundary lines, widespread confusion over which territory belongs to which jurisdiction, in particular stemming from the distinction between incorporated and unincorporated county areas, undermines local pride and engagement with politics. In one minor example, an interviewee told me that she and her fellow tenants had unsuccessfully attempted to use the Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP), a City of Los Angeles-specific legal mechanism that tenants can deploy against negligent landlords, to induce the owner of their apartment building to make needed repairs. She was unaware that at the time she in fact resided in Willowbrook, in unincorporated LA County, which has no equivalent of REAP. While this is but one incident, it is illustrative of the almost invisible barriers to collective action that boundary lines can pose even to politically engaged people.

In another small but telling example, residents attending a regular meeting of their community group in Athens Park insisted to an LA County code enforcement officer, whom they had invited, that their community is not part of Willowbrook, and requested to him that road signs implying otherwise be altered. In fact, according to the US Census's CDP definition, Athens Park is part of Willowbrook, but due to Willowbrook's poor reputation for crime and other social ills they wished to disassociate themselves from it. As Sides (2004) notes, "place names are rarely just that;" they are "heavily freighted." Under such circumstances, it is easy to imagine that political action around complex social issues is difficult to organize.

Another aspect of jurisdictional fragmentation that contributes to a lack of political engagement within the City of Gateway is a lack of local control over the tax revenues generated by job-rich areas where many local residents work. As is discussed in Chapter 4, Vernon and Commerce are among the most extreme examples in the United States (equaled only by several other similar cities in LA County) of the enclosure of job-rich tax bases within single-purpose cities. The resultant abundant revenues in Vernon and Commerce are not shared with the adjacent cities that supply so much of their labor force. If they were, the incentives for political participation would undoubtedly be higher.

Political fragmentation in the City of Gateway, operating through the various mechanisms highlighted above, contributes to dismal voter turnout in many of the local cities. Fulton (1997) noted that during the 1980s and 1990s, it was possible in some jurisdictions of the City of Gateway for a city councilmember to be elected with several hundred votes, even in cities with populations in the tens of thousands. In South Gate during the 1990s, at a time when the city's population was well over 90,000, a city council seat could be won with 2,000 votes (Quinones 2007). Under such circumstances, governance responsive to the needs of the marginalized becomes unlikely.

As argued in Chapter 2, Ong's (2006) notion of a *zoning technology* fits, in many ways, the geography of local governance in the City of Gateway. Used in this way, the meaning of the term zoning differs from its typical usage to denote localities' regulation of land use. Rather, in this sense, a zoning technology allows a large territory to be managed for the benefit of political or socioeonomic elites by its subdivision into geographical units to which laws, or more tellingly exceptions to them, are applied to varying degrees. Ong applies her notion of a zoning technology to large territories the size of nation states, such as China, but in the case of the City of Gateway it is a useful description of the effects of extreme jurisdictional balkanization.

Davis (1992) argues that the jurisdictional fragmentation of the City of Gateway is not accidental, and that it redounds to the overwhelming benefit of the political and business elites that control the governance and economy of Vernon and Commerce and similar single-purpose cities. Such a view is not confined to intellectuals: Councilmember Nestor Valencia of Bell told me, flatly, that "these towns [such as Bell] were created for the purpose of manual labor by Vernon." One does not need to subscribe to a belief in a coordinated and sustained conspiracy over a century to be persuaded that such an explanation holds merit. As one drives on Downey Road southbound from Fruitland Avenue, a look to the right reveals the low-slung, intensely industrial landscape of Vernon. A look to the left provides a view into the cramped residential neighborhoods of Maywood, the most densely populated city in the United States west of New Jersey. From this spot, the physical separation across boundary lines of industry, and the political spoils it entails, from the places that reproduce the labor force that supplies it, along with the panoply of social arrangements that perpetuate it, including omnipresent extralegal housing, appears total.

Municipal corruption

Corrupt actions by local elected and appointed officials have been a recurrent problem in the City of Gateway. Episodes of corruption in the area could easily be the subjects of entire studies on their own. My purpose here, however, is to briefly summarize some of the explanations underlying corruption at the local level that emerge from journalistic and scholarly work, discuss them in the context of specific recent episodes from the City of Gateway, and relate them to local concerns over informal housing.

Hogen-Esch (2011a) notes that the council-mayor form of government, which exists in all ten incorporated jurisdictions in the City of Gateway, was originally promoted by Progressive reformers in the early 20th century. They advocated this structure of governance as a means of stamping out graft, associated with the "political machines" that arose in the 19th century in the wake of influxes of southern and eastern European immigrants to US cities. He observes that more recently, scholars have raised questions about whether Progressives were using reformist rhetoric to cloak their intentions to suppress non-English-speaking and non-Protestant immigrants' political participation. In any event, council-mayor government, whatever its inherent shortcomings or advantages, has been a structure within which corruption has flourished in the City of Gateway in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Whereas local elected officials accused of engaging in clientist, boss-style politics a century ago were typically accused by reformers and others of favoring their base of political supporters at the expense of other groups, some recent cases in the City of Gateway have featured small groups of elected officials and a tight coterie of confederates mainly acting to enrich themselves. Fulton (1997) uses the term "the politics of extraction" to describe this sort of municipal kleptocracy, where local politicians use their privileged position to steer business towards enterprises controlled by their allies. In Chapter 4, I described some of examples of these sorts of enterprises, including "card clubs" and environmentally noxious operations such as debris recycling businesses. The car impoundment schemes designed to victimize undocumented immigrants that were set up in Maywood and Bell, described earlier in this chapter, represent another (Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido 2011).

Low voter turnout and anemic levels of participation in civic affairs by everyday citizens are what have allowed these activities to flourish unchecked (Hogen-Esch 2011a). In Bell, for instance, the average voter turnout (actual voters divided by registered voters) over 11 contested local elections spanning from 1980 to 2011 was 29%. When actual voters in the same local elections are compared against the number of people of voting age, regardless of registration status, the average turnout among what Hogen-Esch refers to as *voting-age adults* in Bell drops to an even more woeful 9% (ibid).[9] The failure and merger in recent decades of most of the small local newspapers that once covered the City of Gateway, along

[9] Much of the discrepancy between voter turnout measured in the standard way and as compared to the number of total voting-age adults is explained by the high proportion of Bell's population that is comprised of noncitizens in Bell. This, and other factors related to ethnic and racial succession and conflict, are discussed below.

with diminished coverage and customized content in the region by the Los Angeles Times, have also helped malfeasance to proliferate unchecked (ibid).[10]

Corrupt local politicians draw upon a network of allies or pliable helpers extending vertically downward through city departments and horizontally to institutions outside of city government. Bell Councilmember Nestor Valencia described to me what he referred to as the "six pillars of corruption" in his city: i) "City Hall" (i.e. the city's non-public safety bureaucracy); ii) nonprofits; iii) schools, because of the potential for graft inherent in the Los Angeles Unified School District's ongoing large-scale school construction effort; iv) business groups, including the city-funded Chamber of Commerce; v) the local Democratic Party; and vi) the police department, which as mentioned earlier ran a subtler version of Maywood's car impoundment dragnet.

In 2011, via a recall election, voters swept away all five members of Bell's city council. At the time of writing, they had accepted plea bargains in federal court and were facing prison sentences of up to four years (Mather and Vives 2013). The figure who emerged as the ringleader of dubious practices in Bell, City Manager Robert Rizzo, had been revealed as being on the brink of becoming California's highest-paid retiree at $600,000 per year (Hogen-Esch, 2011a). Although Valencia was elected in 2011, following two previous unsuccessful campaigns, he told me in spring 2013 that his and other reformists' work to cleanse the six pillars of corruption was still painstakingly difficult and ongoing.

Instances in which grassroots campaigns to oust corrupt local politicians and officials have arisen show a possibility for a lemonade of increased civic participation to be squeezed from the lemons of official misconduct. Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido (2011) noted a doubling of voter turnout in Maywood's 2005 election, in which two pro-immigrant city council candidates condemning the car impoundment scheme were propelled to victory, compared to the previous election. Quinones (2007), in a book-length journalistic account of Mexican immigrant life in the United States, expresses a similar view in his chapter entitled the "Saga of South Gate." Eventually ousted in a recall election in 2003 and convicted on federal charges thereafter, South Gate Treasurer Albert Robles had been accused of such misdeeds as circulating flyers falsely accusing a political opponent of being a child molester; organizing giveaways of campaign-funded hot dogs, toys, and other goods to supporters on the day of an election; and steering municipal contracts to cronies (ibid).

Quinones argues that the Robles episode was formative in introducing Mexican immigrants, many of whom had concluded from long historical experience

[10] There are notable exceptions. For instance, the LA Times broke the Bell corruption story, eventually triggering multiple federal investigations and eventual convictions of corrupt officials. However, Nestor Valencia and other informants made clear to me that there are numerous other instances of corruption in nearby cities that have gone largely unreported by local media. Uncovering such scandals requires sustained, dogged investigative journalism of the sort that is declining amidst structural changes in the news media industry.

in their home regions that politics were best avoided, to American civic life.[11] He views this "saga," and others like it, however painful and divisive, as important in ensuring that local political representation begins to match the profile and needs of the majority of the people who live in the jurisdiction (ibid). One of my informants, who is a planner by profession, near-lifelong South Gate native, and deeply involved in South Gate civic affairs, confirmed to me that South Gate has been relatively free of blatant municipal corruption since the Robles recall election. Whether the experience of South Gate, not to mention the ouster of Bell's previous city council, city manager, and assistant city manager, portends well for the other jurisdictions in the City of Gateway is an open question.

While it continues to persist, municipal corruption impinges on informal housing and its associated debates in at least two ways. First, code enforcement forms part of the first pillar of corruption identified by Nestor Valencia. At least in the City of Bell, prior to the recall election, according to Valencia code enforcement was used by elected officials and their allies as a means to discipline homeowners who spoke out against them. It is unclear whether such patterns have existed in other nearby cities. However, corruption more generally saps local governments of the resources to address complex issues, including informal housing.[12] It diminishes the confidence of voters in their elected officials, and once documented the ensuing electoral battles, however important, monopolize headlines and voter attention. As long as the basic functioning of city government is in question in many of the jurisdictions in the City of Gateway, it is difficult to imagine that such a complex issue as informal housing could be meaningfully addressed.

Local racial/ethnic change and conflict

The California State-Northridge political scientist Tom Hogen-Esch quotes William Fulton in describing southeast LA County as a laboratory for studying "how smoothly suburban political power can be transferred from one race to another" (Hogen-Esch 2011a, p. 11; Fulton 1997, p. 70). Even if all 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions are, demographically speaking, Latino suburbs, the extent to which the racial/ethnic composition of their elected officials mirrors that of their populations is uneven (Pastor 2013). Even in cases where Latino population majorities are reflected on city councils, in most cases this is a very recent development. For instance, South Gate's first Latino councilmember, Henry Gonzalez, was not elected until 1982, even though the Latino population share had already reached 58% two years before (Quinones 2007).[13]

Such patterns are common nationwide. For instance, Hajnal and Trounstine

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[11] Le Moigne (2013) makes a similar observation, based on extensive ethnographic field work in Compton, about Latinos in that city.

[12] This is apparent when one considers that the salary and benefits of Robert Rizzo in 2010 cost $1.5 million per year, as compared to Bell's total projected Fiscal Year 2014 General Fund expenditure of less than $11.2 million (Hogen-Esch 2011a; http://www.cityofbell.org/home/showdocument?id=4131).

[13] All figures on jurisdiction-level race and ethnicity in this chapter are drawn from www.socialexplorer.com, Tables T13 and T15 (1980) and T55 (2010).

(2005) noted that in cities with Latino populations of 5% or more, the share of Latinos on city councils lagged their citywide population shares by an average of 13%. This gap appears to have been larger for much of the last several decades in City of Gateway cities, which comports with the finding from a nationwide statistical analysis that low voter turnout is particularly damaging to the representation of Latinos and Asian Americans on city councils, somewhat less so for African Americans, and advantageous for whites[14] (ibid). Undoubtedly high shares of noncitizens amongst City of Gateway Latinos play a role, as do the greater average number of children per household, but so do language barriers, lack of familiarity with US local government customs and procedures, and other obstacles among Latinos who are naturalized citizens or even native-born. Presumably these factors explain why even today, despite their numerical dominance Latinos do not form majorities on the city councils of Bellflower, Paramount, or Compton (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. City of Gateway jurisdictions by city council majority racial/ethnic group. Note that the four unincorporated communities are listed according to the race/ethnicity of the LA County Supervisor that represents them. This is because LA County, unlike the incorporated cities (with the recent exception of Compton), has district rather than at-large representation.

Latino Majority	White Majority	African American Majority
Bell	Bellflower	Compton
Bell Gardens	Paramount	East Rancho Dominguez *
Cudahy		Florence-Firestone *
Huntington Park		Willowbrook *
Lynwood		
Maywood		
South Gate		
Walnut Park *		

* *unincorporated jurisdiction*

Most of the City of Gateway consists of places that were virtually all-white in the mid-20th century, with a racial homogeneity enforced by *de facto* segregation. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Watts Riots marked a watershed moment, after which the pace of racial turnover, mostly in the form of white flight coupled with Latino inmigration from abroad and from elsewhere in greater Los Angeles, accelerated. As discussed above, because of a lag effect in political representation, decades would go by before political representation of most cities would mirror their populations, a process that is not even complete today.

In some parts of the City of Gateway, however, the dynamic described above is made more complex by the longstanding and enduring presence of a large African American population, which itself supplanted an earlier, largely white, population in the mid twentieth century. Nowhere is this more the case than in the City of Compton. Even though Compton's African American share has decreased a great deal in recent decades, from 74% in 1980 to 32% in 2010, the city's remaining community of African Americans is much larger than the white share of any other

[14] "White" here is shorthand for "white non-Latino," as it is throughout this dissertation.

jurisdiction in the City of Gateway. In other words, while many African Americans have left Compton, unlike the whites who once lived there and in other nearby localities, a considerable number have stayed. Possible explanations vary, from ongoing housing and other types of discrimination in other locales, to remnants of the intense pride felt by residents in the 1950s and 1960s amid media descriptions of Compton as a model middle-class black suburb, even as the city's image took a beating in subsequent decades as it became synonymous with gang violence and gangsta rap music (Sides 2004). Whatever the reasons, the ongoing political dominance by African Americans in what is today the struggling Latino suburb of Compton has resulted in some notable interracial tensions.

Le Moigne (2013) has noted that although Compton's rate of participation in local elections is at rock bottom, as is the case in so many other Southern California suburbs, African Americans retain a large edge over Latinos that allows them to keep control of the city council. In the 2011 civic election, for example, the African American rate of turnout of registered voters was 12% as compared to 3% among Latinos. Coupled with African Americans' share of 60% of registered voters in the city, this advantage was impossible for Latinos to overcome (ibid).

But there have also been allegations that the disparate representation on the city council has not solely been due to differences in voter participation. In what must surely have been a bitter pill to swallow for the generation of African American Compton residents who endured anti-black terrorism in the Jim Crow South, three Latinas, backed by a pair of civil rights attorneys, filed a lawsuit against Compton under the California Voting Rights Act (Evans 2012; Le Moigne 2013). Ironically, the suit alleged that Compton's at-large voting structure—long an object of complaint by African American civil rights activists in other cities—was inherently exclusionary towards Latinos (Le Moigne 2013).[15]

Why do racial/ethnic succession, whether from white to black to Latino or from white to Latino, and interracial tension at the municipal level make a difference in the informal housing market? It matters because extralegal housing is, as many of my interviewees told me, associated in the minds of many with Latinos in general, and with unauthorized immigrants in particular. As with favela dwellers in contemporary Rio de Janeiro, people living next to and within extralegal housing are marginalized based on their tenure, although the stigmatization according to immigrant status unfolds in a characteristically US-specific way (Perlman 2009). As Ward (1999) notes with colonias in Texas, the needs of those communities are all too often excluded from city, county and statewide political processes because of their residents' stereotypical portrayal as unauthorized border crossers. In like fashion, if law and order rhetoric and crackdown policies are not actually fueled by racial/ethnic animus, it seems likely that their targets perceive them to be. This dynamic is illustrated in a 2009 LA Times article:

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[15] The suit was settled in 2012 (Evans 2012). A ballot measure to institute district elections was placed on the ballot in June 2012, and passed with what Le Moigne (2013) notes was a breakthrough feat of Latino political mobilization for Compton, and a rebuttal to the myth of Latino political apathy. In the 2013 municipal election, Compton elected its first Latino councilmember, Issac Galván.

> Anita Bennett, a communications consultant working for the city, said that charge [that code enforcement crackdowns are the result of anti-Latino animus by the city's African American elected officials] is baseless. "If you look at the demographics, it might look like that" because there are more Latino residents and therefore more Latinos facing questions about their garages, she said (Garrison 2009).

What is more, if cultural preferences and not simply economic necessity play at least something of a role in explaining why most people who operate or live in extralegal housing in residential neighborhoods are Latino (as I will discuss in the conclusion), then it follows that intergroup tensions based on race and ethnicity could further complicate political debate on what is already a difficult subject. It is telling that none of the crackdowns described earlier in the chapter occurred in jurisdictions that had Latino majority city councils at the time they occurred. It is also notable that Gloria Molina, the only Latina on the LA County Board of Supervisors, and who represents the most heavily Latino district in the county, was cited by various interviewees as a powerful defender of homeowners in her district, which includes Walnut Park, from code enforcement.

It would, of course, be a mistake to essentialize policies on the basis of the race and ethnicity of those who enact them: after all, as Pastor's Latino suburbs typology reminds us, there is a difference between *working-class* South Gate and *struggling* Maywood, even though they both have Latino-dominated city councils (Table 8.1; Pastor 2013). The former is known for strict code enforcement and the latter is not. But race and ethnicity, as they interact with class position, almost certainly shape the terrain within which a different discourse on informal housing apart from law and order could emerge, or fail to do so.

Explaining the Absence of Informal Housing From the Local Political Sphere: A General Explanation

Let us suppose that rather than being politically fragmented, the City of Gateway were a unified incorporated city with a population of over 700,000. If this were true, it is easy to imagine that this municipality would be on a more sound fiscal footing and better able to deliver municipal services than is possible for today's 14 separate jurisdictions, due to less duplication of services and the sharing of a substantial commercial tax base between areas that have it (Bellflower, South Gate) and those that largely do not (Maywood, Cudahy). Furthermore, suppose that this unified City of Gateway were relatively free of official misconduct by its elected officials. This is plausible, because such a large jurisdiction might be expected to garner more sustained media coverage about its municipal affairs, and to attract a deeper pool of able candidates for political office, given the greater rewards to holding office in such a city. Finally, imagine that all of the major racial and ethnic groups living in this unified City of Gateway were reasonably well represented in local governance.

Would this hypothetical, unified City of Gateway lacking these three locally specific obstacles to informal housing emerging as a high-profile topic in the political sphere, all of them described in the previous section, be expected to host a robust debate on housing cost, availability, and tenure? In this section, I will argue that the answer is still no. First, I mobilize the concept of *the quiet encroachment of the ordinary* to argue that inherent characteristics of Los Angeles, and likely US metropolitan areas in general, militate against informal housing policy being brought into the public realm in anything but a tightly constrained manner. Second, I comment on the general absence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from informal housing debates. Third, I note the role of traditional homeowners advocating for the *suburban ideal* (Purcell 2001) in the City of Gateway in debates on housing. Last, I review what is perhaps the most high-profile public debate on housing informality in an urban area that has ever occurred in the United States, at least until very recently: the garage apartment debate in the City of Los Angeles of the late 1990s. I then demonstrate that the possibilities for the reconceptualization of stigmatized extralegal housing stemming from this episode, which represented near-ideal conditions for a wide-ranging debate to occur if one were going to occur at all, ran aground against the general limitations suggested by Bayat's theory.

The quiet encroachment of the ordinary and informal housing in the local political sphere

The sociologist Asef Bayat (2000) noted shortcomings in different bodies of literature that sought to explain how members of the urban subaltern conceptualize their common interests and act upon them, or fail to do so, collectively. For example, studies on the *political poor*, which focused on the urban political movements that arose amongst the lower classes, were grounded in the Latin American experience and erroneously generalized to the rest of the world (cf. Stiefel and Wolfe 1994). They presupposed the existence of an array of institutions, such as trade unions, church groups, and neighborhood associations, that simply did not exist in large swaths of the Middle East and Africa (Bayat 2000).

What Bayat labels the *resistance* literature (cf. Scott 1998) comes closer than scholarship on the political poor to capturing political relations between the urban subaltern and elites in Africa and the Middle East. These works focus on everyday acts of defiance that the powerless use to thwart, at least in part, social, economic, and political structures imposed on them by the powerful. But Bayat also critiques the resistance literature, in this case for conflating intent and effect. To him, a poor person in Cairo who taps into a power line in order to gain access to electrical power at no cost is not making a political statement. As he puts it:

> While [resistance theorists] attempt to challenge the essentialism of such perspectives as "passive poor," "submissive Muslim women, " and "inactive masses," they tend to fall into the trap of essentialism in reverse—by reading too much into ordinary behavior, interpreting it as necessarily conscious or contentious acts of defiance. (Bayat 2000, p. 544-545.)

In Bayat's conceptualization, the uncoordinated actions of people working to extralegally provide for themselves and members of their families and kinship networks, once sufficiently widespread, begin to exert a sort of inexorable gravitational pull on political structures in the form of an *encroachment* on resources controlled by the state. This is the quiet encroachment of the ordinary. A large part of its explanatory power lies in its ability to make a distinction that the resistance literature cannot: between the pursuit of fresh demands (encroachment) and collective action to defend a gain already achieved (i.e., fighting back when the dominant class tries to rescind something that already exists). The former unfolds with little or no collective organization by the encroachers at all; the latter can provoke a sudden and furious coordinated political counter-reaction.

The asymmetry between offensive and defensive organizing by encroachers rests in the different modes of collective organization used in each case. Encroachers lack the ability to plan coordinated offense-oriented disruptions, such as protests or strikes, that harm the interests of elites. The encroachers' power rests, instead, in their sheer collective mass, and a sort of inertia that results as an unintended byproduct:

> Once [the] real expansion and impact [of encroachments] are revealed, when the cumulative growth of the actors and their doings passes beyond a tolerable point, the state crackdown becomes expected. Yet in most cases, the crackdowns fail to yield much result, since they are usually launched too late when the encroachers have already spread, becoming visible and passing the point of no return. (Bayat 2000, p. 550.)

This characterization describes well the aggregate effects of the crackdowns on extralegal housing in the City of Gateway reviewed earlier, which is to say relatively little. While individual households that are the target of stepped-up enforcement feel direct and (from their point of view) deleterious impacts, no fundamental disruption to the dynamic of encroachment occurs: the cat-and-mouse game between extralegal housing operators and code enforcement (described in Chapter 7) continues apace. One specific episode in Bell Gardens from the early 1990s, however, is a rare instance of action taken by the political establishment that, unlike crackdowns, posed an existential threat to the underground housing economy in the city. As Bayat's theory predicts, the defensive counter-reaction was organized, swift, and overwhelming.

In late 1990, Claude Booker, Bell Gardens' long-serving city manager and de-facto political boss, orchestrated the passage by city council of a downzoning of a large swath of the city from multifamily to single-family residential (Davis 1992). This was coupled with a code enforcement crackdown that a prominent attorney representing affected tenants estimated occurred at a rate 10 times greater than in the City of Los Angeles (Griego 1991). Supporters of what came to be called the No Rezoning movement quickly denounced these actions, castigating them as a deliberate strategy intended to force apartment owners to sell their buildings. They contended that the city, using redevelopment, sought to oust their overwhelmingly low-income Latino residents and rebuild the properties as upscale, low-density

housing (Davis 1992). Due to the racial and ethnic disparities between the city leadership, of whom Booker and four of the five city councilmembers were white, and the vast majority of the affected tenants, No Rezoning activists launched a state civil rights complaint (Griego 1991).

It did not take long for the No Rezoning movement to flex its muscles. Prominent supporters, such as liberal state senator Art Torres spoke in support before the Bell Gardens city council (Davis 1992). By late 1991, it had effectuated a recall election that resulted in the ouster of all four of the white Claude Booker supporters on the city council (Fulton 1997). The municipal election three months later brought a majority of No Rezoning-backed candidates to the city council. This dramatic series of incidents garnered national attention, and was proclaimed as a portent of a new era of progressive Latino governance at the local level (ibid).

But both Davis and Fulton noted that it would be a mistake to view the victory of No Rezoning over Booker and what Davis calls his *ancien regime* as a pure triumph of grassroots local democracy over unresponsive elites (Davis 1992; Fulton 1997). Davis's research demonstrated that the core of No Rezoning's financial support came from an estimated 500 to 600 Chicano families who, as he put it, "[sent] kids to college or finance[d] retirements with the rental income from a few rental units in the backyard" (Davis 1992, p. 74). Davis dismisses this group as a small coterie of landlords, but they are a classic example of encroachers in Bayat's schema (ibid). In this case, they formed what Bayat calls a *passive network*, or a loose network held together by a slender tether of mutual recognition as peers that only crystallized into a more organized alliance once an existential threat emerged.

In any event, Davis's observation that the vast majority of Bell Gardens residents, renters, who at the time made upwards of 80% of the city's population had no voice whatsoever in the imbroglio, is undeniable (Davis 1992) . Furthermore, he and Fulton noted that the 1991 recall campaign cost of $50,000 was almost entirely financed by a group of about a dozen white, absentee landlords (ibid; Fulton 1997). Those searching for a pure brand of progressive, grassroots politics in the rearguard actions taken by encroachers to defend their livelihoods, and more broadly, their way of life are likely to be frustrated (Bayat 2000). Bayat's theory suggests that this is entirely predictable; in the case of Bell Gardens, encroachers and rentier interests were able to form a temporary alliance that toppled a teetering political dynasty, to their mutual benefit.

Research in progress by the sociologist Daniel Olmos provides two recent examples of other types of informal economic activities, in which similar threats to livelihoods have spurred political organization by largely non-English speaking and often unauthorized immigrants in Los Angeles to a degree that caught outside observers by surprise. One was the threat to taco trucks, long a fixture in the streets of East Los Angeles, posed by a proposed action to ban them by the LA County Board of Supervisors. The other was the response of gardeners to proposed ordinances seeking to ban leafblowers, which the gardeners viewed as an essential tool for their livelihoods. In both cases, the informal workers were successful in repulsing the immediate threats to their ability to earn a living (Olmos 2013 and personal communication). Both instances are also explained well by Bayat's theory. Along with the Bell Gardens episode and Bayat's theory, they suggest a durability to the

underground housing economy, but also an inability for its beneficiaries to press their claims in a forward-thinking manner.

I know of no other examples in recent decades in the City of Gateway of such a direct attack on the informal housing economy as what occurred in Bell Gardens in the early 1990s. In South Gate, however, there have been instances of successful residential downzonings in recent decades, such as from R-3 to R-1 (single-family) zoning districts. Why were there different outcomes in South Gate than in Bell Gardens? An answer can only come from speculation, but several factors are notable, including the contrast between the politics of what Pastor (2013) defines as a working-class Latino suburb (South Gate) and a struggling one (Bell Gardens). Another is the prominence of absentee landlords as a political force in Bell Gardens compared to South Gate, supported both by interview findings and by Bell Gardens' much lower homeownership rate (24% vs. 46%; see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4). South Gate politics have been relatively stable since Albert Robles' ouster, whereas Bell Gardens in 1990 was governed by a longstanding political machine that had become politically and ethnically out of step with its electorate and was therefore vulnerable to challenge. Finally, South Gate's downzonings were not accompanied by a coordinated program of code enforcement crackdowns, as they were in Bell Gardens, which fueled the perception that Bell Gardens political elites were deliberately aiming to eject extralegal housing owners and tenants from the city altogether.

As the case of South Gate shows, it would be a mistake to generalize from the events in Bell Gardens, along with the successful mobilization of participants in other parts of the informal economy, that the quiet encroachment of the ordinary always leads to a repulsion of local efforts to attack extralegal housing. This concept does, however, aid in providing a partial explanation for the continued existence of the underground housing economy in the City of Gateway, which is notable much more for its stability than for its occasional spasms of volatility.

Spatial atomization of extralegal property owners

Bayat's (2000) notion of the quiet encroachment of the ordinary helps us understand the lack of forward-oriented political engagement by extralegal homeowners. A big part of the explanation rests in their essentially individualistic (or kin-oriented) and conservative outlook, which are both described in Bayat's theory and borne out by Davis's (1992) description of the 500 to 600 Bell Gardens homeowners who got involved in the political conflict recounted above. But another explanation comes from the spatial arrangement of extralegal housing in the City of Gateway, and its similarities and contrasts to colonias in Texas.

Ward (1999) helpfully divided politically useful alliances sought by Texas *colonia* residents into two categories: *vertical* and *horizontal* relationships. Vertical relationships are those between relatively low-status colonia homeowners and dwellers and members of the local political elite, such as elected and appointed county officials, state legislators, and the like, who would be in a position to steer public resources towards them or rewrite laws to help them. In colonias as in the City of Gateway, vertical relationships are scarce, owing in part to the stereotyping of homeowners (all of them within colonias, and those operating extralegal property

within the City of Gateway) as unauthorized immigrants or their relatives by local political elites and in media discourse. In colonias in Texas, vertical relationships are further hampered by the colonias' location within the jurisdictionally ambiguous terrain of Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs) immediately outside of cities (ibid). In the City of Gateway, by contrast, incorporated jurisdictions, at least, are spatially compact, which in some cases, such as the Maywood campaign against automobile impoundment, can be beneficial to grassroots political organizing (Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido 2011). However, the other factors recounted in the previous section, corruption and racial tensions, work against vertical linkages in the City of Gateway.

Horizontal linkages, in Ward's schema, are those between residents living near each other, and of comparable social status. Horizontal linkages are also weak, both among colonia residents and among extralegal homeowners, but for different reasons, each of them at least partly concerning space. Ward (1999) unfavorably compared horizontal linkages in Texas colonias with their counterparts across the border in Mexico. In northern Mexico, the (typically) insecure nature of colonia dwellers' tenure, owing to their original settlement via land invasion or the unauthorized conversion of formerly agricultural *ejido* (communally owned) lands, provided an incentive for their residents to band together. Organized collectively, they had the best chance of successfully petitioning the state for land title regularization, the extension of state-funded infrastructure, and the construction of state-funded facilities, such as schools, all of which are well-established steps in the incorporation of informal settlements into cities throughout Mexico. Client-based politics, while at times rife with corruption, provided incentives for politicians to demonstrate at least some responsiveness to these demands. Furthermore, the high densities and mixed land uses of Mexican colonias facilitated the social interaction that was the essential prelude to successful political organizing (ibid).

In Texas colonias, by contrast, colonia dwellers tend to hold title to their properties through a financially risky but legally airtight mechanism known as Contract for Deed.[16] Thus, while colonia dwellers often have a difficult relationship with the developer who sold them their parcel, the gains they can achieve by organizing collectively are limited. Because they are generally denigrated or, at best, ignored by local politicians, who see no electoral incentive in coming to their aid, Texas colonia dwellers have little reason to collectively plead their case for the installation of water and sewer lines, the upgrading of roads, the construction of schools, and other critical needs to elected officials.

Furthermore, Texas colonias tend to be automobile-oriented, with large plots of land, low densities of construction, and a paucity of non-residential space all conspiring against the sort of spontaneous social encounters that occur routinely in their Mexican counterparts. Thus, even if political gains could be achieved via collective organizing, the social interactions that would give rise to such actions are thwarted by the spatial layout of colonias.

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[16] These observations, though grounded in Ward's book from the late 1990s, still largely hold true today, despite reform efforts in the Texas state legislature over the past two decades. See, for example, Ward (2014).

In the City of Gateway, horizontal linkages amongst extralegal homeowners are also weak, but for different reasons. There is no developer against whom such property owners can rally. While, unlike in Texas colonias, residential densities are high and commercial and other non-residential spaces abound, because of code enforcement and its reliance on anonymous reporting by neighbors extralegal homeowners have every incentive to conceal their activities both from the local government and from each other. Rudy Espinoza, the executive director of LURN, a Los Angeles-based organization that advocates on behalf of informal entrepreneurs, also noted to me the inherently private nature of a home, as compared to other forms of unauthorized business activity conducted in the public realm, such as gardening and food vending. The discretion on the part of extralegal property owners engendered by code enforcement thus only furthers an already-pre-existing dynamic.

The result of the foregoing is that horizontal linkages among extralegal homeowners in the City of Gateway—and perhaps in other urban and suburban communities in the United States—are thwarted by their *spatial atomization.* This is illustrated conceptually in Figure 8.1. The diagram on the left shows a typical boundary between an informal settlement and a formal development in Mexico City: the line demarcating the two is clearly legible to the casual observer (Lynch 1960).[17] The possibilities for organizing in such an area are considerable. By contrast, the right side shows the atomized pattern of residential parcels in a portion of the City of Gateway that are out of conformance with one particular readily observable zoning parameter, the lot coverage ratio (as discussed in Chapter 5), and therefore extralegal. Where exactly within the City of Gateway these lots are located, and the fact that they are extralegal according to one particular zoning parameter, when there are others that are also relevant, is beside the point. What is important is that the extralegal properties are spatially discontiguous, and are not combined into a unified and spatially legible territory that could facilitate political action.

[17] It would be a mistake to assume that housing informality throughout the Global South is always as spatially legible as is the case with this example in Mexico City. See, for example, Soliman (2004) for mention of unauthorized subdivisions of agricultural land in Egypt to create wealthy enclaves that to the casual observer are visually indistinguishable from their permitted equivalents. There is, however, a classic pattern of collective, informal urbanization and subsequent collective mobilization that emanated from Latin America and gained a great deal of visibility in the literature; for a quintessential case, see Turner (1977). Other examples exist in other parts of the world: for example, the original residents of *gecekondu* settlements on the periphery of Istanbul and other Turkish cities, who while mostly politically conservative in outlook have similarly organized to assure their tenure (Balaban 2011). These are the sorts of urban informality to which I am contrasting extralegal housing in the City of Gateway.

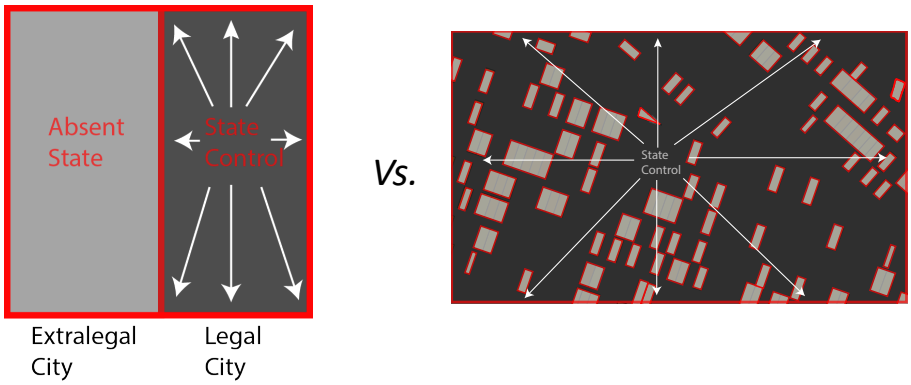

Figure 8.1. Two abstracted views of the spatial relationship between urban informality and state control. In the prototypical example that emerged from scholarship in Latin America in recent decades (left), there is a clear demarcation between the extralegal city, where state regulation and services are largely absent, and the legal city, where they are present. By contrast, in the City of Gateway, there is a pattern of spatial atomization (right), where residential parcels (shown in red outlines) that are out of compliance with particular regulations (in this case, lot coverage ratios) exist within an area where the local state's services and regulatory enforcement are omnipresent.

The suburban ideal

As of 2010, only four City of Gateway jurisdictions—Compton and the three unincorporated communities of East Rancho Dominguez, Walnut Park, and Willowbrook—had a (slender) majority of their housing units occupied by homeowners. In Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Huntington Park, and Maywood, the rate was 30% or less in 2010 (see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4). Even comparatively well-off Bellflower had a homeownership rate of only 40%, down from 64% in 1960 (ibid). And yet homeowner politics reign supreme in the City of Gateway.

Purcell (2001) made a useful argument, grounded in an ethnographic study of homeowner activism in the affluent southerly flank of the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, that homeowner politics can be best understood as an effort to realize an idealized spatial vision. It is not that distinctions based on race, class, and gender are not important in homeowner politics; rather, homeowners themselves are primarily motivated to enter the political realm by a disjuncture between their idealized spatial vision and the actual landscape around them. Distinctions based on personal identity are often components within this disjuncture, but not their primary driver, at least if what homeowners say amongst themselves in the course of collective organizing is to be taken at face value (ibid).

The spatial vision that Purcell (2001) terms *the suburban ideal* continues to make its presence felt in the City of Gateway. This idealized image is based on such quintessential postwar suburbs as Lakewood (located immediately south of the City of Gateway) and the Levittowns of the East Coast. The suburban ideal is a vision of a "respectable" neighborhood composed only of single-family houses, preferably at low densities and with large yards. Landscapes should be full of greenery to offer a "feeling of open space and a vista of natural vegetation" (ibid, p. 182). The political forces motivated by this ideal explain the impetus for the discourse of law and order described earlier in this chapter, and the constricted policy responses of

crackdowns and presale requirements that have been deployed to (ineffectually) combat what is portrayed as a degradation of the residential atmosphere that once existed throughout the City of Gateway.

De Neufville and Barton (1987) wrote about how *myths*, of which homeownership is one of the two they review, define public policy problems. The myth of homeownership in this case is delimited in a highly reductive manner, namely it is construed to include an idealized vision of nuclear families living in detached single-family houses that they own, and that are set in a landscape with grass and trees. Notably, it does not allow for the mixed-tenure housing so common in the City of Gateway. De Neufville and Barton note several general characteristics of myths, several of which are pertinent here: myths are durable and long-lasting over time; they rely on magical thinking rather than logic; they cover over tensions and contradictions within a societal structure; and they legitimize an existing political order (ibid). All of the foregoing help explain the lasting power of the myth of homeownership, or the suburban ideal, in influencing politics at the local level within the City of Gateway.

In the case of the City of Gateway, to a remarkable degree, the image of the traditional suburban, residential street as seen from the public realm is intact. This is true even though the City of Gateway of today has a density closer to that of large cities such as San Francisco and Chicago than it does to the prototypical LA suburbs of the mid-20th century, for which the region was celebrated and derided (McWilliams 1946). The sight of a row of freestanding, single-story, single-family houses arrayed along a quiet street, with green lawns and even picket fences in front, projects a visual totem of the suburban ideal that belies the block's horizontal density (defined in Chapter 5) and non-homeowning majority (Figure 8.2). This totem is a rallying point, around which self-appointed defenders can rally, and invoke in the event of any perceived threats, particularly extralegal housing, to its integrity.

In the hardscrabble City of Gateway, the politics of homeownership have never precisely resembled their equivalents in the bourgeois suburbs such as those Purcell (2001) studied. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is a persistent and countervailing myth of self-reliance, which emphasizes the use value of homeownership, and which is grounded in the now century-old origin narrative of City of Gateway communities as early 20th century versions of what Montgomery (1977) called libertarian suburbs.[18] Even so, the suburban ideal, in its various

[18] See also Nicolaides (1999). Surprisingly, Purcell (2001) found little empirical support for the often unquestioned assumption, embodied in Pratt (1982), that exchange value necessarily trumps use value in affluent suburbs, at least in the southern San Fernando Valley communities he studied. Instead, he found that homeowner activists sought to preserve a bucolic residential atmosphere for the sake of their own enjoyment rather than concerns about resale value. For instance, they opposed proposals, such as a proposed theme park expansion, that would have been certain to increase their property values. This suggests that affluent and working class suburbs differ more in the prevailing *type* of use value that their residents prioritize, rather than that exchange value is more important in the former than in the latter.

guises, while never coming close to eradicating extralegal housing in the City of Gateway, nevertheless is a sufficiently potent force that it constricts the terms of local political debate to variants of the prototypical aspirational American Dream. Its adherents may be outnumbered, but they punch well above their weight in the local arena.

Figure 8.2. The incongruity between the horizontal density of a block in Huntington Park and the block's spacious appearance as seen from the public realm of the street. At left, building footprints shown in red are from the mid-1960s, whereas blue footprints are recent. It is clear that building densities have increased via the infilling of backyards over time. Paradoxically, urban density retains the image of the suburban ideal from the vantage point of where most people perceive it, the residential street. (See Chapter 5 for a description of how the building footprints at left were determined.)

The absence of NGOs

Literature on informal housing in the Global South, particularly since the 1980s, is full of discussions about the role of NGOs.[19] NGOs, in many locales at least, play a critical role in educating and organizing slum dwellers, many of whom regard themselves as extralegal property owners. In the City of Gateway, by contrast, NGOs (generally referred to as *nonprofits* in American parlance) are effectively absent from any debates on informal housing. Institutions of this sort, which hypothetically could provide both vertical political linkages (by mediating between homeowners and local elected officials) and horizontal linkages (by helping to organize homeowners), are not providing either.

[19] For an early example of a journal article devoted to this topic, see World Development 1987. For a more recent article with a brief overview of the rise of NGOs in its introduction, see Sanyal and Mukhija (2001).

It is not that NGOs are completely absent from the political sphere in the City of Gateway in general. In spite of Huntington Park Councilmember Rosa Perez's observation that every councilmember's priority in that city is expanding access to homeownership, she noted that local housing nonprofits are successful in turning out supporters to city council meetings.[20] This has yielded real results for them, including convincing the (perhaps reluctant) city council to steer federal subsidies over which Huntington Park has discretion, principally the HOME and CDBG block grant programs, towards affordable housing projects.

But housing NGOs in Los Angeles, as is the case throughout the US, are almost exclusively focused on developing and operating subsidized multifamily rental housing projects. Jan Breidenbach, who formerly headed Southern California's regional consortium of nonprofit housing developers (the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing or SCANPH), told me that this is because "what the nonprofits know how to do is build," using well-established funding streams, most notably the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in tandem with other local, state and federal sources.[21] Nonprofits, she told me, typically have little interest in working with homeowners on extralegal housing, for reasons of economies of scale: as she put it, "it's so much work for one little unit." Because the housing produced by such NGOs in an expensive region such as Los Angeles is always in perpetually short supply, as well as highly expensive to build, considerations of efficiency become paramount.

Stoecker (2003) has criticized housing NGOs in the US for being focused on housing production to the detriment of community organizing, the original mission of many such organizations, particularly those that began as Community Development Corporations during the Great Society era. One of the many ramifications of this observation is that a group of institutions that could potentially alter the terms and tenor of the debate over informal housing within the local political sphere in the City of Gateway by and large do not do so.[22]

The garage housing debate in the City of Los Angeles

In 1997, perhaps the most high-profile debate on extralegal housing ever to occur in the United States took place in the City of Los Angeles. This episode is revealing, because it represented perhaps the single best opportunity for discourses

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[20] In Chapter 4, the relative lack of enthusiasm for affordable housing in the City of Gateway over recent decades is described, and its relatively minimal footprint is quantified.

[21] Other than CDBG and HOME funds, the main other source of local funds for affordable rental housing was redevelopment agencies, who were mandated by state law to spend 20% of their monies on affordable housing (Fulton and Shigley 2005). With the abolishment of redevelopment in California in 2012, that source of funding is dwindling.

[22] One intriguing exception to this rule is the nonprofit TRUST South LA, which operates within the City of Los Angeles. Its recent activities concerning ADU-style housing are described in Chapter 9, the conclusion to this dissertation. Another exception is Pacoima Beautiful, an environmental justice NGO that served as the client for a UCLA master's thesis that examined informal housing issues in its eponymous northeast San Fernando Valley neighborhood in Los Angeles (Cabansagan 2011).

on extralegal housing apart from law and order to emerge, and for policy solutions other than crackdowns to be enacted. It occurred in the wake of two tragic incidents that galvanized public opinion on an issue that is normally relatively hidden and slow-moving. It unfolded in the second-largest media market in the United States, repeatedly garnering reportorial coverage, editorials, and op-eds in the *Los Angeles Times,* the most prominent daily newspaper in the western United States.

In addition, the debate took place against a backdrop that mostly lacked the structural features identified in the previous section as those that constrain debate in the City of Gateway. It occurred not in a tiny, fiscally stretched jurisdiction, but in the nation's second largest city, with ample capacity for devoting staff time towards its study. No major incidents of municipal corruption dominated headlines in the City of LA at the time. Finally, LA's City Council in 1997 was relatively racially and ideologically diverse, thus diminishing the potential for the debate to be reduced to a power struggle between ethnic blocs jockeying for influence in the body politic. If a thoughtful discussion on extralegal housing were going to take place anywhere, at any time, it was here in 1997. And yet, the ultimate outcome of the episode yielded essentially nothing from the standpoint of policy outputs. Thus, this episode serves as a perfect illustration of the general forces that conspire, in Southern California and perhaps in the US in general, against the enactment of policies that address the issues surrounding extralegal housing in low-income communities. For that reason, it is worth recounting in some detail.

In March 1997, a woman and her two granddaughters perished in a garage apartment fire in Sun Valley in the San Fernando Valley (Bond 1997). Late the previous year, there had also been a garage unit fire within LA city limits that killed five in the city's Watts district (Wilgoren and Gordon 1996). Shortly thereafter, the Los Angeles Times published an editorial supporting City Councilmember Richard Alarcón's proposal to convene a task force to study policy measures to upgrade garage apartments.[23] The editorial board's language suggested the possibilities for expanding discussion on informal housing beyond the typical law and order frame, examining larger structural issues and nodding towards a pragmatic approach to the issue:

> The big question is how to get people out of overcrowded garages and into homes or apartments of their own. But the more urgent and more manageable question is how to make sure those living in garages now are safe. … We support the task force as a good first step. Among the issues it needs to tackle: How to bring some well-built apartments in line with zoning rules; how to get marginal units up to safety standards; and where to place residents of dangerous units. The effort requires flexibility and commitment. The rigid zoning laws that segregate land uses are outdated. A city changing at the pace of Los Angeles needs zoning that reflects how residents live today, not how a much smaller city lived 50 years ago. (Los Angeles Times Editorial Board 1997).

[23] Jan Breidenbach told me that then-Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas—the LA County Supervisor whose travails with an unpermitted garage on his property were described at the beginning of this chapter—was the driving force behind convening the task force.

The task force, comprised of 13 safety and planning officials, was duly convened, and by May the basic outline of its recommendations was reported by the media (Bernstein 1997). Under the plan, city workers whose jobs took them into residential neighborhoods would be instructed to be on the lookout for dangerous-seeming garage apartments. This would result in city inspectors visiting those properties, whereupon units deemed to present immediate safety threats would be shut down, with their owners paying tenant relocation costs. Meanwhile, owners of garages with more moderate conditions would be given a certain length of time to install basic health and safety features such as smoke detectors, windows, adequate plumbing, and the like. After fulfilling these obligations to bring the garages up to minimal standards, owners would be issued a special temporary occupancy permit that would allow their occupants to remain for up to three years, in spite of the units' continuing noncompliance with zoning codes. Afterwards, making the units permanent would require discretionary approval, to unfold within a relatively speedy time frame of no more than four months, at a cost to owners of $1,300 (ibid). Notably, this proposal would have implemented a version of Ward's (2014) concept of *progressive compliance.*

Years earlier, in 1990, a city councilmember had pushed for the departments of City Planning and Building and Safety to consider creating supplemental use districts, including a so-called "R1.5" zone, that regularized extralegal units within them provided that minimal health and safety standards were met (Whittemore 2010; City of Los Angeles 1991a). At the time, city officials estimated that 40,000 to 50,000 garage apartments housed as many as 200,000 people (Whittemore 2010). According to Jan Breidenbach, these actions, along with others such as the creation of a dedicated LA Department of Housing, were a direct outgrowth of the attention to extralegal housing that arose in the wake of the LA Times' significant coverage of the topic in the late 1980s. However, the notion of regularizing non-zoning compliant extralegal units withered in 1990, in part because of opposition from within the city's planning department (City of Los Angeles 1991a). Was the time right in 1997? The LA Times editorial board, while acknowledging how fraught the issue was, sought to stiffen the city council's spine on the day of a crucial committee vote with an editorial supporting the legislative package that resulted from the task force's recommendations (Los Angeles Times Editorial Board 1997b).

The enactment of a pragmatic policy towards extralegal housing, which would have been unprecedented in recent times in big city US history, was not to be. A critical seven-member committee of the full city council rejected the task force's recommendations (Hugo 1997). The chair of the committee, Councilmember Hal Bernson, instead spoke in the language of law and order rhetoric, complaining that "Currently, nothing happens to the landlord when they get caught" with a garage conversion, and proposed stiffening the penalty to a criminal misdemeanor from a mere fine (ibid). His proposal to reverse course from the task force's recommendations, and instead pursue a crackdown, sent shockwaves of panic into the city's immigrant communities, transmitted by Spanish language media, and had to be quelled with a public information campaign by the housing department (Bernstein 1997b).

Meanwhile, according to Jan Breidenbach, Mark Ridley-Thomas, one of the original driving forces behind convening the task force, had rescinded his support, fearing the evictions that would befall some of the city's renters under the proposal (i.e., those living in the extralegal units deemed to be immediate dangers). While the issue of informal housing does not necessarily map neatly onto standard US political polarities, in terms of the composition of the LA City Council at the time the task force's recommendations were left high and dry without support from either the political right or the left. The LA Times Editorial Board bitterly assailed the Council for its members' lack of courage:

> Council members at last week's meeting correctly pointed out that living in a garage apartment is far from ideal. Yet even as they preached compassion, the committee members turned their backs on thousands of residents for whom the only choice is between a garage apartment and the streets. The line for public housing is years long, and the supply of affordable apartments is not nearly as plentiful as the council would like to believe (Los Angeles Times Editorial Board 1997c).

Perhaps the center could have held with a push from the NGO sector, a well-organized and formidable force in LA city politics in 1997, as it remains today. But some NGO leaders viewed extralegal housing regularization efforts as a diversion of scarce funds needed for multifamily subsidized rental housing production. At the time, Jan Breidenbach told me, she and other affordable housing advocates were already in a defensive posture, due to the Richard Riordan mayoral administration's opposition to allocating CDBG funds towards affordable housing production, as they long had been.[24] A typical example of affordable housing advocates' wariness towards extralegal housing regularization efforts is this quote from an official from an LA-based housing NGO:

> We have accepted the fact that people are living in garages in the city of Los Angeles. That, I think, is part of the problem. . . . I don't think . . . rehabilitating the garages is an answer to the problems of a lack of housing. . . . If the city is going to assist to fix garages to bring them into code, I can't understand why they don't use that same money to build more affordable housing (Bond 1997).

For her part, Breidenbach was willing to participate in the debate in her capacity as executive director of the region's consortium of housing NGOs. She told me that she regarded zoning regulations that suppress accessory units—as distinct from building codes that truly promote safety—as "stupid." She had been prepared to serve on the task force, but city officials overruled her participation on the grounds that garage apartments constituted a code enforcement, rather than a housing production, issue. In retrospect, this declaration can be viewed as a missed opportunity for much-needed dialogue between affordable housing advocates and

[24] Also see the op-ed she wrote in the *Times* reflecting this position in 1997 immediately prior to the most intense public debate about informal housing (Breidenbach 1997).

city officials who dealt with the everyday, on-the-ground consequences of affordable housing shortages.

In the end, the proposal to regularize extralegal housing had too many enemies and not enough friends. The forces embodying the suburban ideal were practically synonymous with Los Angeles, and were the dominant force in LA city politics from the 1960s through the year 2000, according to the planning historian Andrew Whittemore (2012). These viewpoints found a strong voice on the city council during the 1997 garage housing debate, none of them favorable to exploring alternatives to the rhetoric of law and order.

Meanwhile, members of the housing NGO community were at best distracted and ambivalent concerning the regularization of extralegal housing, and tended to view policies intended to achieve them as a threat to their own difficult and often thankless work. Although important institutions, prominent among them the *Los Angeles Times,* along with respected regional housing and planning experts such as Jennifer Wolch and Dowell Myers of USC and William Fulton, were willing to introduce nuance to the public discussion, what is striking is the near-total absence of the groups most directly affected by informal housing from the debate. In none of the official documents or media reports concerning extralegal housing that I reviewed did people who own or dwell within extralegal housing, such as garage apartments, speak in their own voices, let alone as part of an organized group.

According to Jan Breidenbach, there have been no meaningful efforts to address issues surrounding extralegal housing in the City of LA since 1997. A fatal 2004 garage fire impelled the LA Fire Department to issue a report that concluded that it was impossible for it to guarantee the safety of the hundreds of thousands of people living in extralegal spaces, but no official action followed (Whittemore 2012). To this day, installing a legal garage apartment in Los Angeles is near-impossible, according to Breidenbach. Overall, the experience in the City of Los Angeles concerning debate over extralegal housing can perhaps best be summed up as "If not there, then where?"[25] The local politics concerning extralegal housing regularization in the City of Gateway, therefore, would seem to be extraordinarily difficult if LA's experience offers any indication.

Indirect Discourse on Informal Housing

As I have argued in this chapter, discourse on informal housing in the local sphere is largely absent in the City of Gateway, for both locally specific and broader structural reasons. Where such discourse exists at all, it tends to be framed through the lens of law and order, which tends to constrain both how extralegal housing is conceptualized and addressed via local policy responses.

However, in the course of my field research I learned that there are at least four issues of concern in the local sphere for which housing informalization is one of the most important, if not the most important, drivers. These concern *Housing*

[25] At the time of writing, legislation is moving forward in San Francisco that would allow some extralegal housing to be regularized. If successful, this would almost certainly be the most ambitious effort of this sort in big city US history. See Lagos (2014).

Elements, *wet utility capacity*, *on-street parking,* and *school overcrowding*. These tend to be the proximate issues that in some cases eventually lead public attention towards informal housing, once their underlying causes are openly discussed. The public discussions about these issues can therefore be thought of as *indirect discourse* on informal housing.

Indirect discourse of the sort defined above both helps and hinders an engagement with informal housing in the local political sphere. On the one hand, it encompasses specific, immediate consequences of informal housing that elicit public concern and bring immediacy to what can otherwise seem to be a recondite, abstract, and slow-moving phenomenon. On the other hand, indirect discourses related to particular knock-on effects of informal housing do not seem to normally result in comprehensive examinations of informal housing as a unified phenomenon. Instead, the side effects tend to be debated in isolation, ultimately reinforcing the dynamic of a constricted discourse in which law and order, enforcement-oriented policy options are the only ones brought up for consideration.

I will explore these contentions below by reviewing each of the four indirect discourses on informal housing in turn. Each of them is a large subject unto itself, and can only be briefly touched upon. Each one suggests important areas for future research on the impact that extralegal housing has on communities in the City of Gateway and elsewhere in Los Angeles and beyond.

Housing Elements

Under state law, California cities and counties are required to draft and approve Housing Elements. Housing Elements are one of seven required elements of local governments' general plans, and one of just two that are reviewed and certified by a state agency, in this case Housing and Community Development (HCD). Housing Elements contain a number of required components, including a section that details compliance with requirements under the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). To demonstrate compliance with RHNA within its Housing Element, a locality must list specific parcels with the appropriate zoning sufficient to accommodate housing developments that will allow the jurisdiction to meet its mandated growth target during the Housing Element's planning period.[26]

The effectiveness of the Housing Element law and process in prodding unwilling local governments to approve and fund affordable housing is debatable at best. Local governments are only required to demonstrate that they have *zoned* for enough land to meet their housing growth targets. Since permitted housing is almost entirely built by for-profit developers and NGOs, they cannot be reasonably held accountable for failing to meet past quotas if, for example, market conditions or high housing costs work against housing production. In addition, even in cases where local governments blatantly shirk their obligations under Housing Element law, enforcement in the form of court-ordered land use policy changes is backward-

[26] Aggregate housing growth targets for metropolitan areas are determined by the state government. These targets are divided into four affordability categories. The four quotas (one for each affordability category) are then allocated among cities and counties by each region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

looking, and largely left up to non-governmental advocacy groups via legal action (P. G. Lewis 2005). While HCD reviews Housing Elements for adherence to its guidelines, it has no real power to discipline uncooperative jurisdictions other than to publicize which jurisdictions are in compliance and which are not.

According to the planner familiar with the work of SCAG, advocacy organizations are unlikely to target the Gateway Cities for lawsuits. They tend to focus their efforts on affluent communities, such as Pleasanton in the Bay Area, whose Housing Element was successfully contested in a 2010 lawsuit (Egelko 2010). Meanwhile, the only consequences that state government can impose on recalcitrant local governments is to make them ineligible for park development funds approved by voters in 2006 as part of Proposition 1C; all other state government funds flows to those localities remain unimpeded. The planner also told me that hiring consultants to draft Housing Element updates can be challenging, since updates occur only every 5 to 8 years. For these reasons, it is altogether unsurprising that compliance with what the planner characterized as a classic "unfunded state mandate" is spotty in the City of Gateway. As of March 24, 2014, only three of the 11 City of Gateway jurisdictions were fully in compliance with HCD requirements (Appendix 8-1). Bell, Compton, and Huntington Park had not even submitted their Housing Elements to HCD at all, even though the submittal deadline had been October 15, 2013, with a four-month grace period ending on February 15, 2014.

Even if Housing Elements do relatively little to alter the course of local housing policy choices, they perform an important communicative function. Housing Element updates typically trigger consultative processes that seek to gather and reflect input from individual residents and civil society organizations within a jurisdiction. They force a local community to grapple with the "wicked problem" of providing decent, safe, and affordable housing, and reflect its discourse on housing issues in the process (Rittel and Webber 1973). For that reason, a review of the 11 most recent City of Gateway Housing Elements available online, one for each jurisdiction, is revealing.[27] Perhaps most revealing of all is what the Housing Elements do *not* say about the informal housing market.

In none of the 11 Housing Elements is the existence of an underground housing economy directly acknowledged or comprehensively discussed as a structural response to population inflow combined with a lack of permitted housing construction. In the 177 pages of Los Angeles County's Housing Element, for instance, there is no mention of extralegal housing until the very end of the main body of the document prior to the appendix, a "public input matrix" starting on page 156 that summarizes public comments. In a jurisdiction as varied as LA County, which includes communities ranging from intensely urbanized Florence-Firestone and Willowbrook to remote desert and mountain towns, this is perhaps at least somewhat understandable, though still surprising given the extreme housing conditions in the densest communities.

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[27] The Housing Elements that I reviewed vary in terms of whether they were draft or had been approved by the jurisdiction's elected body, and whether they had been certified as compliant with HCD's requirements. These attributes, plus the online URLs for all of the Housing Elements that I reviewed, are shown in Appendix 8-1.

Even more puzzling is Compton's Housing Element, which lists 33 separate housing policies, of which not a single one explicitly pertains to extralegal housing (pages H3-18 to H3-20). "Secondary Dwelling Units" are mentioned only once, via a cursory statement that they are permitted within two of the city's residential zone districts (page H3-45). The closest that Compton's Housing Element comes to acknowledging informal housing is this statement:

> Unit overcrowding is caused by the combined effect of low earning and high housing costs in a community, and reflects the inability of households to buy or rent housing that provides a reasonable level of privacy. However, cultural factors may also play a role in overcrowding (Page H3-21).

While Compton's Housing Element is an extreme example, in general the City of Gateway Housing Elements use a constricted vocabulary, with the repeated use of various terms that obliquely refer to informal housing, including "overcrowding" and "substandard conditions." Other terms, such as "bootleg units" and "illegally converted units" are more direct descriptions of housing informality, but arise with surprising rarity given the extent of the phenomenon. Presumably because Housing Elements tend to be written within a narrow frame that does not account for informal housing, they contain startling statements, such as the following one from Cudahy's Housing Element, presented matter-of-factly with no further commentary:

> There are a number of other census indicators that are useful in identifying potential dilapidated units. These indicators include units without heating, units lacking conventional plumbing, or units lacking complete kitchen facilities. The latter variable may also be an indicator of bootleg units constructed illegally or legal second units. *According to the most recent census, 2,166 units (38.3% of the city's total) did not use any form of heating fuel* (Page 32)**.** (Emphasis added.)

One would have to assume that a city where fully 38% of the units lack heating in a region where wintertime temperatures can dip close to the freezing point features an active informal housing market, and yet little more is said on this point. Another example of a statement that incongruously bespeaks such a market with little follow-up commentary is this one from Huntington Park's Housing Element:

> Unlike many urbanized communities, single-family homes have increased in relative proportion and number over the past two decades, from 34 percent (5,361 units) in 1980 to nearly 50 percent (7,656 units) in 2007, with the most dramatic increase being in attached single-family units. In comparison, multi-family units now comprise just half of the housing stock, decreasing from 64.5 percent in 1980. (Page II-28.)

To say the least, a 34% increase in the number of "single-family homes" during a period when Huntington Park's population increased by 40% (Page II-1) to reach a population density exceeding that of the New York City borough of Queens is anomalous. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is almost impossible to explain such a

figure without invoking the informal housing market, and yet the ramifications of this difficult-to-believe claim are left unexplored.

South Gate's Housing Element contains the most forthright acknowledgement of informal housing among the 11 City of Gateway jurisdictions:

> The actual South Gate population is thought to be significantly larger than reported by the Census or State Department of Finance. An ongoing UCLA study found that the 2000 Census undercounted many Los Angeles County communities, especially low income minority communities. Based on observations by City staff, severe overcrowding is an issue as evidenced by illegal garage conversions as living space in the community. As a result, the number of residents in the City has far exceeded the carrying capacity of the current housing stock. Using utility usage as an estimate of household size further supports the population undercount. Based on utility usage, the City estimated its 2006 population at between 115,000 and 125,000, almost 13 to 25 percent above the official estimate by the State. (Page 2-2.)

Unlike most of the other Housing Elements, in this case the City of South Gate has referenced outside research (the UCLA undercount study), and incorporated findings from a non-standard data set (utility usage data) to attempt at least an indirect quantification of the informal housing market via population estimates. Even here, the description of this phenomenon as unfolding through "severe overcrowding" and "illegal garage conversions" exceeding the "carrying capacity of the current housing stock" represent a limited and incomplete framework for a discussion about likely the most important mechanism by which low-income people find housing in the city.

In several cases, the potential for Housing Elements to spur a more robust civic conversation on housing informality can be at least glimpsed. For example, in the introductory pages of its Housing Element, Paramount makes what amounts to an official statement of regret concerning its past crackdown efforts in the name of economic development:

> The Let's Get Paramount Neighborhoods Lookin' Good program [in operation between 1987 and 1989], a code enforcement effort designed to clean up the residential neighborhoods in Paramount, was also implemented over a two-year period while there had been a major effort in Paramount in redeveloping the central business district and promoting new housing stock within the City. In addition, much attention was given to preventing the further deterioration of the existing housing stock through code enforcement programs. *In early efforts, the City targeted areas throughout the community for specific code enforcement activity, only to find that this type of action often alienated the residents and encouraged them to complain to elected officials.* Recognizing the difficulty of this comply or else approach to code enforcement, the City implemented a number of programs to provide financial assistance to the community in improving their homes. (Page 8.) (Emphasis added.)

Other Housing Elements highlight at least some non-enforcement-oriented policies that impact extralegal housing. For example, Huntington Park provides

loans to homeowners to allow them build room additions (Page 35). Maywood coordinates code enforcement with housing rehabilitation assistance funds to minimize the hardship on homeowners who are required to modify their houses in the wake of code enforcement actions (Page 40).

The community input that typically forms a strong part of the Housing Element update process offers an opportunity to expand the range of issues addressed in the resulting document. For instance, Huntington Park places an overview of comments received from community members near the beginning of its Housing Element document. This summary shows that concerns in the category of property maintenance and code enforcement ranked topmost among all housing issues in feedback received from Huntington Park residents (Page 16). While the summarized comments all reflect Purcell's notion of the suburban ideal, emphasizing stricter enforcement and a concern for a "dirty, unkempt appearance to the street," the mere fact that these concerns typically lacking from Housing Elements are foregrounded shows the potential for meaningful community input to shape the documents. Presumably, a still wider variety of perspectives might have been obtained had the voices of extralegal housing dwellers and their advocates been incorporated.

The foregoing suggests that the Housing Element process has at least the potential for broadening discourse about informal housing, but at present largely fails to do so. For instance, Saul Bolivar, Housing Director of the City of Cudahy emphasized to me how unrealistic the regionwide housing production targets allocated by SCAG to member cities are for Cudahy and similar localities. Under RHNA, Cudahy is required to identify sites for dense, subsidized multifamily buildings to meet its requirements despite the city's tiny size of 1.2 square miles, high existing density, high poverty rate, and overtaxed utility infrastructure. RHNA presupposes a growth paradigm, in which the unstated assumption is that all California communities must do their fair share to accommodate regional growth. The Housing Element process does *not* seem to be designed to help the communities, notably the likes of Cudahy, in which rapid growth has already occurred, particularly when much of it has been in the form of extralegal housing.

In addition to its legally mandated structure, the potential of Housing Elements to provide an alternative discourse for informal housing seems to be stifled by the limited vocabulary they use. This constricted vocabulary is arguably reflective of conceptualizations of the housing market that, by and large, treat informal housing as an aberration or a nuisance to be addressed rather than the central process by which most low-income renters are able to find housing. In Chapter 9, the conclusion to this dissertation, I briefly discuss steps through which the limited discourse of Housing Elements could be broadened. For the time being, Housing Elements in the City of Gateway mostly reflect the constricted discourse on housing issues in the communities from which they originate.

Wet utility capacity

The ADU literature that arose in the 1980s, most notably Gellen (Gellen 1985), emphasized the potential for ADUs to allow underused interior space to be repurposed, particularly within aging suburban communities with decreasing

populations resulting from fewer children. One aspect of this argument was that existing wet utility (water and sewer) networks were under capacity, and could therefore accommodate the increased demand resulting from the addition of ADUs. In the City of Gateway, where the population has both dramatically increased *and* grown younger in recent decades (as discussed in Chapter 4), I learned from my interview informants that far from having room for growth, in many cases water and sewer networks are beyond capacity.[28] Extralegal housing has exacerbated the pressure on wet utility networks without contributing to utility impact fees that would help maintain them, resulting in political fallout at the local level. For instance, in 2013 Oscar Magaña, recently elected mayor of Maywood at age 31, placed the need to replace the city's antiquated water pipes (some of them dating back to 1924) on par with afterschool enrichment programs and job creation as urgent needs facing his city (Arredondo 2013).

Wet utilities have arisen as a local political issue primarily through two channels. One of them is a sudden, visible decrease in service quality. Saul Bolivar relates that in his city, Cudahy, it is common to see water bubbling up onto streets from leaks in mains running underneath them. For instance, on River Road, recently leaks were occurring several times per year. The result was that the street's surface became riddled with irregularities following the water company's repeated efforts to remove the street pavement, stop the leak in the pipe, and then finish by patching the asphalt. Because of a lack of funds available for wholesale replacement of the water mains, a situation arose, in Bolivar's words, where "It's kind of sad, because it looks like the old cartoon where you're patching inner tubes on your bike. At the end, all you have left is patches."

Worse, in Maywood, the next city to the north (served by a different water company), residents had been recently complaining that water coming from residents' faucets was brown, owing to mineral deposits that build up in mains over many years. In another example, at a meeting of the Concerned Citizens of Athens Park that I attended in Willowbrook, several residents noted to the invited LA County employee that they had experienced recent drops in water pressure. Later he told me that these were common occurrences, and likely attributable to the installation of unpermitted housing on these streets. I learned from Veronica Lopez , Code Enforcement Manager of South Gate, that sinkholes had appeared on South Gate streets in recent years, owing to the deterioration of antiquated clay pipes accelerated by increased water service demands from the extralegal housing. A front page article on a "water crisis in Huntington Park" in the Spanish language publication Latino California quoted city residents complaining about

[28] For reasons explained in Chapter 5, there are few obstacles to the extension of "dry utilities" of electricity and telecommunications to those who can pay them, or to the maintenance of their distribution networks. By contrast, so-called "wet utilities"—water and sewer—are a different matter altogether. Funding the maintenance of wet utility networks is a major concern nationwide; for example, Levin et al. (2002). The concentration of informal housing in the City of Gateway adds an additional layer of complexity to an already difficult issue.

contamination of their water, drawn by the local city-contracted provider from a well, with carbon tetrachloride and nitrates (Rodríguez 2013).

Inevitably, these observed declines in water and sewer service translate into what quickly becomes the second contentious channel for local issues concerning wet utilities: increases in wet utility rates, connection fees, and taxes. William Campana, Chief Building Official in South Gate, noted the underlying reason for an increase in water and sewer rates in his city: South Gate's municipal Water Division, which serves most of the city, purchases its water from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), which serves a large swath of Los Angeles County. Because MWD has a tiered wholesale pricing structure when it sells water to local distributors such as South Gate's Water Division, in which the unit cost increases with the total amount of water sold (in an effort to encourage conservation), increases in water demand from extralegal housing can result in water rates increasing for the whole city when a pricing threshold is crossed.[29]

As Campana and Lopez both noted, such rate increases typically result in bewildered and angry reactions from city residents, which can swiftly result in demands for crackdowns, once city officials point out that extralegal housing is driving the added demand. According to Saul Bolivar of Cudahy, Golden State Water Company, whose Central Basin West service area includes portions of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Paramount, the Hollydale section of southeast South Gate, and Willowbrook, has the highest water rates in the area, with a 58% increase over the past five years. In Huntington Park, the subsidy drawn from the city's general fund to prop up Huntington Park's contracted-out water system nearly doubled from $1.4 million in fiscal year 2007-2008 to $2.6 million by 2013 (Rodríguez 2013).

Because local ratepayers resist water and sewer rate increases, in many cases it becomes politically expedient for local politicians to shift the burdens of needed systemwide capital improvements onto new housing development in the form of increased connection fees for water and sewer service. For instance, Campana pointed to recent increases in water connection fees in South Gate from $1,000 to $3,500 for ¾" service, and from $1,000 to $7,000 or more for 1" service. Saul Bolivar of Cudahy cited a case in which the public works department determined that a proposed 15-unit development was unable to obtain adequate flow of water for firefighting for the building. As a result, the city imposed an additional fee of about $200,000 on the development, which caused the developers to abandon the project. He cited utility connection fees, assessed per housing unit, as part of the motivation for developers to turn to extralegal means to split townhouses into stacked flats post-occupancy (a practice described in Chapter 5).

In cases where increases in water or sewer rates are politically difficult, and impact fees applied to new development are insufficient, some cities turn to utility

[29] Without the tiered pricing structure of the MWD, extralegal housing might not be expected to put pressure on water and sewer rates, since as noted in Chapter 5 relatively little water goes unmetered in the City of Gateway. Unauthorized branches from water laterals usually occur downstream of water meters, meaning that the increased water consumption is monitored and charged for.

taxes applied to customers' water bills. Nestor Valencia, the Bell city councilmember I interviewed, noted that Bell has resorted to imposing these types of taxes. Veronica Lopez observed that Huntington Park has done the same.

Whether residents of the City of Gateway experience degradation of their utility service, or pay more for it in the form of increased water and sewer rates and taxes, or as higher costs of new housing passed on to homebuyers and renters in the form of connection fees, extralegal housing is a driving force behind these trends. When this link between informalized housing and deteriorating utility service is brought to light, it tends to result in public calls for crackdowns on extralegal housing, and increased political resistance to the approval of new, permitted housing developments.

While this particular US version of the "politics of shit" is far more subdued than, for example, the transgressive toilet festivals organized by Indian slum dwellers that Appadurai describes, nevertheless "Human waste management, as it is euphemistically termed in policy circles, is perhaps the key issue where every problem of the urban poor arrives at a single point of extrusion, so to speak." (Appadurai 2001, p. 37). As a result of the collision between the urgency underlying the basic needs for clean water and sanitation with extralegal housing, Hector Rodriguez, the city manager of Cudahy, predicts intensifying conflicts over wet utility issues in the years ahead.

On-street parking

Veronica Lopez of South Gate characterized a shortage of on-street parking as roughly equivalent to utility service degradation as a spinoff effect of extralegal housing in terms of intensity of public sentiment in the local political sphere. Rosa Perez, a Huntington Park city councilmember also noted that this issue will motivate residents to attend city council meetings and bitterly complain about their inability to park on their streets. A journalistic account from the early 1990s even recounted Walnut Park residents pulling guns on each other during heated disputes over scarce curbside parking spaces (Berg 1993).

Perez observed that the rate of car ownership has greatly increased, using her own family's history as an example. When her parents moved to Huntington Park 40 years ago, the family had just one car. Today, Perez's household of four people has six motor vehicles. Between her property's garage in the back and its long driveway, the six cars can fit on her parcel without taking up on-street spaces, but the same is not true for many other households in the area. Between the dispersed commuting patterns noted in Chapter 4, and the addition of extralegal housing, which in some cases simultaneously generates the need for new parking (via new residents' cars) while eliminating already existing off-street parking (as in the conversion of garages), parking on City of Gateway residential streets can become an exercise in futility.

There is at least some evidence that resident frustration over lack of parking and congested residential streets has fueled the demand for extralegal housing crackdowns. Leeds (1996) implies that this was the case for South Gate's crackdown in the 1990s. Berg (1993) similarly recounts that neighborhood leaders in Walnut Park responded to their community's parking crunch by organizing to encourage

neighbors to call in complaints about extralegal housing to county code enforcement officials. Given that parking is an issue that leaves tempers flaring at the best of times, it is perhaps not surprising that curbside parking crunches can swiftly lead to pressure for local governments to pursue enforcement-oriented actions against unpermitted living quarters.

Perez noted the inherent difficulties in managing on-street parking in residential areas. She noted that when Huntington Park residents express frustration over the lack of parking on their streets at city council meetings, she often asks them how many cars their household owns. Often, the number is four or more. Even so, residents have typically expressed proprietary feelings towards the parking spaces in front of their houses, even when she has pointed out to them that all on-street parking is city-owned and not allocated to any particular house. Perez has challenged residents making such statements to state what *they* would suggest that the city should do, and has found that they are unable to come up with a workable solution.

Shoup (2005) has long advocated for reforms in the management of publicly owned parking spaces, in part through reforms that employ market pricing mechanisms. He also notes, however, that the politics are more difficult, and the feasible policy tools more limited, for improving the management of parking on residential, as opposed to commercial, streets. Whereas merchants have at least some inherent interest in parking pricing reforms that stimulate quick turnover in parking spaces on commercial thoroughfares, residents generally do not (ibid).

While some policy options, such as residential parking permit programs, are at least theoretically feasible, Perez noted that the recent Bell corruption scandals have harmed residents' trust that enforcement of the existing parking regulations in Huntington Park is carried out in a fair and impartial manner. Even without the specter of corruption, parking management reforms require a degree of staff capacity that is difficult to muster in a small and fiscally overwhelmed city.

More fundamentally, parking reforms presuppose that by limiting the supply of on-street parking, residents will switch to non-driving modes of transportation. As recounted at the beginning of Chapter 4, where good-quality public transportation, such as the Green Line light rail, exists within the City of Gateway, it is well-used, even when it does not link up obvious activity centers. However, as can be plainly seen in Chapter 4's Figure 4.1, rail transit service does not reach most of the City of Gateway. As detailed in Chapter 9, this may change in the future. Even so, for the time being, in most of the City of Gateway public transportation means LA Metro bus service. While offering a dense network of routes, bus routes may not be enough of a consolation for residents skeptical about supporting reductions in their access to on-street parking.

Some cities, such as Bell and Cudahy, have addressed their residential parking crunches with a blunt instrument: an across-the-board ban on overnight curbside parking on city streets (Figure 8.3). Violators risk receiving a parking ticket. Veronica Lopez stated that she knew of a significant number of families who had moved to South Gate from those cities specifically to escape their overnight parking restrictions.

Figure 8.3. A signpost at the city line notifies drivers entering the City of Bell of its ban on overnight on-street parking. Photo by the author.

South Gate has instituted overnight parking restrictions only in limited areas of the city, and only at the behest of residents who have petitioned for it in their areas. Under the program, known as "preferential parking," residents receive two tags per household, which allow them to park their cars on-street overnight. If residents wish to receive more than two tags, they must meet some additional requirements: first, they must submit to inspections of their properties to assure that their garages have not been converted into living spaces. (Lopez had identified several extralegal garage conversions in this manner.) Then, Lopez's employees assure that residents are using all available off-street spaces on their property's driveway and garage, before then issuing additional on-street parking permits for properly registered vehicles with verifiably licensed drivers. Thus, South Gate's preferential parking program, in the areas of the city where it exists, has the effect of introducing an additional mechanism to interdict extralegal housing and the cars associated with it.

School overcrowding

Population growth within the City of Gateway and elsewhere in Los Angeles has, at times in recent decades, put severe pressure on the capacity of school districts. Because extralegal housing has accommodated much of the population growth, at least in the City of Gateway (as argued in Chapter 4), and also because contrary to the national trend, children have accounted for a large proportion of the increase, at times it has been conflated with booming school enrollments.

An LA Times article from the 1990s on school overcrowding in the Paramount Unified School District is a good example of this connection (Helfand and Pascual 1995). In the 15 years leading up to 1995, Paramount's school district increased in student enrollment from 9,800 to 14,000. The piece cites "some local

officials" who argued that the school overcrowding was primarily a byproduct of the success that Paramount had had with redeveloping its downtown and encouraging more (legal) multifamily housing construction there. It then goes on to cite an opposing viewpoint, also from unspecified "city officials," that the new downtown housing had been primarily in the form of small apartments not catering to families with children, and that the pressure on school capacity was primarily attributable to informal housing, which was in fact serving families with children (ibid).

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest, which serves all of the City of Gateway except for Bell Gardens, Compton, Lynwood, Paramount, and parts of Willowbrook, has been able to respond to school overcrowding by embarking on a $20.6 billion expansion program. This was authorized by district voters over five elections spanning from 1997 to 2008 (Los Angeles Unified School District 2009).

Formulating a cogent hypothesis about why pro-expansion forces were able to build a coalition sufficient to get such an ambitious initiative, the largest in the nation, passed is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But several factors seem likely to contribute. For one, LA Unified is a geographically vast entity that covers not only the City of Los Angeles but also transcends the city and county boundary lines that divide the numerous smaller communities that form part of it. LA Unified thus escapes the jurisdictional fragmentation that bedevils the City of Gateway.

In addition, the education of children, it would appear, elicits a level of political involvement from everyday residents that is elusive on other, less visible issues such as the deterioration of utility networks. For instance, Le Moigne (2013) notes that despite the near-complete absence of Latinos from involvement in Compton city electoral politics until about 2010, a group of parents at Jefferson Elementary, a school with a 98% Latino student enrollment, was able to organize a school strike and other tactics to reverse the Compton Unified School District's proposal to close Jefferson. The district had sought to shutter Jefferson and five of the district's 37 other schools in order to close a $40 million budget deficit. School advocacy also seems to offer the potential to spin off political involvement in other areas. For instance, Quinones (2007) noted that a South Gate civic organization, Padres Unidos, originally formed to pressure LAUSD to address school overcrowding issues, played a central role in ousting South Gate's treasurer, Albert Robles, in a recall election (an incident recounted earlier in this chapter). These episodes point to the possibility that local debates about school politics could provide an entry point for more vexed issues, notably informal housing, to be taken up. At present, however, such a claim remains entirely untested.

Summary

As has been argued throughout in this chapter, the peculiar form that housing informalization takes in the City of Gateway has largely suppressed debate on its implications from entering the local political realm. Because housing

informality, LA-style, is built on top of fully legal property ownership,[30] and because code enforcement gives homeowners every incentive to conceal their extralegal spaces from the local state and from each other, with rare exceptions property owners do not band together to plead their case within the local political sphere. The *quiet encroachment of the ordinary* that their cumulative actions represent tend to repel attempts to dismantle the underground housing economy, but neither are opportunities for policy solutions that extend beyond periodic and ineffectual crackdowns stemming from a discourse of law and order much in evidence (Bayat 2000). In short, there is a stunted discourse surrounding housing informality in the City of Gateway that contributes to a *local political stalemate* on housing issues. With weak governance capacity occasioned by jurisdictional fragmentation, municipal corruption, and ethnic and racial conflict common within the City of Gateway, this policy blockade is even more impregnable than it would be otherwise.

As a result, housing issues are largely left alone by local elected officials. Evidence from a Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) survey of elected officials in 304 high-immigrant cities in California in 2004, with responses from 86% of the jurisdictions, suggests that this dynamic exists throughout the state (Lewis, Ramakrishnan and Patel 2004). For instance, the responding councilmembers and mayors cited "housing supply and affordability" as the leading issue faced by all of the residents of their jurisdictions, ahead of such perennially vexing problems as traffic, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, fiscal health, and crime, and by an even wider margin for their immigrant constituents. Meanwhile, 71% of the planning officials responding to a separate survey (with a response rate of 69%) indicated that housing conditions among immigrant residents had not been debated by the planning commission or city council, as compared to 13% who said that it had as a major issue, 14% who said that it had as a minor issue, and 2% who did not know (ibid). It would be entirely speculative to surmise that the reasons for this gap between policy need and action on housing in other high-immigrant cities in California are the same as those in the City of Gateway. But the parallel between the urgency of housing issues and their lack of attention in the local political realm between the City of Gateway and other communities throughout California is nonetheless striking.

[30] This structured relationship between titled property ownership and informal housing appended to it is not unique to LA. For instance, Soliman (2004) uses the term "exformal" to describe formerly permitted housing in Egypt that has been modified in informal ways, such as the subdivision of public housing units. The most apt analogy in the Global North to the LA experience of extralegal housing bundled with separately and privately-owned property could well be Mediterranean Europe; see Allen, Barlow, Léal, Maloutas, and Padovani (2004).

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Chapter 9: Conclusion

> This corner, almost two decades after the riots, has become something else altogether. Its tiny bungalows nowadays tend to be freshly painted and well maintained, with neat gardens and flower-beds surrounded by new wrought-iron fences in the front and thriving vegetable patches in the back. Its boulevards are now more active and colourful, with many more shops, small industries and lively markets and eateries, decorated with exuberant, colourful signs and displays. This will never be a beautiful neighbourhood and is not a completely safe one, but it has become a much neater, happier, more optimistic one.
>
> —Doug Saunders, *Arrival City, p. 77.*

The earlier chapters in this dissertation have defined the City of Gateway and positioned it historically and geographically; described the physical concretization of the informal housing market; explained the market's workings; explored its relationship with the municipal function of code enforcement; and examined how informal housing manifests, or fails to do so, in local politics. They have sought to address the research subquestions, and by extension the overarching research question, posed back in Chapter 1, of what role informality plays in the housing market, expansively defined, of the City of Gateway.

Considering the findings from the previous chapters together raises another set of questions, whose answers must necessarily be, at this point, tentative and speculative. This concluding chapter seeks to pose and then address, if not definitely answer, these additional questions in order to synthesize the findings described throughout this work, and assess their broader meaning and relevance. The questions are as follows:

- On balance, is the informal housing market in the City of Gateway a net benefit or detriment for its participants and those who live near them?
- What, if anything, should be done to intervene in the City of Gateway's informal housing market?
- What are the broader implications, if any, of the findings of this dissertation beyond the City of Gateway?
- Is the informalization of the housing stock in the City of Gateway solely a consequence of structural economic forces, or are cultural preferences also relevant?
- What does the near future hold for the City of Gateway and its housing?

The remainder of this chapter examines these questions in order.

A Normative Assessment of the Informal Housing Market in the City of Gateway

Any attempt to intervene, from a policy standpoint, in the informal housing market of the City of Gateway must start with an assessment about what about the status quo is good, and what is not. A judgment that it is entirely good would lead to the conclusion that attempts to shrink or alter the market are misguided. After all, plenty of other pressing social issues in the City of Gateway compete for policymakers' attention, including poorly performing public education, a lack of living-wage jobs, air pollution, a lack of park space, severe traffic congestion, and various others. For policymakers to undertake attempts to overhaul the informal housing market, which would undoubtedly be difficult and contentious, the efforts would need to be worthwhile.

Conversely, a judgment that the informal housing market is entirely bad could lead to heavy-handed attempts to eliminate it or at least to significantly reduce its footprint. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, official policy has, for the most part, been written as though elimination of the informal market is a desirable objective. In practice, however, the means to bring such an outcome about have never come close to matching such sentiments, nor has local elected officials' demonstrated ability to stomach the inevitable ensuing social dislocations. In this regard, debates over informal housing bear more than a passing resemblance to the much more prominent controversies on the national stage over unauthorized immigration and what should be done about those who are already in the US without papers.

There is, of course, a precedent in US urban history for the elimination of conditions in cities of the mid-twentieth century that resembled in many ways what can be seen now in the City of Gateway. These were grouped under the antiseptically dismissive term "blight." The program, robustly funded by the federal government, was *urban renewal*, or *redevelopment* as it came to be called in its California implementation (Fulton and Shigley 2005). For now, with the elimination of redevelopment powers and the local agencies that wielded them in California in 2012, the prospects of mass clearance of City of Gateway neighborhoods with widespread extralegal conditions seem remote. Historical trends, of course, can reverse themselves; it is not possible to know at the present time whether aggressive, mid-20th century style redevelopment could make a return at some time in the future. For now, it seems highly unlikely.

My judgment about the informal housing market in the City of Gateway is that it is a net positive and, perhaps more fundamentally, a necessity for most of those who participate in it. The market offers undeniable benefits to its participants, above all through its success in providing rental housing to the working poor in a convenient location near the urban core and close to a high concentration of jobs. With essentially no large-scale planning vision whatsoever, the informal housing system arose organically from the ground up over decades in southeast Los Angeles in response to a seemingly intractable lack of affordable housing. Seen from this purely instrumental standpoint, it is a smashing success.

But I also believe that it would be a mistake to unduly romanticize the informal housing market. Cases can certainly be found of people who fit the profiles of Turner's (1977) Mexico City anarchist-builders or De Soto's (2000) heroic entrepreneurs. However, to overgeneralize from them risks obscuring from view the very real detriments of the informal housing market, both to those who participate in it and to those who live in its midst.

On balance—and without any pretense of having performed a formal cost-benefit analysis—I believe that the informal housing market in the City of Gateway does more good than harm. At the same time, I believe that its drawbacks are real and urgent. My hope is that the list of positive and negative attributes, each presented in turn below, would be helpful to reform efforts that seek to preserve the former while extirpating or at least mitigating the latter to the extent possible.

Positive attributes of the informal housing system

As argued above, in the most fundamental sense the informal housing market is successful. Not only does it resolve a fundamental mismatch between housing supply and demand, it provides housing for many subpopulations that are largely shut out of the formal housing market, whether its subsidized or unsubsidized segments. These include unauthorized immigrants, including the recently-arrived; people with poor credit histories or none at all; and the unbanked. But other positive attributes of the system rest in other aspects aside from its instrumental success in providing housing.

Relative security of tenure (for owner-occupants). It is true that homeowners who reside on their properties while operating extralegal housing face the risk of having to close down their rental space if they become subject to code enforcement. In certain cases, homeowners depend on the rental income from such rental spaces, in which case having to shut them down imposes real economic hardship. Undoubtedly there are instances where homeowners, as a result, lose the financial wherewithal to retain ownership of their properties. While I lack data to substantiate a claim that such a scenario is relatively rare, the code enforcement officers with whom I spoke suggested that it is. Two interview subjects, Hilda McCall in Harbor Gateway (City of Los Angeles) and Roberto in Florence-Firestone, recounted instances where they or their family members were compelled to shut down extralegal space because of code enforcement action and yet their households retained ownership of their properties afterwards without difficulty. In general, both because informal housing in the City of Gateway is built on a foundation of legal property ownership, and also because homeowner-occupants, as discussed in Chapter 8, are at the top of the local political food chain among everyday citizens, they enjoy a degree of tenure protection that is absent in most of the world's other informal housing economies. Furthermore, the unshakable legal property ownership upon which City of Gateway-style informal housing rests may prevent future difficulties, especially the family inheritance disputes which Ward (2014) warns are looming for the inheritors of Texas *colonia* properties as a result of their owners' lack of fully formal title deeds and potential buyers' lack of access to formal credit.

Creation of a participatory local housing economy open to many. The incremental, self-built or at least self-directed nature of the construction of extralegal living space in the City of Gateway provides many opportunities for labor compensated by cash wages or in-kind benefits to people who are shut out of formal construction work. Such labor often capitalizes on knowledge and skills that immigrants have brought with them from their home countries. It also provides opportunities for workers to gain skills through informal apprenticeship networks, and to later launch their own independent building companies (whether licensed or not). In contrast to so many large-scale construction projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods, where community activists frequently battle for guarantees that subcontractors will allot a given percentage of construction jobs to neighborhood residents, the informal housing economy is often inherently local as a matter of course.[1] In addition, construction labor is not the only work opportunity: there are livelihoods to be earned performing handyman work and managing properties, many of which also go to local residents, with the accompanying benefits of capital recirculation in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood stabilization. In at least some of its incarnations, the informal housing economy is a force that stabilizes neighborhoods. In very different contexts in Newark and in Montreal, Sternlieb (1966) and Krohn, Fleming, and Manzer (1977) noted that mixed-tenure housing, where homeowners and renters are intermingled within the same residential properties, can reduce landlord-tenant conflict, tenant turnover, rent-gouging, and other destabilizing aspects of absentee-owned rental housing. Heath (2001) recalled that the three-decker houses of his childhood neighborhood in New Bedford, Massachusetts allowed families to weather economic disruptions and other tragedies by allowing the resource of separate dwelling spaces under the same roof to be reconfigured by their homeowners in response to changing circumstances. The same appears to be the case in the City of Gateway, at least where owners reside on their properties or close by. In an added City of Gateway twist, mixed-tenure housing—often, though not always, created via extralegal means—allows family and kinship groups to recreate in a metropolitan environment the practice, common in rural Latin America, of establishing a de facto family compound that is held for multiple generations. In contra-distinction to the mainstream American propensity for suburbanites to move "up and out" as their financial wherewithal grows, into bigger houses in more high-status neighborhoods, the suburban family compound of the City of Gateway is often the site of long-term

[1] It would be a mistake to assume that this is always true. For instance, Chapter 8 describes the absentee landlords in Bell Gardens who have relied on extralegal modes to increase their profits. Even so, informal housing is much more likely to be a localized economy, compared to permitted multifamily housing, so much of which has been plugged into national and even international capital circuits via Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities (CMBS), and other mechanisms.

investment and improvement, reminiscent of vernacular building[2] practices in Southern Europe (J. Allen, Barlow, Léal, Maloutas, and Padovani 2004). If the City of Gateway were redeveloped according to the standard US "Smart Growth" formula of replacing single-family houses with multistory rental or condo buildings over retail, this stabilizing force would be lost.

Housing for children. Observers have long questioned whether large apartment buildings, particularly those with elevators and semi-public internal spaces such as corridors and lobbies, are suitable for low-income families with children (Newman 1972). I heard of no instances of extralegal housing in the City of Gateway's residential neighborhoods that included such spaces. Quarters inhabited by families with children, while often cramped, usually have direct access to the ground and to the street, where children can play. Housing for children, long lamented for its scarcity among the stock of affordable housing added to areas with high land costs, can be seen everywhere on the rear of residential lots throughout the City of Gateway.

Cultural expression. As discussed earlier, incremental additions allow Latino homeowners to modify suburban properties originally conceived mostly for white Americans to meet their preferences for the use of residential space. Lawns become tiled patios, open lots are enclosed by wrought iron fences and gates, and front yards become places to display religious icons and seasonal decorations. The addition of extralegal living space is part and parcel of an overall process of incremental construction that allows owner-occupants to make their own decisions about how to configure their properties to meet the needs of their (often extended and multigenerational) families.

Economic provision. Direct control of residential space that lies at ground level and that fronts the public realm opens opportunity for residents of residential properties in the City of Gateway—homeowners, to be sure, but also renters of extralegal space—to earn a living from off-the-books occupations, and not simply from the housing economy. Tacos are grilled in front yards and sold to passers-by on foot. Cars are repaired curbside or on driveways, by people seeking to save the expense of fixing their own vehicles or earning money by fixing others'. Clothing is sold from racks set up in front yards. Street vendors pushing carts or driving trucks, whether to sell ice cream or cooked food, park their equipment in their yards. Accommodation for these sorts of livelihood opportunities usually does not exist in multifamily buildings.

Residential atmosphere. Because it focuses living space close to the ground and to the rear of lots, the informal housing market maintains many aspects of the open, airy visual character of suburban residential streets in the City of Gateway. Although

[2] Vernacular building refers to construction that is carried out or directed by non-professionals, typically without the involvement of licensed architects. It tends to follow particular well-established patterns associated with certain ethnic or other cultural groups.

many such streets have lost some of their front lawn areas to paving, and while many of them are crowded with cars parked curbside, buildings continue to be mostly one or two stories in height, and front yard setbacks have been almost entirely maintained. For those who value the traditional appearance of suburban streets, the informal housing economy does much to preserve it, despite the high residential densities that now exist.

Fiscal contribution. Because the Los Angeles County Assessor seeks to add residential buildings and improvements to the tax rolls irrespective of their permitted status, such improvements added via extralegal modes make a contribution to the tax base of a jurisdiction. This is in contrast to many cases from other parts of the world, where entire unauthorized communities escape taxation altogether.

Payment of utility fees. A sizable portion of the water, electricity, telephone, and cable TV services consumed by people living in extralegal spaces are billed and paid for in the City of Gateway. Again in contrast to unauthorized communities in many other parts of the world, where unsanctioned diversions of utility services abound, in the City of Gateway diversions of water services upstream of utility-maintained water meters, for example, are comparatively rare (though, as discussed in Chapter 5, certainly not absent).

Relative safety. The City of Gateway, while by no means free of crime, is comparatively safe. To use homicide rates—a metric that does not tell the whole story about violent crime but that is the best choice for making comparisons with other geographies[3]—the 10 incorporated cities within this area had 55 combined instances of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in 2010, or a rate of 9.5 per 100,000 residents.[4] While higher than the US national average of 4.8 in the same year, this rate was comparable to that of similarly-sized Albuquerque (7.7) and Memphis (13.8) and far lower than in Baltimore (35.9). Police protection exists throughout the City of Gateway, and extends to extralegal living spaces as much as anywhere else. This is in strong contrast, for instance, to the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, many of which have long been mostly abandoned by municipal authorities and controlled by drug gangs, which monitor all entries and exits to the communities. Perlman (2009) has written about the debilitating effects of the stigmatization that results from the association of *favela* dwellers with criminality in the minds of middle-class residents of the *asfalto*, or formal city. While living in

[3] Quite simply, murder rates make for easy comparisons between jurisdictions because corpses are difficult to conceal. Furthermore, the precise definition of homicide differs much less by context than for other types of crimes.

[4] Homicide rates are calculated by the author using data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's online Uniform Crime Reports, downloaded in March of 2013. URL: http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/. Homicides from unincorporated Los Angeles County are not easily attributable to particular communities and are thus omitted from this calculation.

extralegal dwellings is certainly stigmatized in the City of Gateway as well, the severity is arguably less than in Brazilian *favelas* and in other similar locations.

Lack of commoditization. Connolly (1982) described how over a period of decades, communities originally built as auto-constructed settlements on what were then the outskirts of Mexico City later evolved into inner city tenement districts, with owner-occupancy rates that plunged precipitously over time. To be sure, some City of Gateway jurisdictions, especially Bell, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, and Maywood, and most of all Cudahy, also have rock-bottom homeownership rates. In this regard they are suburban versions of more prototypical inner-city tenement districts such as MacArthur Park immediately west of downtown Los Angeles (Davis 1998). But other areas of the City of Gateway, such as South Gate and Compton, still have considerably higher homeownership rates in spite of the proliferation of extralegal living spaces. Since the hedonic analysis of the Property Sales Data Set described in Chapter 6 showed that the presence of extralegal space does not appear to be systematically associated with higher property values, I have not found evidence that unpermitted rentals are being monetized in the course of their host properties being sold to absentee owners. The informal housing system, therefore, appears to continue to be directed by many onsite owner-occupants, or else property owners who live in the immediate vicinity, and not just by rentiers who collect rent from afar.

Negative attributes of the informal housing system

The foregoing positive aspects of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway must be balanced against numerous attributes that are harmful to many people who participate in the market or who reside alongside it. These are as follows:

Health and safety. Fires in extralegal space, particularly garage apartments, have been a high-profile and recurrent phenomenon in Southern California. Indeed, the deaths that some of them have caused have been perhaps the foremost spur for enforcement crackdowns. Less dramatically, but affecting far more people, poorly built extralegal spaces expose their occupants to mold, moisture, overly hot or cold air, poor ventilation, insects, and other harmful impacts. It is now well-established that such conditions have deleterious health impacts, particularly to children (Lubell, Morley, Ashe, and Merola 2012). It is certainly the case that unpermitted housing can be top-quality, and vice versa; however, it is clear that unsafe and unhealthful conditions are more common in extralegal space. The tradeoff between minimum standards of health and safety and the need for cheap shelter, possibly to avoid outright homelessness, recapitulates more than a century of debates about housing in the United States dating back to the tenement reform era of the early twentieth century (Vale 2007). While leading housing experts have characterized the current era as one in which affordability for low-income renters has supplanted adherence to minimum housing standards as the source of greatest concern, in strong contrast to a century ago (Quigley and Raphael 2004), this is emphatically not the case in the City of Gateway. In the City of Gateway, while affordability is of

great concern as it is in low-income urban and suburban communities nationwide, the area is also rife with housing that is unsafe—not simply because of poor maintenance, but in many cases because of its inherent design.

Insecurity of tenure (for renters). While, as noted above, the informal housing system of the City of Gateway offers relative security of tenure to homeowner-occupants, the same is not true for renters. A code enforcement officer who formerly worked in an incorporated City of Gateway jurisdiction told me that, prior to compelling a homeowner to shut down an extralegal living space, he would give the occupants time to make alternative living arrangements. But such leniency is dependent on the whims of the individual enforcing the law. In other cases, renters residing in extralegal quarters are unceremoniously evicted with little or no warning following enforcement. Renters also, for the most part, lack the typical protections from abusive treatment from their landlords to which tenants are entitled. The stigma of the extralegal status of their living spaces might discourage them from pursuing recourse even in cases where the law may offer some protection. In any event, the strongest form of tenant protection, rent stabilization laws, are completely lacking in any of the City of Gateway jurisdictions, although they do exist in other LA County cities such as Los Angeles and Santa Monica.

Exploitation. In the immigrant enclaves of Long Island in the early 1990s, Mahler (1995) described an informal housing system that she characterized as built on exploitation. While a small class of well-established immigrants—the *encargados*, or those "in charge" —made a living by mediating between the mostly white property owners and their vulnerable coethnics who found themselves in desperate need of dwelling space, most renters experienced an informal housing economy that was high-cost and rife with conflict and stress (ibid). Similarly exploitative arrangements, what Kissam (1998) labels "artificial support networks," exist in the City of Gateway, such as the single family houses-turned-bunkhouses of Willowbrook. Perhaps most vulnerable to being ensnared in such places are recently arrived immigrants who lack connections to relatives who are more well-established in the United States. However, the City of Gateway also has many extralegal housing arrangements that are based on kinship and friendship, which appear to be much more benign for those who have access to them. One key difference between Long Island of the early 1990s and the City of Gateway of today is that the vast majority of property in the former was owned by whites, and the *encargado* system was concentrated in small islands amidst a sea of mostly middle-class, owner-occupied housing. The City of Gateway is a much more continuous carpet of housing for the working class and for the working poor, much of it Latino-owned, where both kinship-based and artificial support housing networks exist throughout, albeit in different proportions in different areas. Any policymakers seeking to intervene in the informal housing market would be well-advised to distinguish between the two, and avoid needlessly conflating them together, as current law now does.

Discrimination. Although I have no evidence to support such a contention, it seems likely that an informal housing market such as the one in the City of Gateway results in discrimination against certain types of would-be tenants seeking housing in extralegal spaces. Given the cultural gulf between African Americans and Latinos (Le Moigne 2013) and also amongst Latinos of different national origins (Rocco 1996) in the area, it would be unsurprising if the discrimination had a racial or ethnic component, as Rudel (1984) found in the legalized secondary units of Babylon, Long Island in the 1980s.[5] Other forms of discrimination against classes of people who are covered by housing discrimination laws, such as families with children or people with disabilities, may well occur as well.

Environmental issues. As described in Chapter 5, the informal housing market in the City of Gateway has taken a particular characteristic physical form of *horizontal density.* In addition to the conversion of existing residential and (formerly) nonresidential space, housing space is added primarily by covering open ground in the rear of residential lots with single-story structures. For the most part property owners cannot or do not avail themselves of the alternative of building upwards, either from existing buildings or via the erection of taller structures, to leave more ground space open. The resulting urban form worsens pre-existing environmental concerns that are of particular concern in Los Angeles. For instance, the high proportion of ground covered by impermeable rooftops exacerbates the urban heat island effect. This can affect residents' comfort and health, particularly during the summer months when temperatures can climb into the 90s and above in the City of Gateway due to its location about 9 miles inland from the ocean at its closest point. The impending specter of climate change will exacerbate these concerns. In addition, the spread of impermeable surfaces worsens the pressure on overburdened storm sewer systems in a region already exceptionally prone to flash flooding (Waldie 2004; McPhee, 1989).

Pressure on infrastructure. Homeowners adding space extralegally evade contributing impact fees that they would be assessed if they pursued their residential additions through legal channels. While, as explained in Chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, water service for extralegal space is mostly captured by utility billing, utilities have come to rely on new (legal) development for the impact fees that they generate, which contribute to overhauling the existing system and not simply expanding it. Part of this is because of the political popularity of burdening new development rather than existing residents with a greater share of capital replacement costs. Similar dynamics affect park and open space development, which is in short supply in Los Angeles in general and acutely so in south and southeast LA County (Lau 2011). Also, because extralegal housing is usually built without provisions for off-street parking even when tenants have personal automobiles, local streets become clogged with parked cars. This adds to tensions among

[5] In Babylon, the primary discriminatory dynamic for which Rudel found evidence was white homeowners discriminating against African American renters.

residents, and likely affects the delivery of certain municipal services, such as trash pickup and emergency vehicle response.

Thwarted business activity. I noted above that extralegal housing, because of its physical configuration, supports certain types of livelihood activities undertaken by its residents. However, in the City of Gateway other forms of potential business activity are thwarted. For instance, despite very high population densities that likely could easily support business activity on streets that are currently designated as all residential, for the most part stores and other commercial spaces cannot openly operate in such areas due to code enforcement. Thus the gradual, organic evolution of entirely residential neighborhoods into mixed-use communities, as has been seen after large developer-driven tract house communities have opened on the periphery of Mexico City (Guerra 2013), does not take place in the City of Gateway. Commercial activities sprinkled into residential streets could have various benefits, including reduced driving and the creation of business and employment opportunities for local residents. Meanwhile, business activity is very much alive and well on residential streets in the City of Gateway, but it must typically unfold in a furtive manner and in ephemeral, sometimes mobile, settings.

Lack of political representation. Because of the dynamics noted in Chapter 8, the informal housing market, despite its size and importance, is rarely addressed in the local political realm. When it is, it is typically viewed through the constricted discourse of law and order. Owner-occupants operating extralegal space typically have ample representation in city politics as a result of their status as homeowners, but lack venues in which to organize according to their shared interests specifically as operators of unpermitted space. Meanwhile, and arguably worse, renters living in extralegal space are almost completely absent from participation or influence within the local political sphere. These dynamics are a consequence of the specific structure of the City of Gateway's informal housing market, and bear a family resemblance to the political dynamics in Texas homestead subdivisions long noted by Ward (1999). The vibrant culture of political organizing among "slum dwellers"[6] in Mexican *colonias* (ibid) and in numerous other locations in the Global South is nowhere in evidence. As a result, in the City of Gateway there are no constituencies that can advocate pragmatic policies to improve the functioning of the housing market of the sort proposed in the next section.

Negative effects on planning and economic development. Astrophysicists have long theorized the existence of "dark matter," which is invisible but which affects, through its gravitational pull, the dynamics of the cosmos. By analogy, the informal housing market can be viewed in a similar way. Though largely invisible both in

[6] Many consider "slum" and by extension "slum dweller" to be stigmatizing terms. This could well be true. It is, however, revealing that there are no comparable terms for people living in or among extralegal housing in Los Angeles. What is not named is little discussed, contributing to the silence on the issue in political discourse discussed at length in Chapter 8.

physical terms, as seen from the street, and in symbolic terms, as contrasted against the imagery of prototypical American Dream, informal housing constrains the universe of possibilities that local jurisdictions can choose to plan their futures. Although the Census Bureau does its best to identify all residents in every neighborhood, the inevitable undercounts that are a consequence of the off-the-books status of so much housing and of its recondite urban form have various consequences. The missing residents, whether they constitute 2% or 20% of a jurisdiction's population (depending on which estimates one chooses to believe), likely mean that cities forego outside grants from state and federal government, or at least receive smaller ones than they otherwise could. Businesses considering relocating to such areas, particularly retailers, are less likely to do so when population counts are understated. Meanwhile, while the rise of informal housing is in large part a consequence of the stunted market for the production of permitted housing, the causal chain works in reverse as well. The flouting of land use rules undermines the public's opinion of the integrity of the planning process, while the pressure on infrastructure fuels a perception that cities are "built out" and unable to accommodate new (legal) development, and thus undermines public support for Smart Growth-friendly infill projects.

A mismatch between perception and reality about the nature of communities. Perhaps most fundamentally, the informal housing market, because of the peculiar way in which it has unfolded, has contributed to what are now thoroughly urban communities making land use decisions that hearken back to an outdated suburban growth model whose heyday passed decades ago. Much of local politics in City of Gateway jurisdictions, which today have population densities comparable to such epitomes of big city America as Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, revolves around such tropes as the primacy of the single-family detached house lifestyle and the need for convenience for automobile drivers above all others. Part of the explanation is that the unpermitted back house, or the converted garage, do not have the iconic salience of the Boston three-decker, the Philadelphia rowhouse, or the Chicago three-flat. In the local political realm in the City of Gateway, an urban self-consciousness to match the current reality is lacking. This dynamic explains the *downzoning* undertaken in South Gate (discussed in Chapter 8), even as the city skyrocketed in terms of both population and housing, as well as that city's approval of Azalea, its recent signature economic development showpiece. Azalea, opening in 2014, is an almost totally automobile-oriented shopping center, where the land devoted to parking exceeds all other land uses (Figure 9.1). Even as the informal housing market has turned the City of Gateway thoroughly urban, by remaining out of sight it has prevented its constitutive political jurisdictions from embracing the difficulties and opportunities of fully embracing their present and future as dense, mixed-use, city neighborhoods.

Figure 9.1. A rendering of the Azalea shopping center in South Gate, expected to open in the spring of 2014. Its urban form is strikingly auto-dominated, despite its location in one of the most densely populated urban areas in the United States. Source: http://www.shopatazalea.com.

What Should be Done?

To eliminate the negative aspects of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway, while preserving the positive aspects, what should be done? This section seeks to enumerate a range of policies that collectively seek to pull off such a balancing act. They are presented separately for local, state, and federal governments, since each level of government is an entirely different sphere with different sets of decision-makers and those who seek to influence them. I also present recommendations for how NGOs, as well as the housing advocates who staff them and who work independently of them, can reorient how they do their work, in addition to lobbying at the various levels of government, to begin to grapple with the informal housing market.

The potential policies presented in this section should be seen as a menu of options rather than a comprehensive package. None of them entails an initiative as vast in terms of expenditure or social dislocation as mid-20th century-style urban renewal. None of them requires solving the large-scale *wicked problems* (Rittel and Webber 1973), such as income inequality and the disappearance of highly-paid blue collar work in the US, that have contributed to the rise of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway. The policies shown here are mostly (though not quite entirely) *housing* policies that could be enacted if governmental decision-makers so chose. They vary greatly in their level of impact, ambition, and difficulty of enactment, but they would make a difference.

Local government

Ultimately, most of the actions that would have the greatest impact on the informal housing market would have to be taken by local jurisdictions. This is because most of the laws that push housing into an extralegal state are enacted on

the local level. Local politics, therefore, will necessarily be the foremost arena for any efforts to intervene in the underground housing market.

Unfortunately, as we saw in Chapter 8, the obstacles to making policy changes at the local level that would benefit the owners of extralegal space and those that rent them are inherently difficult at best and possibly impossible at worst. In California, the most notable successful efforts to deal with the informal housing market have taken place in relatively small, middle-to-high-income, and well-resourced localities. These include Santa Cruz, which has made it far easier for local residents to construct legal secondary units on their properties; Daly City, which implemented perhaps the most far-ranging secondary unit amnesty program; and Marin County, which also allowed homeowners to seek amnesty for their secondary units (Antoninetti 2008; Cabansagan 2011).

Among large cities, in 1997 the City of Los Angeles stood on the threshold of enacting a comprehensive, pragmatic ordinance to address garage apartments, but ultimately fell short, as recounted in Chapter 8. At the time of writing San Francisco recently passed an ambitious effort, likely unprecedented among large US cities, to regularize existing in-law units (Lagos 2014). Whether San Francisco's amnesty program will succeed in attracting participation from homeowners in large numbers—particularly given that legalized secondary units will come under the jurisdiction of the city's rent control regime—remains to be seen.

In Los Angeles County and in the incorporated jurisdictions of the City of Gateway, such policy reforms seem unlikely, for all the reasons discussed in Chapter 8. What is more, bruising city-by-city efforts to update outdated land use codes could frustrate efforts by housing advocates to bring more systemic changes to a wide area. Even if successful, a hard-fought campaign to, for instance, change one city's zoning ordinance could, if sufficiently opposed, sap the will for neighboring cities to undertake similar reforms.

For these reasons, the possible local reforms enumerated below are unlikely to occur without pressure from senior levels of government or from coordinated and organized segments of civil society. Their enactment will almost certainly require a "nudge" from powerful entities that operate outside of local governmental boundaries. With that caveat, below I list local policy reforms that could make a positive impact on the informal housing market:

- *Graduated building permits.* Ward (1999) has long called for graduated building permits as a mechanism for local governments to make a distinction between safe but not compliant and altogether unsafe construction in homestead subdivisions in Texas and elsewhere in the Southwest. Such permits, he suggests, can be time-limited in order to provide an incentive for homeowners to make incremental progress towards eventually upgrading their properties to fully-compliant status. In the City of Gateway, graduated permits might be used most effectively by localities to certify that the most urgent priorities underpinning building codes—basic health and safety considerations—are met. They could be issued to homeowners, providing them with security of tenure for their extralegal improvements, and providing assurance to tenants that they will not be evicted due to code

enforcement actions. Conditions could be imposed, such as the homeowner residing onsite for a specified portion of the year, and disallowing the transfer of intermediate permits to new owners, to discourage extralegal space from being absentee-owned. By requiring that modest fees be paid by property owners, a graduated permitting system could be made to be fiscally self-sufficient and not impose a burden on localities' general funds.

- *Amnesty program.* A comprehensive amnesty program would likely incorporate graduated permits, as described above, in some form. But it would need to include other elements, such as public outreach efforts, and possibly incentives, such as regulatory concessions, to induce homeowners to come forward and participate in the program. Experience from California cities shows that it is not enough for an amnesty program to make it *possible* for homeowners to regularize their extralegal living spaces, at least provided that such an amnesty remains unaccompanied by a heavy-handed enforcement crackdown. Instead, homeowners require encouragement, and possibly incentives, to come forward. Amnesty programs will almost never achieve universal participation, but if well designed they can result in the regularization of a significant proportion of a jurisdiction's off-the-books housing stock.
- *Rezoning.* Rezoning lies at the heart of any effort to convert extralegal into legal housing, both what exists already and what will be built in the future. The most urgent priorities for rezoning vary by jurisdiction, but two reforms would arguably be the most consequential. One would allow for increased density limits, so that, for example, a 2,000 sf duplex is no longer treated more harshly than a 2,000 single-family house, as is so often the case now. The other would be less onerous off-street parking requirements, particularly by eliminating the outdated stipulation that off-street parking be *covered* in a garage or carport, and also including reductions from the two-spaces-per-unit standard that exists in many locations. Also, increases in allowable building height in certain locations may allow homeowners to build extra stories upward rather than covering rear yard space with new structures. Other reforms could relax front, rear, and side yard setback requirements that are not justified for basic life safety reasons such as fire fighting access to the rear of properties. The imposition of some new restrictions might be useful; for instance, the rental of secondary units to non-relatives could be made contingent on the homeowner residing on the property.
- *On-street parking management.* Localities could create permitted parking systems on residential streets to manage the proliferation of parked cars that animates so much of the opposition to treating extralegal housing more favorably. Shoup (2005) has provided suggestions for how residential neighborhoods can better manage on-street parking supply. Such systems might, for instance, make it possible for cities to permit ancillary units on residential streets while ensuring that it is difficult or impossible for the residents of those units to park their cars curbside. While it may be difficult for localities to suppress the formation of an informal secondary market for

on-street parking permits, it may not be worth the trouble; indeed, such a market could become a mechanism for managing on-street parking and ensuring that those who most need parking can do so.

- *Extralegal housing upgrades incorporated into housing rehabilitation programs.* At present, locality-run programs that seek to provide financial and technical assistance to homeowners to physically improve their houses, such as Cudahy's Single-Unit Housing Rehabilitation Program, which uses federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, tend to require that any non-zoning compliant living spaces be removed as part of the renovations. If such a program were coordinated with other initiatives listed above, particularly zoning reform and graduated permitting, existing rehabilitation programs could be expanded to help homeowners upgrade, rather than eliminate, currently extralegal living spaces.
- *A "customer-friendly" attitude.* Homeowners are not the same as professional developers, and municipal bureaucracies should not assume that they are. Points of interaction between staff and homeowners seeking to add living space or regularize their existing extralegal space should be designed to be accessible and tractable for laypersons. Technical language and elaborate procedures should be avoided and streamlined to the extent possible. Almost everywhere in the City of Gateway, Spanish-English bilingual staff and printed materials would be necessary for many homeowners and their representatives to have a chance of productively engaging with municipal bureaucracies.

State government

State government can only affect the informal market indirectly, since its constitutional authority to regulate land use is, in practice, almost entirely delegated to local jurisdictions. However, there are numerous actions that the state of California could take to help break the *local political stalemate* on housing issues, as I defined it in Chapter 8. Thus, the state's most important contribution would be to induce local government to act. There are also actions that the state could take to influence the informal housing market directly. Together, these actions would have benefits in the City of Gateway and in similar areas throughout Southern California and statewide. They are as follows:

- *A revamp of Housing Element requirements to account for informal housing.* At present, as discussed in Chapter 8, the Housing Element process as currently constituted is an almost entirely wasted opportunity to gather data and stimulate public debate on informal housing processes within local jurisdictions. State law could require that informal housing be made an explicit part of the analysis that is required to occur in Housing Elements, perhaps through a mandate to conduct the sort of place-specific fieldwork needed to uncover local informal housing markets. Indeed, such a change would remedy the perverse current situation, where perhaps the primary mechanism by which low-income households find housing in many localities is left mostly or entirely unaddressed in the housing policy documents of

their general plans. Such a change, on its own, would do little to compel localities to make policy changes to address housing informality, but it would serve an important communicative planning function that at present is almost entirely absent (Innes 1995). Because Housing Element analysis is a rare occasion during which the consultants preparing the documents gather data of various sorts from city or county governments, it is a perfect opportunity to compile information from various sources that would be highly useful in pinpointing the extent and characteristics of informal housing, and that could be valuable supplements to fieldwork-generated data collection. These additional sources could include water and sewer usage data from municipal utilities; permit data from building departments; and complaint and enforcement data from code enforcement departments. Otherwise, this information will continue to be mired in isolation, visible only to the municipal agencies that generate it. Making it available for analysis would be invaluable for any efforts to subsequently design policies that grapple with this type of housing. Without question, some technical assistance would need to be offered to Housing Element consultants to help them undertake new forms of analysis to which they are not at present accustomed.[7]

- *Alteration of the most abusive municipal boundary lines.* Since local governments are, in the end, creatures of state government, the only reasons that their boundary lines cannot be redrawn are political. While there is a strong and deeply-rooted tradition of home rule in California that is unlikely to change, possibilities exist for the most egregiously abusive boundary lines to be redrawn. In late 2011, for instance, an effort by the state legislature to disincorporate the "exclusively industrial" City of Vernon ended only when State Representative Kevin De Leon of Los Angeles brokered the creation of a $60 million fund to be paid by Vernon for community projects in surrounding cities, including Huntington Park, Bell, and Maywood (S. Allen 2011). This effectively implemented at least some of the tax base sharing that an outright disincorporation or annexation would achieve. In addition, in 2013 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the county's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), a body responsible for adjusting municipal boundaries, was studying the merger of several southeast LA County cities, including Bell, Compton, Cudahy, Commerce, Gardena, South El Monte, and Maywood in addition to Vernon (Flores 2013). At least in theory, such an action could result in less corrupt and more efficient local governance for the area. A larger ur-City of Gateway of some description could have more

[7] One of my interview informants pointed out that finding qualified consultants to draft Housing Element updates for local jurisdictions can be difficult. This is because preparation of these documents is an extremely specialized task that only takes place in concentrated bursts every five or more years with each new Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycle announced by the state government. Efforts to add new analyses to Housing Elements, as proposed here, would need to take these capacity constraints into account.

competition in local elections, and should have more staff capacity for addressing complex issues such as housing.

- *Legislation to encourage zoning reform inspired by the federal "Race to the Top" education program.* Regardless of one's opinion of the Obama Administration's education reform agenda, the effectiveness of its $4.35 billion "Race to the Top" program, enacted in 2009, in inducing state governments to adopt K-12 school policy reforms in order to compete for grant funds has been striking (McGuinn 2012). The State of California could use a similar approach to encourage its municipalities to enact zoning and other land use reforms to break the local political stalemate over housing. Rather than education reform funds, the proffered monies should be for priorities that are both affected by extralegal housing (as discussed in Chapter 8) and that are urgent, widely recognized municipal priorities. Perhaps the most obvious candidates would be funds to create, expand, or revamp parks and open space, and to repair and rebuild aging and overcapacity water and sewer infrastructure.[8]
- *The creation of mortgage programs that finance properties with secondary units and additions to existing properties.* To fill the void left by the obstacles that the GSEs and FHA pose to homeowners seeking to use income from additional units on their properties to qualify for mortgages, as well as to add living space to their properties, the State of California could unveil mortgage products that fill these gaps. The California Housing Finance Authority (CalHFA) already offers mortgage programs intended for first-time homebuyers, veterans, and those seeking to buy homes in low-income areas; new or modified loan products could be disseminated via this existing institutional structure. These mortgages could be structured to i) allow borrowers to claim income from secondary units; ii) recognize living spaces with graduated building permits (discussed above) as sources of income, perhaps at a discount to comparable market rents of permitted living spaces; and iii) provide funds to upgrade extralegal spaces that do not meet building codes. Other loan products, perhaps second mortgages, could be designed to allow homeowners to add new, permitted living spaces, backed by the rental income that these spaces would generate. Such loan programs could be offered on a pilot basis to communities where they are most needed, such as the City of Gateway. Eligibility for homeowners to access such new loan products could also be tied to their localities' having adopted zoning reforms and partial permitting regimes, which could provide further pressure (in addition to the "Race to the Top" program legislation proposed above) for breaking the local political stalemate on housing.[9]

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[8] Even though public schools are a highly visible institution affected by the informal housing market, tying funding for them to land use reforms would be less advisable, since school districts are politically independent from cities, and since many school districts, including the enormous LA Unified School District, span multiple jurisdictions.

[9] In a public presentation at UC Berkeley on February 24, 2014, the UCLA housing and planning scholar Vinit Mukhija described his research in-progress in Vancouver that

- *Data collection.* The State of California should collect data from its municipalities on extralegal housing. Its Department of Finance already performs intracensal population housing estimates; its capabilities could be extended to create a repository of data on informal housing markets throughout California. If Housing Element requirements were amended as suggested above, the data collected from them could be used to create a repository that would be useful to policymakers and housing advocates throughout the state.
- *A general suggestion: accept that subsidized housing, on its own, will never be enough.* The shortfall of affordable housing in many areas throughout California, and above all in Los Angeles County, due to its one-two punch of skyrocketing rents even in the face of declining median incomes over the past decade, is nothing short of staggering. According to a recent report, median rents in the county increased by 25% from 2000 to 2012 even as median incomes fell by 9% (California Housing Partnership 2014). Meanwhile, the shortfall of homes affordable and available to the county's very low and extremely-low income households (i.e., those earning up to 50% of the Area Median Income) now exceeds 490,000 (ibid). California elected and appointed officials need to internalize the reality that implementing the report's modest and laudable recommendations, or even achieving vastly ambitious—and highly improbable—increases in funding levels for subsidized affordable rental housing, would not be enough to close the affordable housing gap. Subsidized housing is and will continue to be a lifeline to those who have access to it, and its production should be encouraged as much as possible, but under any realistic scenario it will never be enough. The informal housing market is already the *de facto* local and state policy solution to scarce affordable rental housing in California. Pretending that it does not exist, which is effectively what current state policy does, should not be an option. Instead, state policymakers and officials should focus on ways to intervene in the informal market to make it function better for its participants, even while continuing to fund and support as much subsidized housing construction and rehabilitation as possible.

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highlighted the role of Vancity, a large local credit union, in making mortgages on residential properties that include unpermitted space. Undoubtedly Vancity's success is made possible by the structure of the Canadian mortgage finance system and not easily translatable to the US. Nevertheless, it spotlights the key role that mortgage finance reforms could potentially play in the City of Gateway and elsewhere. See also Mendez (2011) for a less optimistic take. He argues that informal housing, via the mortgage system, has helped fuel housing booms in Vancouver and other Canadian cities by acting as a mechanism, akin to subprime loans in the recent past in the US, for funneling credit for purchasing costly homes to buyers with low incomes. Clearly caution is warranted in attempts to retool mortgage finance to deal with "mortgage helper" units, but it would arguably still be, on balance, beneficial.

Federal government

The role of the federal government in intervening in the informal housing market in places such as the City of Gateway is less obvious than it is for the state of California, where extreme housing market pressures are widespread, if not ubiquitous. In the United States as a whole, by contrast, informal housing in metropolitan regions is likely intensely concentrated in relatively small pockets, mostly in Hawaii, along the West Coast, and in the Boston-to-Washington corridor.[10] To change federal policies to address housing issues that, when seen within the nationwide context, appear to be regionally-specific concerns, may appear somewhat daunting. Nonetheless, some proposed policy changes on the federal level appear below. Some of them have constituencies that could be broader than simply those concerned specifically with informal housing, and others entail modifications to federal programs that already exist.

- *Changes to GSE and FHA mortgage guidelines.* Some or all of the proposed new CalHFA mortgage products described above would be redundant and unneeded if Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and the FHA changed their loan guidelines to make their loan products able to perform similar functions. To reiterate, these would be to i) allow for income from secondary units to be used for loan qualification; ii) recognize structurally sound, building code-compliant extralegal living quarters as contributing to a property's value; and iii) allow homeowners to finance the addition or conversion of rentable space. Some of the resulting changes would draw support not simply from those concerned with intervening in informal housing markets, but also those seeking to remove financing as an impediment to the growth of legal secondary unit production (Brown and Watkins 2012). Indeed, secondary unit production is emerging in cities nationwide as a strategy to add density to single-family house neighborhoods, allow homeowners to age in place, provide unsubsidized affordable housing, and fulfill various other objectives (Schafran 2012). Thus, the constituency for such changes could conceivably be relatively broad. These proposed modifications come at an opportune time, during which Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae remain under direct ownership and control of the federal government, and at a time when their future is being actively debated. In addition, at the present time the future of homeownership is the subject of fierce debate, with many arguing that federal homeownership policy needs to be rethought following the disastrous housing crash of the Great Recession (Landis and McClure 2010).
- *Extension of federal programs intended to finance and support upgrading of colonias in the Southwest to metropolitan regions.* Mukhija and Monkkonen (2006) provided a review of federal policy towards colonias in the four states

[10] Informal housing also exists in many other areas, of course, including Native American reservations, resort areas, farmworker settlements, and various others. Informal housing in *metropolitan areas* that results from an excess of demand over permitted housing supply, however, is likely largely confined to a relatively short list of "superstar cities" and their suburbs (Gyourko, Mayer, and Sinai 2013).

that border Mexico, from Texas to California, and a critique of existing programs for being simultaneously "too broad and too narrow." They characterized the suite of programs administered by HUD, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) as too broad in their eligibility criteria because they were designed on the erroneous assumption that Texas *colonia*-like conditions apply in the three other border states. Meanwhile, they found the criteria to be too narrow, since they excluded otherwise suitable candidate communities for funding for infrastructure improvements and housing upgrades on the basis of distance from the border, metropolitan location, and other characteristics that bore little relationship to their level of need for the funding (ibid). Their critique suggests that a holistic overhaul of these programs should be undertaken that reflects on-the-ground realities. My research in this dissertation suggests that the federal programs targeted towards *colonias* should be extended to selected urban and suburban areas also grappling with widespread informality, overburdened infrastructure, and the need for incremental construction to improve housing conditions. City of Gateway jurisdictions would be ideal candidates.

- *Census tracking of secondary units.* The Census Bureau already goes to great lengths to attempt to identify all housing units, regardless of their permitted status, and the people living in them. It would be a simple matter for enumerators to note the relationship of a given housing unit to the property on which it lies. For instance, is a given unit the main house, one of several primary units, or a secondary unit? Is it attached to or detached from the main structure? Is it above, below, or behind the main structure? In addition, bundles of units lying on the same property could be associated together in Public Use Microdata Sample data released by the US Census Burearu as well as in American Community Survey (ACS) data. At present, it is not possible to make any inferences about secondary units on residential properties from ACS or past decennial Census or PUMS data. This need not be the case; for instance, the Norwegian national census specifically identifies secondary units, permitting researchers to use them as a unit of analysis (Nordvik 2000).

Housing NGOs and advocates

Governments are not the only important players in housing. Housing policy is influenced and implemented by a network of private and nonprofit as well as governmental actors. The production of NGO-sponsored subsidized rental housing is a perfect example (Erickson 2009). In any effort to intervene in informal housing markets, NGOs and advocates would need to play important roles. At the present time, they are largely sitting on the sidelines of the informal housing issue. Several recommendations follow that could change that.

- *A rebalancing away from NGOs' near-exclusive focus on subsidized multifamily rental housing and preservation.* Today's federal rental housing policy is built around three pillars: the Housing Choice Voucher, the Low Income Housing

Tax Credit, and block grants (Orlebeke 2000). The latter two have formed the nuclei of the nationwide subsidized rental housing production network that has arisen over the past three decades (Erickson 2009). One of the unintended consequences of the network's rise has been the diversion of NGOs' efforts towards housing development and management, and at least in many cases, away from their Great Society-era roots as organizations devoted to local empowerment and political organizing (Stoecker 2003). To this critique I add another: unlike in countries throughout the Global South, US-based housing NGOs are almost solely devoted to creating and owning rental housing, and focus very little on homeowners.[11] Two unchallenged assumptions buttress the current order: first, that encouraging the creation and upgrading of rental housing on 1-4 unit parcels is cost inefficient and therefore not worthwhile, and second, that homeowners are a privileged class who do not require assistance. This dissertation's findings casts doubt on those assumptions. The production of desperately-needed subsidized rental housing can and must remain a priority in Los Angeles; however, the mission of housing NGOs should broaden to encompass the specific challenges, currently unaddressed, posed by the informal housing market.

- *Political organizing of homeowners and renters in the informal housing market by NGOs.* In the specific case of the City of Gateway, Stoecker's (2003) call for housing NGOs to expend effort on political activism should be channeled into organizing homeowners with extralegal space and the renters who live in such spaces so that they have a voice, currently lacking, within local political debates. Housing NGOs are some of the few organizations that are well-positioned to fill what is at present a vacuum in local civil society. A vibrant network of NGOs in Los Angeles is already doing important work organizing factory and retail workers; vendors, gardeners, and other self-employed entrepreneurs battling restrictions on their livelihoods; people of color unduly suffering from pollution; immigrants experiencing discrimination from the police; and many other vulnerable groups. These NGOs' agendas can and should be extended to encompass the housing issues that affect so many people from these groups, which for many of them means extralegal housing. Pacoima Beautiful, an NGO and advocacy group based in a predominantly working-class Latino section of the northeast San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles, provides a good example of a combined approach to environmental justice, housing, and other interrelated issues at the neighborhood scale (Cabansagan 2011).

[11] Admittedly, housing NGOs in the Global South tend to work with homeowners with informal tenure rights, and as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, at least one major philanthrophic organization active in the US, Habitat for Humanity, emphasizes homeownership for those aspiring to achieve it. Nonetheless, despite their relative security of tenure, as I have argued throughout, *existing* homeowners in the City of Gateway merit attention by housing NGOs, not least because they provide housing to some of the most vulnerable renters.

- *Technical support for homeowners with extralegal space or seeking to add living space.* The UCLA planning scholar Vinit Mukhija and the LA-based organizer and activist Rudy Espinoza have proposed and are, at the time of writing, pursuing the creation of a community-based "housing clinic" that matches the budding technical expertise of planning students with the specific needs of homeowners with extralegal space, or those seeking to add living quarters to their properties. Whether structured as a university-based partnership or an NGO, this technical support function will be critical to any efforts to encourage homeowners to engage with municipal bureaucracies. To a layperson, navigating even routine procedures to regularize an existing unit or obtain permits to install a new one is a bewildering experience, to say nothing of the added difficulty when language difficulties or other complicating factors are present. While municipal efforts to improve the "customer service" experience, as recommended above, are important, technical support provided by non-governmental actors is an important element as well.
- *Develop and refine new models.* Mixed tenure housing that combines ownership and rentals on the same parcel occupy a portion of a wide spectrum between pure fee-simple ownership of a single unit, on the one hand, and pure rentership, on the other hand. Most NGOs addressing housing issues work on furthering housing that conforms with one of the two extremes of this tenure spectrum. Other, largely unexplored, alternatives exist. NGOs can use their familiarity with community needs and their relative dexterity to experiment with new models that may turn out to provide useful solutions. One example comes from the NGO TRUST South LA, which in 2013 won the housing division of the My LA2050 competition, which sought to foster ideas for a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable Los Angeles of the future. TRUST South LA's winning proposal, which resulted in a $100,000 prize, is for it to purchase foreclosed single-family house properties in hard-hit South Los Angeles before they are purchased by house "flippers" or absentee owners, bundle them together in a single Community Land Trust (CLT) ownership structure, add secondary units to the properties, and use the assemblage to provide a form of limited equity homeownership to local residents in need of housing. Whether this proposal will ultimately prove to be successful is difficult to ascertain; what is important is that it is being attempted. TRUST South LA's model may well prove to be more well-suited to the needs of South LA neighborhoods than the construction of LIHTC-financed large, subsidized multifamily rental developments, which if my fieldwork in the City of Gateway was any indication, are not viewed favorably by many residents of residential neighborhoods, despite the housing shortages experienced there.

Broader Implications of the City of Gateway Experience with Informal Housing

This dissertation has aimed to plumb the inner workings of the informal housing market in the City of Gateway, and this concluding chapter thus far has aimed to provide suggestions for productive ways to intervene in this market. As has been argued throughout, Southern California is replete with communities that share many of the demographic and other attributes of the City of Gateway. As such, this dissertation's findings are at least partially relevant to them. But are they relevant beyond Los Angeles, to elected officials and advocates making and influencing policy in other US and Canadian cities, to researchers studying them, or even to scholars examining housing markets in cities outside of northern North America? My argument is that the answer is yes, for each of these constituencies. I discuss them separately below.

Lessons for policymakers and advocates in other US and Canadian cities

While informal housing takes locally-specific forms, there are undoubtedly broader lessons that can be learned from comparing the experiences of different metropolitan areas. As awareness about the phenomenon grows, the opportunity to make such comparisons will follow suit. At the very least, US and Canadian planners, policymakers, advocates, and others would do well to think holistically about the informal housing markets in their midst, rather than viewing them as aberrational or fringe phenomena. They would benefit from considering a set of questions on the subject:

- *What are the unintended consequences of new regulations?* When designing new regulations that intervene in land and housing markets, policymakers should not assume that compliance is widespread or preordained. As this dissertation has demonstrated, compliance is, instead, contingent on cultural norms, enforcement capacity, political will, and other highly situational factors. Lack of compliance with a new regulation may create a new equilibrium that was never intended, such as the fostering of an urban form of horizontal density, as occurred in the City of Gateway as an unforeseen consequence of code enforcement and zoning restrictions.

- *Where might informal housing arise next?* While the reindustrialization of the urban core of LA County of recent decades is likely unique in North America, it is not the only demand-side process that could lead to sharp increases in pressure on housing markets in metropolitan areas or sections of metropolitan areas where they have previously been unknown. For instance, it is conceivable that a sudden spike in gasoline prices, whether owing to general scarcity or to disruptive geopolitical events in oil-producing countries, could spur demand for working-class households to seek housing in close-in suburban areas close to jobs, transit, and other necessities. While such an eventuality would be a spur towards housing informalization distinct

from LA's reindustrialization, the results would bear at least a family resemblance to what has occurred in the City of Gateway.

- *What new informal housing markets will arise?* Being attentive to informal housing markets may allow policymakers to respond to new ones that arise in response to changing economic conditions, technologies, and business models. For instance, the rise of Web-driven "home sharing"[12] businesses such as Airbnb, VRBO, and others are spurring owners and renters of housing units to extralegally—and lucratively—convert them to tourist rentals, in defiance of zoning restrictions and hotel taxes.

Lessons for researchers studying US and Canadian housing markets

The results of this dissertation suggest a number of implications of relevance to researchers studying housing markets, and their interrelated planning problems, in the US and Canada. These include the following:

Far more remains to be learned about how low-income people find rental housing. In the US, only about one quarter of renter households determined to be in need of federal rental housing subsidies actually receive them (Viveiros and Sturtevant 2014). And yet subsidized housing has attracted the lion's share of attention in housing and planning research, perhaps because housing subsidy programs and their on-the-ground results have been so fiercely contested.

Meanwhile, surprisingly little, at this advanced date, is known about how low-income renters who do not seek subsidized housing, or who fail to obtain access to it, find housing, particularly in high-cost metropolitan regions such as Los Angeles. The results of this dissertation suggest that two oft-cited mechanisms, *drive-til-you-qualify* and *overcrowding*, while incontestably germane, are insufficient, at least in some places. The first fails to account for the large numbers of working-class people who remain near metropolitan cores, such as the City of Gateway. The second obscures the agency of participants in the informal housing market, who far from passively shoehorning themselves into small, existing spaces in fact actively convert and add living spaces according to characteristic patterns. "Overcrowding" as a hypothesized mechanism also risks obscuring the central role of informality in housing processes, and assuming *a priori* a desire on the part of low-income renters for particular types of idealized housing arrangements that may or may not conform with their actual preferences.

Existing accounts of the patterns of metropolitan growth and decline are incomplete. Accounts of metropolitan growth and decline in the US and Canada tend to focus on four mechanisms. One, which has received a great deal of scholarly

[12] Such enterprises form part of a broader category that has come to be known by the misleading label of the "sharing economy." In reality, "sharing" in this context refers to short-duration rentals of consumer-owned goods and services—in this case, housing—made possible by advances in information technology. In other words, making money is the main motivation for people to participate in the so-called "sharing economy."

attention in spite of its relatively small footprint even in the highest-cost metropolitan areas, is *gentrification* of existing neighborhoods (Smith 1996). Another is *urban and suburban decline,* where already built-up areas lose population, jobs, housing units, or all three (Ryan 2012). Still another is the *redevelopment* of former industrial lands, shopping centers, waterfronts, and other centrally-located areas that have come to be desolate, but that subsequently become the sites of dense urban developments (Punter 2003). Last, *suburbanization* is the outward expansion of the metropolitan footprint into formerly open lands (Bruegmann 2005).

And yet the processes that have unfolded in the last several decades in the City of Gateway fit none of these categories. Land prices have skyrocketed, but the City of Gateway can in no way said to have experienced gentrification. Household incomes have fallen, but the thronged ambiance of Huntington Park's Pacific Boulevard, a shopping street whose crowds can rival those on Chicago's famed Miracle Mile, would never be confused for that of an ailing neighborhood or inner suburb of a city, such as Cleveland, experiencing widespread decline. The built footprint of the City of Gateway has drastically increased, but its new structures look nothing like the high-rises, festival marketplaces, and lifestyle centers that have proliferated on redeveloped waterfronts and repurposed shopping center parcels nationwide. And while residents of the City of Gateway have, from their communities' founding, been self-consciously suburban in their mindset, and arguably continue to be, the suburbanization process there essentially drew to a close more than a half century ago.

So how do we classify what has happened in the City of Gateway? It most closely resembles processes that past accounts of American urbanization have chronicled, but that are little recognized in the contemporary US metropolis. One example is the spread of tenements through New York City's Lower East Side in the 1910s, where the need for workers to live within walking distance of their poorly paid factory jobs led to, in effect, land for housing for the affluent being outbid by housing for low-income workers by virtue of the latter's density and need for a central location (Dolkart 2007). Another historical example of this mechanism, which like New York tenements is predicted theoretically by the monocentric city model of Alonso and Muth (see Muth 1969), is Warner's (1978) account of the formation of Boston's streetcar suburbs beginning in the 1870s. There, cheap, densely-built three-deckers crowded out the single-family houses of the affluent in strategic transportation nodes, particularly close to the junction of streetcar lines (ibid). Still another example is the residential hotels of early 20th century America, some of which provided cheap, convenient housing for single people in the most central locations of cities such as San Francisco (Groth 1994).

Market processes of dense, working-class housing economically outcompeting housing for the affluent have been, in many locations, interrupted by both the advent of zoning, starting in most locations in the 1920s, and the relentless suburbanization of most American metropolitan regions for the better part of the last century. But the City of Gateway is an exception. Importantly, its revival of land market dynamics that remained largely dormant for a century cannot be explained without invoking informality. Thus, informality must be seen, in this case at least, as

central, rather than peripheral, to the growth trajectory of recent decades of a swath of Los Angeles County that now houses more than 700,000 people.

Seen in this way, the growth of the City of Gateway hews more closely to the experience of examples from the Global South such as Mexico City (Connolly 1982) than to the typical accounts of recent US metropolitan change. Whether or not the City of Gateway is an aberration, an exemplar of more instances, or a harbinger of the future is not entirely clear. But, I would argue, it is a compelling case that is worth examining further.

Smart Growth is not an appropriate framework through which to view the growth trajectory of the City of Gateway. In the last quarter century, the normative project of "Smart Growth" has come to dominate US and Canadian planning practice and discourse. Smart Growth aspires to channel metropolitan growth into central locations while limiting its encroachment into open areas (Danielsen, Lang, and Fulton 1999; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2001). In so doing, residents of the areas that receive growth are presumed to be compensated for their tolerance of more construction, traffic congestion, and other density impacts because the new construction pays for the introduction of new amenities such as parks and mass transit service or the reduction of tax burdens (Burchell 2005).

In the City of Gateway, the growth has arrived, but its accompanying public amenities largely have not. Informality in housing growth has starved park expansion, utility network reconstruction, and other needs of funds. Thus, it would be inappropriate to assume that City of Gateway residents can be convinced of the benefits of new, permitted housing development. The political consequences of such a dynamic are unfamiliar in the US context, and bespeak the need for a new vocabulary to describe and understand what has happened in the City of Gateway and in similar areas.[13]

Much more remains to be learned about the "missing middle" of housing tenures. Most US-based housing scholarship focuses either on single-family homeownership or on rentals. While these two types of tenure are, respectively, the first and second most widespread in the US, and therefore meritorious of attention, they are not the whole story. This is particularly true in the City of Gateway, where tenure-mixing—the interleaving of owned and rented housing on the same residential parcels—is a central element to the functioning of the local housing market.

To make matters even more complicated than in past, worthy accounts of mixed-tenure housing in 1870s Boston, 1960s Newark, and 1970s Montreal, in the City of Gateway the tenure mixing is also accompanied by the mixing of legal status of living space on the same parcels (Warner, 1978; Sternlieb 1966; (Krohn et al.

[13] It is certainly true that rapid growth in former greenfield areas elicits complaints from nearby residents as these places urbanize. But normally such development generates impact fees that fund community amenities. Although such amenities may not materialize as rapidly as existing residents would prefer, typically they eventually do, unlike in the City of Gateway.

1977). Housing scholars are increasingly advocating the spread of such emergent intermediate tenure arrangements as Community Land Trusts (J. E. Davis 2010). But they would also benefit from examining mixed tenure arrangements that are already widespread in certain locales, including the City of Gateway. Lasner (2012) has made a worthy contribution by chronicling the underexamined rise of the condominium and other multifamily ownership models from the mid 20th century onward. More scholarship in this vein is needed to paint a fuller picture of housing in the US and Canada of today.

Now is the time, more than ever, for the "transnational method" in US housing scholarship. Perhaps due to the enormous size and globally prominent position of the United States, US-based housing scholarship has a distinctly inward looking character. An entire book-length account of rental housing policy, for example, with contributions from a "who's who" of leading housing policy experts, may include scarcely any reference whatsoever to housing lessons from other countries (Retsinas and Belsky 2008). By contrast, perhaps because of the combination of economic integration and cultural and political fragmentation of the European continent, comparative work in housing studies there is common (cf. J. Allen et al. 2004; Kemeny 1995).

Even in European housing studies, however, lessons imported from the Global South are often nowhere in sight. Understanding a case such as that of the City of Gateway benefits greatly from use of the *transnational method* (AlSayyad and Roy 2004), which can entail both North-to-North and South-to-North interrogations. Because housing is so thoroughly imbricated in its nation-specific economic, cultural, and political context, directly importing lessons from other nations can be of dubious value. But other nations' experiences can allow researchers to make the familiar unfamiliar by helping them pose altogether new questions about their backyards (ibid).

Ward (1999) provides a worthy model of the use of the transnational method. His account of Texas homestead subdivisions in border areas is greatly enriched by his expansion of his field of vision to *colonias* on the Mexican side of the border, which are geographically proximate but perceptually far in conventional policy analysis. In a like manner, while the informal housing market in the City of Gateway does not closely resemble any of its Global South cousins, the latter were invaluable to me in formulating queries about my object of analysis. Likely there are many other areas of housing scholarship in the US that could similarly benefit from the use of the transnational method. For the time being, this is mostly an untapped opportunity.

Lessons for researchers studying housing informality

Researchers studying informality in housing arguably have less to learn from a case such as that of the City of Gateway than US-based researchers have to learn from them. The former are already deeply engaged with the ambiguities and complexities of informality in housing, while the latter are, in some cases, tentatively dipping their toes into the waters of informality and in other cases eschewing such subject matter altogether. Nevertheless, I propose to briefly suggest two modest

ways in which the case of the City of Gateway could be useful for researchers engaged with housing informality, whether in the US, elsewhere in the Global North, or in the Global South.

In addition, I would like to suggest that the case of the City of Gateway is theoretically interesting in of itself. As argued in my normative assessment of this informal housing system earlier in this chapter, it does not quite fit any other well-known instance of housing informality. In particular, its inherent structure of informality built on formal land ownership, coupled with its footprint within territory that receives the full suite of municipal services, including code enforcement, makes it different from most other well-studied cases and, therefore interesting. I briefly enumerate three aspects of this unique system of informal housing that deserve further exploration.

First, as I have shown in this dissertation, important distinctions arise between extralegal space that is built or converted completely outside of the gaze of the regulatory and enforcement apparatus, and that is built using *partial permitting*, or that receives official sanction and then is subsequently modified in a way that it no longer conforms to the law. Anecdotal accounts suggest that in middle- and upper-income areas of the United States, the latter is ubiquitous even if the former is nowhere to be seen. The implications of the distinction between these two modes remain, and how it varies across communities of differing socioeonomic and racial/ethnic compositions, remain to be sorted out.

Second, the effects of informal housing on local political debates, as suggested in Chapter 8, are important and worthy of attention. The case of the City of Gateway shows that neither the high physical densities nor the lack of legal barriers to political participation by most residents living in neighborhoods with a high concentration of extralegal housing are a guarantee that the residents of whole categories of people living in and among such housing—their owners and, above all, their occupants—will have their voices represented in the local political sphere.

Last, the case of the City of Gateway shows that informal housing can put pressure on infrastructural networks even when all of the residential land is under formal property ownership. Explorations of the ways in which the relationships between housing and infrastructure both resemble and differ from well-documented cases in which land ownership itself is informal will be crucial in making sense of how housing informality, LA-style, makes its impact felt on the wider *polis* in the region.

For all of these reasons, the case of the City of Gateway could be a useful addition to an emergent school of scholarship on informality in housing in the Global North. J. Allen et al. (2004) have already called for a Southern European school of housing studies, made distinctive in part by the centrality of informal processes in the European portion of the Mediterranean Basin. Meanwhile, between the Texas and southwestern *colonia* literature, literature on farmworker housing, and other cases, as well as other work on metropolitan housing informality in Los Angeles and Vancouver and elsewhere, the outlines of an emergent northern North American school of studies on housing informality could be said to be coming into view (cf. Ward 2014; Mukhija, 2014; Kissam 1998; P. Mendez 2011). Such work could undoubtedly yield new and unexpected insights as it comes into dialogue with

emergent scholarship on other informal processes, aside from housing, in the Global North (cf. Valenzuela 2003; Sassen-Koob 1989; Venkatesh 2006; and numerous others).

The Informal Housing Market in the City of Gateway: Solely a Structural Economic Phenomenon, or Does Culture Also Play a Role?

Are the vernacular housing provision practices in the City of Gateway mostly explained by the economic necessity of the people practicing them, or do cultural factors also play an important role? Although this question is not directly answerable via the methods that were used in this dissertation, it is nevertheless an important one to consider on a speculative basis, and to inform future research.

Mendez (2005) took a position in favor of the proposition that culture does in fact matter. He coined the term *Latino New Urbanism* to denote an intersection between the urban design movement of New Urbanism and the propensity of Latino immigrants and their descendants, in Los Angeles in particular but also throughout the Southwest and beyond, to modify their daily environments to suit their needs in ways that increase social interactions and the vibrancy of the public realm. This argument builds on seminal work by James Rojas from the early 1990s (Rojas 1991; Rojas 1995). Rojas documented the modifications commonly seen in densely populated Latino neighborhoods on residential properties, including the addition of wrought-iron fences along the perimeter of the property, the conversion of front laws into paved patio areas, and Spanish or Latin American decorative elements applied to façades. Rojas described how many such building practices have the effect of modifying an American suburban house and lot to exhibit many of the spatial arrangements of the tradition Mexican courtyard house.[14]

Seen in this way, the extralegal housing modes discussed throughout this dissertation are part of a suite of vernacular practices that modify residential properties, with the vast majority of them practiced by Latinos, whether of Mexican, Central American, or South American origin, and whether immigrants (authorized or not) or US-born. Adding or using extralegal living spaces, as the mother of Roberto (introduced in Chapter 5) did, becomes part of a strategy to, in effect, create a family compound and eventually a *patrimony*[15], or enduring legacy, for one's family (Ward 2014). Roberto recalls his mother's five-unit property as a lively and enjoyable place for him to live as a child; there were always children with whom he could play, and caring adults, many of them relatives, either living on the property or frequently visiting, who kept an eye on him.

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[14] Rojas' and Mendez's arguments are not simply confined to residential spaces; Latino New Urbanism also encompasses modifications to commercial buildings as well as different, and more intensive, uses of public spaces, than what existed prior to them lying in majority Latino communities. Here, however, I am focusing on residential properties.

[15] Although this term is gendered, my intention is for it to refer to legacies that both men and women create for their families.

Beyond the mere fact of allowing for the addition of living spaces, the seven modes described in Chapter 5 exhibit specific spatial patterns that, according to the common practices of Latino New Urbanism, meet the cultural preferences of the people who mostly practice them. For instance, living spaces that open onto the ground are valued, since they maximize the social interaction that can occur in outdoor spaces on the residential parcel, whether sheltered or open air, and whether in the front or the back of the lot. Whether the living spaces themselves are cramped or not is relatively unimportant, according to this view, since the emphasis is on fostering a lively social realm outdoors. Rojas himself, for instance, recalls never entering the interiors of his childhood playmates' homes in East Los Angeles. Instead, they always played outdoors. This set of preferences differs markedly from the emphasis on fostering "coziness," or comfortable interior spaces suitable for daily living and for entertaining guests, in Northern US or Northern European homes (Personal Communication, James Rojas).

Also essential is the homeowner's feeling of *control.* Residential properties in the City of Gateway are not simply bundles of living space combined with a speculative investment; their *use value* is arguably considerably greater to their owners than it is for the average American homeowner. In a survey of Latino homeowners from 2002, by far the largest share (40%) selected "room for a growing family" as the leading reason for homeownership, with financial investment a distant second (22%) (Kotkin and Tseng 2002, cited in Mendez 2005). This differs markedly from the predominant view of homeownership as emphasizing, above all else, the resale value of the home (Perin 1977; Fischel 2001).

The foregoing is indirect but compelling evidence—confirmed in my interviews, for instance with Hilda McCall of South LA's Harbor Gateway neighborhood—that residential properties are not simply important to homeowners because of what can be done with them. Residential properties are also important to homeowners precisely because *they* can make the decisions about what is to be done with them. With even many homeowners— a relatively privileged class within the context of the low-income City of Gateway—experiencing insecurity and a lack of autonomy in their workplaces and at least in some public spaces, the home becomes a refuge, a social realm, and a place to exercise agency and control. In this way, there is a considerable overlap between the worldviews of the overwhelmingly Latino homeowners of the City of Gateway and the white families, many of them recent arrivals from the Upper South, who preceded them half a century or more earlier (Nicolaides 2002). In a sense, it could be said that what Nicolaides calls an ethic of *plain-folk Americanism* has yielded to a sort of *plain-folk Latin Americanism* (ibid).

Irazábal (2012), while in agreement with many of the underpinnings of Latino New Urbanism, also seeks to problematize the concept by raising several issues that surround it. She sees a danger, for instance, in romanticizing the poverty and economic insecurity that lead to overcrowded housing in Los Angeles and elsewhere, and from which the seven extralegal housing modes described in Chapter 5, along with a suite of other practices, stem. She also raises concerns about the otherization or exoticization of Latino living environments. She sees a partial solution in introducing a broader concept that she calls *ethnurbanisms*, or suites of

ethnically-specific practices similar to Latino New Urbanism, but carried out by a wide variety of groups and not only Latinos (ibid).

Given the concerns that Irazábal raises, is it fair to characterize extralegal housing as described in this dissertation as culturally specific practices rather than (or perhaps in addition to) acts of survival? It is difficult to answer this question, and indeed it seems likely that both explanations have merit. Even so, comparing the experiences of African Americans and Latinos in the City of Gateway is at least suggestive that the cultural explanation is part of the answer. After all, both groups suffer from high levels of discrimination, past and present, as well as low incomes and family wealth, and yet Latinos appear to engage in extralegal housing practices at far higher rates.

To be sure, there are certainly examples of African Americans, such as Sandra (introduced in Chapter 5), who have lived in extralegal housing. She lived in extralegal housing that was managed by Latinos, in Florence Firestone, and by her own African American daughter and son-in-law, in Compton. But her ultimate move to public housing bespeaks a theme that emerged in various interviews with informants who are familiar with housing issues in the City of Gateway: in general, my informants agreed that African Americans are more likely to seek out public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, apartments in rental developments operated by nonprofits, and other subsidized, legal housing options, and less likely to live in extralegal housing. Undoubtedly, some of the differences must be attributable to African Americans' native-born English-speaking ability, their unquestioned citizenship status, and their savvy about navigating the bewildering maze of public agencies and nonprofits that control access to subsidized housing. Some or all of these characteristics are missing in a large portion of the Latino population.[16]

In the end, the information collected as part of this dissertation does not make it possible to answer the question of whether economic or cultural factors drive the informal housing market in the City of Gateway. It does, however, provide some clues that cultural factors play at least a role in spurring the seven extralegal housing modes described in this chapter, and by extension, the spread of horizontal density and its attendant environmental and political ramifications. Future research comparing the experiences of African Americans and Latinos sharing neighborhoods with a high degree of housing informality would be particularly useful. Gauging the contribution of cultural factors that underpin informal housing, LA-style, could come to be especially important to the tricky politics of housing in areas that are more ethnically and racially heterogeneous than the City of Gateway, such as the San Gabriel Valley.

[16] Most importantly, unauthorized immigrants, who make up a substantial proportion of the Latino population and a miniscule share of African Americans, are completely barred from subsidized housing.

Closing Thoughts: What Does the Future Hold for Housing in the City of Gateway?

Prognostication is always a risky endeavor, but I now nevertheless close this chapter and this dissertation with observations about several near-term trends currently unfolding in the City of Gateway and their possible effects on its housing market. After all, it would be a mistake to assume that the next several decades will resemble the recent past.

First, and above all from the standpoint of the demand side of the housing market, population growth is leveling off, if not stopping altogether. From 2000 to 2010, the City of Gateway's population grew by only 1%, as compared to 9% and 23% in the 1990s and 1980s, respectively. In 9 of the 14 jurisdictions, the population actually fell modestly during the decade of the "Oughts." Although population figures should be taken with a grain of salt, particularly in areas such as the City of Gateway with high immigrant and unauthorized immigrant populations and extensive extralegal housing stock, the numbers do seem to indicate a general trend of population growth slowing down or even halting altogether.

Perhaps the driving factor behind this population growth slowdown is a sharp decrease in the rate of Latino immigration to the United States, which reached a peak in the last decade and then began to drop (Krogstad and Lopez 2014). Furthermore, the composition of the immigrants now arriving in the United States appears to be shifting away from Mexicans and Central Americans arriving by land, and towards other groups, particularly Asians, arriving by air. In 2009, for the first time ever, Asians constituted a majority of immigrants to the United States, a sharp departure from the recent past, when Latinos predominated (Pew Research Center 2013).

Although it is possible that new immigrants, particularly the increasing numbers of new arrivals from Asia, will settle in the City of Gateway, more likely they will situate themselves, at least initially, in more established Asian immigrant enclaves, such as in the San Gabriel Valley. While the City of Gateway has several small Asian enclaves, such as the area surrounding the Bicycle Club casino in Bell Gardens, which has attracted Asian workers, for the most part the City of Gateway is, as my interview respondent Eduardo put it, a "bubble" of Latino life. It is a place where Latino immigrants and their descendants, along with old-line Chicanos, have created a vast infrastructure of businesses and civic institutions, not to mention multigenerational family homes that demonstrate a long-term commitment to the area and that reflect their cultures.

All of this makes it likely that what the USC demographer and planner Dowell Myers has described as the "helping hands" ratio, or the ratio of well-established immigrants to newcomers, will steadily increase over time, not just in Los Angeles County in general, as he has and his colleagues have predicted, but in the City of Gateway specifically (Myers and Pitkin 2013). This will represent a profound, almost unimaginable change from recent decades, when overwhelming population growth and the informalization of the housing stock appeared to be almost unstoppable forces. Coming decades may be a time of comparative stability, or a

respite from the seemingly unending flux that the area has experienced at least since the Watts Riots.

Nor does it seem terribly likely that gentrification will be a major factor in the City of Gateway anytime soon. While vast areas in and around downtown Los Angeles, such as the Historic Core, South Park, Koreatown, the area around USC, and even long-stigmatized neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights and Westlake-MacArthur Park, are currently under tremendous development pressure, the City of Gateway is sufficiently distant from these areas to likely escape these forces. Furthermore, it is physically and psychologically separated from LA's innermost, now rapidly growing, urban core by such formidable barriers as the vast industrial belt of Vernon and Commerce, the Los Angeles River, the enormous Burlington Northern Santa Fe intermodal terminal in Commerce and its accompanying phalanx of railroad tracks, and the I-5, I-10, and I-110 freeways. Classic building blocks of gentrifying neighborhoods, such as 19th century building stock, picturesque topography and natural features, and an abundance of parks, are mostly lacking in the City of Gateway. Furthermore, the area's location along the humming Alameda Corridor, connecting the Western Hemisphere's largest port complex with the train yards and freeways that broadcast freight eastward throughout the North American continent, suggests that gritty industrial enterprises, and their accompanying noise and pollution, will not be departing the area anytime soon, at least not entirely.

What does all of this mean for the City of Gateway's near future? It will likely remain a working-class, predominantly Latino enclave for the foreseeable future. Trends seem to show that the unusual reindustrialization that affected the greater urban core of Los Angeles County has come to an end and its creation of jobs has now gone into reverse, although wholesale industrial flight seems unlikely due to the reasons posited above. Even though *industry* will likely retain a strong presence in the area, *industrial jobs* will probably continue to decrease owing to technological advances that are making industrial production steadily less labor-intensive, as well as continuing manufacturing and logistics enterprise relocation to the Inland Empire because of acute traffic and rail congestion in LA County's traditional industrial heartland (Southern California Association of Governments 2013).

Meanwhile, while downtown Los Angeles has long been the largest jobs center west of the Mississippi and is currently the fifth largest in the nation (Levy and Gilchrist 2013), as of recently it has begun rapidly gaining residents, fashionable entertainment and restaurants, and the other accoutrements of a "global city" hub such as have long existed in the likes of New York, London, and Tokyo but have eluded the historic center of LA until very recently. As Saskia Sassen, one of the originators of the concept of "global cities" has noted, such enclaves tend to develop a bifurcated job market, which offers both high-paying jobs to their well-educated workers and residents, and low-wage service jobs to those who serve them food, sell them clothes, clean their offices and homes, and otherwise tend to their needs (Sassen 2001).

Thus, the growth of downtown Los Angeles may well bring in a surge of low-wage jobs that replace many of those lost due to the reversal of reindustrialization. The City of Gateway will have ready access to those jobs. Perhaps proportionately more of them will be held by women, and transit access may become more

important than it was in the past, when so many industrial jobs were located in areas poorly served by transit, and included shifts at odd hours. Furthermore, as LA's rail transit system continues to grow and reach a greater number of job-rich destinations such as West Los Angeles and Santa Monica in the near future, these dynamics could strengthen further. The effects could be to concentrate housing demand in the City of Gateway more tightly along arterial streets with frequent bus service, and around existing or planned LA Metro rail stations, than was the case before. At the same time, it seems difficult to imagine that much multifamily construction in such areas could be profitable without subsidies. The result could be more intense housing informalization pressures in those locations, along with a modest amount of multifamily construction.

At least two ambitious proposed infrastructure projects hold promise for creating an armature for reorganizing urban space, including residential neighborhoods, in ways that could greatly benefit many City of Gateway residents. First, as of late May of 2014, the federal Army Corps of Engineers has accepted in principle an ambitious $1 billion plan to revamp an 11-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River leading north from downtown Los Angeles, transforming it into a chain of restored riparian zones and parks and a continuous bicycle and pedestrian route (Figure 9.2). This project would form the linchpin of a vision to similarly reconfigure most of the river's entire 51-mile channel, stretching from the western San Fernando Valley to the river's mouth adjacent to the downtown and port of Long Beach.[17]

[17] There is already a usable bike and pedestrian path that follows the LA River from the city of Vernon to Long Beach. Undoubtedly it already proves useful to some. However, the views from the path of the unrelenting concrete channel of the river do not, to say the least, suggest a safe, welcoming environment. At present, the exceptions, such as Maywood's relatively new, well-maintained, and vibrant Riverfront Park, are few and far between.

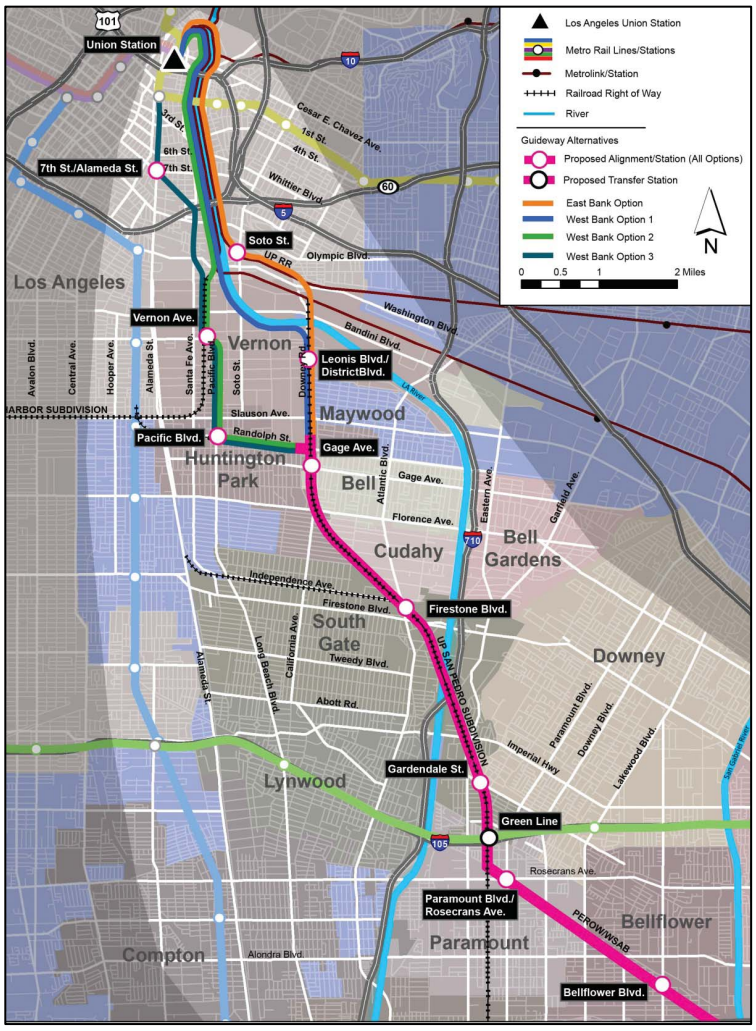

Figure 9.2. Ambitious possible future transit and river restoration projects connecting the City of Gateway to the broader region. The Los Angeles River, whose concrete-lined channel is proposed for restoration, runs from north to south through the center of the image. The route of the proposed West Santa Ana Branch light rail line is depicted in pink, with several route alternatives shown between the station in Bell and Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. Reproduced from: Southern California Association of Governments 2013, p. 2-26.

If realized, the Army Corps' plan will utterly transform a river that for a human lifetime has had all of the visual appeal of a concrete-lined stormwater drainage channel, one best known as a popular location for car chases and shootouts in apocalyptic action films such as *Terminator 2.* Liberating the LA River, the water source for the original Spanish settlement of Los Angeles dating to 1781, and the Tongva Native American village of Yaangva for centuries before that, from its flood-control concrete channel will provide gritty southeast LA County with desperately-needed open space, access to nature, an active transportation corridor, and a powerful link to the region's natural and human past all at once.

The other potentially transformational infrastructure project is a long-term proposal for a light rail line extending from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles with stations in Vernon, Bell, and South Gate before reaching a new infill station on the existing east-west Green Line light rail line in Paramount. One option would also include a station on Pacific Boulevard in Huntington Park, the busiest shopping street in the area. Another segment, built either separately or concurrently, would continue southeastward, following the publicly-owned former Pacific Electric "Red Car" right-of-way towards the county line, and perhaps eventually to Santa Ana in Orange County (Figure 9.2, above). The region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), has completed an Alternatives Analysis for the corridor, an essential prerequisite for a future Environmental Impact Statement and subsequent regional and federal funding.

SCAG's analysis shows a projected weekday daily ridership of over 80,000, equaling LA Metro's Blue Line, already the single most heavily-used modern light rail line in the nation (Southern California Association of Governments 2013). While there are no definitive plans at present to fund the line, at present tentatively dubbed the West Santa Ana Branch Corridor, it is being actively considered as part of an ambitious countywide transportation funding package for the 2016 ballot, a follow-up to 2008's successful voter-approved Measure R, which is funding a countywide rail transit expansion. The West Santa Ana Branch Corridor, linking the densely-populated heart of the City of Gateway with job centers in downtown Los Angeles and beyond, and possibly also to still-growing Orange County, would go a long way towards ending the City of Gateways' paradoxical status as a perceptual "empty quarter" in the regional imagination, in spite of its centrality and density (M. Davis 1992). It would also undoubtedly have a transformative effect on the housing market of the area, leading to further pressures for growth (whether legal or extralegal) near station areas.

While working-class enclaves in other large, hot-market cities, such as San Francisco, Boston, and New York, are shrinking under the pressures of gentrification and escalating housing costs, this fate seems unlikely to befall the City of Gateway. While the growth in the informal housing market may slow or stop even as it spatially concentrates near rail stations, it seems unlikely that the majority of extralegal housing will simply disappear. At the same time, the slowdown in population growth may mean that local jurisdictions will have more latitude to come to grips with the informal housing market and its lingering effects, such as shortages of parks and deteriorating utility networks. A higher proportion of more well-established immigrants and second- and third-generation citizens[18] will likely become more politically engaged and make more stringent demands that local elected officials grapple with the aftermath of rapid informalized housing growth.

[18] Here I follow the Pew Research Center, an important source of analysis on immigration trends, in applying the term "second-generation immigrant" to people born in the United States to immigrant parents. In colloquial usage, such persons are sometimes referred to as "first-generation Americans," but this has the unfortunate side effect of implying that their foreign-born parents are not Americans themselves.

Much as Harris (1999) describes for the auto-constructed communities of the outskirts of Toronto in the postwar era, and indeed as Nicolaides (1999) describes in the City of Gateway's own past in the 1950s, the remainder of the 2010s and the 2020s may be a period where City of Gateway communities focus on increasing their local quality of life, shoring up their local economies, and generally pausing to catch their breath after decades of relentless growth. One of the most crucial tasks will be to decide how to deal with the existence of an enormous informal housing market in their midst.

. . .

The Canadian journalist journalist Doug Saunders (2010), in his book *Arrival City,* chronicles his visits to locations around the world in which migrants from impoverished regions of the Global South have moved to the suburbs of booming metropolises, in the South and North. Some migrants have found opportunity and upward mobility, and others have struggled mightily to eke out a living. The City of Gateway has been, for decades now, one of those "arrival cities."

One of the sites Saunders describes is the West Adams district of Los Angeles, an area that closely resembles much of the City of Gateway in many respects. In the almost quarter century since the Rodney King riots of 1992, the nadir of despair for many hard-luck communities in Los Angeles County, the area has experienced a revival, led by immigrant newcomers. As in the City of Gateway, informal housing is what has allowed many of them to gain a toehold in their new community. Perhaps, in the end, Saunders' description of West Adams—quoted at the beginning of this chapter—as a neighborhood that is by no means picturesque but that has become one of much greater optimism is applicable to much of the City of Gateway. Born as a place of welcome for the (white and male) "workingman" of a century ago (Nicolaides 1999), though radically transformed in its physical appearance, economy, demographics, and much else, today's City of Gateway persists as a haven for a large swath of the vast working class of greater Los Angeles.

Moving forward, it is not inconceivable that, in an age of mounting inequality in the United States, the City of Gateway could become that rare place in the contemporary US metropolis: the working-class enclave that provides stability and a decent quality of life to its residents. Preserving what already exists, and improving on it further, however, will require that the people of this section of suburban Los Angeles grapple with the existence and the ramifications of the vast housing system that has arisen outside the formal economy without anyone having planned its emergence. If this dissertation plays some small role in assisting in this arduous task, then it will have served its purpose.

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Appendix 3.1: Code Enforcement Survey Instrument

Code Enforcement Officer Survey
Industry Specific

Design Survey | Collect Responses | Analyze Results

Edit Survey

Preview Survey | Send Survey »

To change the **look** of your survey, select a theme below.

Anemone | Create Custom Theme

TITLE & LOGO Edit Title | Upgrade to Add Logo »

Code Enforcement Officer Survey

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PAGE 1 Edit Page Options ▼ | Add Page Logic | Move | Delete — Show this page only

Introduction and purpose

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

College of Environmental Design, University of California - Berkeley

UC BERKELEY ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

My name is Jake Wegmann, and I am a PhD candidate at the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC-Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. I am working under the supervision of Associate Professor Karen Chapple in the same department. I would like to invite you to take part in my doctoral research study, which concerns the role of secondary units (otherwise known as “Accessory Dwelling Units," "Ancillary Dwelling Units" (ADUs) and by various other names) in the housing market in Southern California.

I am asking you to participate in this survey specifically because of your professional expertise and experience in code enforcement (or a related field) in Southern California. Note that this survey is only to be taken by individuals who are 18 years of age or older.

Before you start responding to questions, the next several screens will provide important information about the survey. You will then be asked to provide your consent (by clicking a button on the screen) before you begin.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this online survey. It should take about 10 minutes of your time.

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Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study; however, I hope that the research will benefit society by providing information about how zoning, building and other applicable codes are enforced on secondary units. At present, very little is known on this topic in the planning field.

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General information

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Risks/Discomforts

Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop participating at any time. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, I am taking precautions (detailed below) to minimize this risk.

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

Confidentiality

I will handle the data I collect from you as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, personally identifiable information such as job title and jurisdiction will not be used.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will not share survey data with anyone other than Prof. Chapple that will make it possible to identify you or anyone else responding to this survey.

At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you are willing to be interviewed. If you indicate that you are, you will be asked for your name and your

contact information, which I will keep on file so that I have the information I need to contact you. In this case, however, I will absolutely not reveal your name or address to anyone else other than Prof. Chapple. If your words are quoted in any presentation or publication, it will be impossible for anyone to tell who wrote them.

When I complete this survey, I may save all of the collected survey data for use in my future research. Any resulting data files will be kept only on my personal home computer and on an external drive that I use solely to backup my personal home computer. My home computer is protected by a password at login that only I know. I will not transmit these files to any other person or computer, by e-mail or by any other means.

If I collaborate with anyone else on this future research, I will not grant him/her access to information that would allow you to be identified.

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

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Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

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Your rights and consent

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate, to answer any particular question, or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

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Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me (Jake Wegmann). I can be reached at (415) 816-2777 or

jagw@berkeley.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the University of California at Berkeley's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects at (510) 642-7461, or e-mail subjects@berkeley.edu.

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Q1 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

***1. If you agree to take part in the research, please print a copy of this page to keep for future reference if you so choose, then click on the "Accept" button below.**

Accept

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General questions

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q2 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

***2. What jurisdiction (i.e., county or incorporated city) do you work for? (For example, "County of San Bernardino" or "City of Pasadena.")**

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q3 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

3. What is the name of the department or division that you work for? (For example, "Department of Community Development, Code Compliance Division," or "Department of Public Works.")

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q4 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

4. What is your job title? (For example, "Senior Code Enforcement Officer.")

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q5 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

5. What approximate neighborhoods/districts/sections of your jurisdiction do you or your staff cover as part of your inspection/enforcement duties? (For example, “The north side of the city,” or “the Elm Park and Cedar Heights neighborhoods,” or “the area west of the I-5 freeway,” etc.)

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q6 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

6. Do your enforcement duties primarily cover zoning, building codes, both, or something else? (Select the best answer.)

- Mostly or only zoning enforcement
- Mostly or only building code enforcement
- Both zoning and building code enforcement
- Other

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q7 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

7. Approximately how many Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees work in code enforcement (in any capacity) in your division/department? (Type “I don’t know” if you do not know.)

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Conditions on residential properties

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q8 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

8. In the neighborhoods where you and/or your staff conduct inspections, what percentage of residential (1-4 unit) parcels do you estimate have at least one additional dwelling unit (i.e. converted garage, back house, partitioned unit within main structure, etc.) that is not compliant with building, zoning, or other applicable codes? Select the choice that is closest to your ballpark estimate, or "I don't know" if you don't have one.

- 0%
- 2.5%
- 5%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%
- I don't know

Additional comments

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q9 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

9. In the neighborhoods where you and/or your staff conduct inspections, what percentage of residential (1-4 unit) parcels do you estimate are overcrowded according to zoning or other applicable standards? Select the choice that is closest to your ballpark estimate, or "I don't know" if you don't have one.

- 0%
- 2.5%
- 5%
- 10%

20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
I don't know

Additional comments

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q10 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

10. In the neighborhoods where you and/or your staff conduct inspections, what percentage of residential (1-4 unit) parcels do you estimate have at least one non-code compliant condition of any sort? (For example: unpermitted dwelling units, overcrowding, unpermitted structures or house additions, unauthorized auto repair, excessive debris, etc.) Select the choice that is closest to your ballpark estimate, or "I don't know" if you don't have one.

0%
2.5%
5%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
I don't know

Additional comments

Upgrade to Add More Questions

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PAGE 6 Edit Page Options ▼ | Add Page Logic | Move | Delete Show this page only

Volume of enforcement action

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q11 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

11. On approximately how many residential (1-4 unit) properties with unpermitted dwelling units, overcrowded occupancy or other noncompliant conditions did you and/or your staff initiate enforcement actions in the last 30 days? (“Enforcement action” refers to any contact you and/or your staff made with the property owner, ranging from a written notice, to verbal communication, to the issuance of a citation, etc.) If you don't have a ballpark estimate, write "I don't know."

Number of residential properties:

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q12 Edit Question ▼ Add Question Logic Move Delete

12. What percentage of all of the residential (1-4 unit) properties with unpermitted dwelling units, overcrowded occupancy or other noncompliant conditions that exist in your inspection territory would you estimate that you and/or your staff were able to address via enforcement action during the past 12 months? Select the choice that is closest to your ballpark estimate, or "I don't know" if you don't have one.

- 0%
- 2.5%
- 5%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%
- I don't know

Additional comments

Upgrade to Add More Questions Split Page Here

Q13 Edit Question ▼ Edit Question Logic (2) Move Delete

13. Please select the statement below that best represents your opinion about the volume of enforcement actions taken by your department or division on residential (1-4 unit) properties with unpermitted dwelling units, overcrowded occupancy or other noncompliant conditions in your inspection territory.

- The volume of enforcement actions carried out by my department/division is about right.
- I would prefer that my department/division carry out more enforcement actions than we currently do.
- I would prefer that my department and/or my staff carry out fewer enforcement actions than we currently do.

Additional comments

Upgrade to Add More Questions

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PAGE 7 Edit Page Options ▼ | Add Page Logic | Move | Delete Show this page only

Volume of enforcement action

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q14 Edit Question ▼ | Edit Question Logic (5) | Move | Delete

***14. Why does your department/division carry out more enforcement actions than you would prefer? (Select the best answer.)**

- Pressure from the leadership of my department/division
- Pressure from staff from other departments/divisions in my jurisdiction
- Pressure from local elected officials from my jurisdiction and/or their staff
- Other
- I prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

Upgrade to Add More Questions

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PAGE 8 Edit Page Options ▼ | Add Page Logic | Move | Delete Show this page only

Volume of enforcement action

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q15 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

15. Why does your department/division carry out fewer enforcement actions than you would prefer? (Select all that apply.)

- Pressure from the leadership of my department/division.
- Pressure from staff from other departments/divisions in my jurisdiction
- Pressure from elected officials and/or their staff
- Lack of staffing capacity within my department/division
- I prefer not to say

Other (please specify)

Upgrade to Add More Questions

+ Add Page

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Staff capacity

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q16 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

16. Imagine that the elected officials in your jurisdiction were to make a political decision to take enforcement actions sufficient to address most or all of the 1-4 unit residential properties with unpermitted dwelling units, overcrowded occupancy or other noncompliant conditions within your jurisdiction's boundaries. Roughly how much do you estimate that code enforcement officer staffing capacity in your department would need to be increased? (100% increase means a doubling of staff capacity, 200% increase means a tripling of staff capacity, etc.) If your answer is "None" or "I don't know," you can write these in the answer box.

% increase

Upgrade to Add More Questions

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Wrap-up

Upgrade to Add More Questions

Q17 Edit Question ▼ | Add Question Logic | Move | Delete

17. While I expect that the results of this survey will be informative, there is also a great deal that I can only learn by doing in-person interviews. Would you be willing to have me contact you to schedule an interview at a later date? If so, please leave your contact information in the box designated below. As is the case with this survey, strict anonymity would be maintained.

Yes

No

Name and contact information

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Q18 Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

18. While I tried to be comprehensive in selecting the questions to include in this survey, there may be issues that I have not considered. If there is anything else about your experience as a code enforcement officer that you would like to share, please write it below.

Upgrade to Add More Questions | Split Page Here

Edit Question ▼ | Move | Delete

You have now completed the survey. Thank you.

If you know of any colleagues, whether in your division/department or in any other jurisdiction in Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, or San Diego Counties, who might be willing to fill out this survey, please send them a link to www.enforcementsurvey.com.

Thanks again for filling out this survey. I appreciate your time.

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+ Add Page

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Appendix 3-2: Materials for Requesting Responses to Code Enforcement Survey

Email sent to CACEO listserv subscribers and employees of municipal code enforcement divisions

Dear CACEO listserv member/code enforcement professional:

(Apologies in advance for any cross-posting.)

Do you currently work in code enforcement? Do you currently work for any jurisdiction (incorporated city or county) within the following six Southern California counties – Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, or Ventura? Do you deal with unpermitted units (garage conversions, back houses, etc), overcrowded dwellings, or other non-code compliant conditions (such as unpermitted home-based business activities, excessive debris, etc.) on residential (1-4 unit) properties in the course of going about your work?

If your answer to these three questions is "yes," I would be very grateful if you would be willing to take 10 minutes of your time to respond to my online survey. (Note: if this link doesn't work for some reason, just go to www.enforcementsurvey.com.) My name is Jake Wegmann, and I am a PhD candidate in the planning department at UC-Berkeley. The survey is part of my dissertation research project, which is on the role that unpermitted dwellings play in the housing market. In my opinion, the important role of code enforcement activities in shaping the housing market has been almost completely neglected in planning studies. I am hoping to begin to change this oversight with this survey, and the publications that will result from it.

Protecting your anonymity and confidentiality is not only very important to me personally, but it is required by UC-Berkeley's Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), which reviewed and approved my study before I was allowed to start it. The beginning of the survey provides details on exactly how I will protect your identity if you choose to participate in the survey.

In addition: if you have any colleagues, whether inside your department or working for another jurisdiction in the six counties I listed above, that might be interested in filling out this survey, please let them know about it. They can click on the link above, or simply go to the website www.enforcementsurvey.com.

Thank you for your time,
Jake Wegmann
jagw@berkeley.edu

PhD Candidate
Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP)
UC-Berkeley

Postcard sent to municipal code enforcement divisions

Dear code enforcement officer/supervisor,

You and/or your staff and colleagues are invited to participate in a survey as part of a research study by Jake Wegmann, a PhD candidate in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. This study looks at the role that secondary units (also known as "mother-in-law units," "ADUs," and by other names) play in the Southern California housing market.

Responding to this survey takes about 10 minutes. It asks a series of questions about your work, specifically the enforcement of building, zoning and other applicable codes and ordinances on residential properties with unpermitted secondary units, overcrowding, or other non-compliant conditions. *The anonymity of all survey respondents is strictly protected.*

To begin the survey, please go to:

www.enforcementsurvey.com

NAME
(or other responsible official)
TITLE

Department of Building Inspection and Enforcement, Code Compliance Section

City of Southern California City
1234 Main Street
Suite 5
Southern California City, CA 99999

Appendix 4-1: Quantifying a Proxy for Housing Stock Informalization in the City of Gateway at the Place Level

This appendix presents two methods of using Census data to attempt to rank the jurisdictions within the City of Gateway according to the level of the informalization that their housing stocks underwent in recent decades. Neither method is definitive; each should be seen as a different method for approximating the influence of informalization processes on the places' housing stocks. Nevertheless, taken together and in combination with other analyses, they provide some insight into the variations within the jurisdictions that make up the City of Gateway.

Method 1: Quantifying Increases in Single-Family Units as Share of Housing Stock

The City of Gateway as a whole (see Table 4.6 in Chapter 4), and most of its individual jurisdictions, exhibit a consistent pattern in the share of single-family units in their housing stocks over the past half century. The share starts out relatively high in 1960, dips to a low point in either the 1980 or the 1990 Census, and then steadily increases thereafter. This pattern can be seen in every individual jurisdiction except for Paramount and Willowbrook (Table A4-1).

Planners operating in the US context would typically assume that jurisdictions in which population density is steadily increasing, as is the case for all City of Gateway jurisdictions from 1960 through 2000 (and in some cases beyond), would have an increasing share of multifamily housing and a declining share of single-family housing (detached and attached, and including boats, RVs, trailers, etc). In the City of Gateway, this has not been the trend in most places since either 1980 or 1990. Presumably the conversion of garages and sheds to dwelling units, of single-family houses to multiunit housing, the construction of new back houses, and the emplacement of trailers, RVs, and other inhabited structures on residential lots is accounting for the increasing share in single-unit dwellings. Thus, one might view the increase in the single-family unit share from its low point in either 1980 or 1990 until the present time as a proxy for the level of informalization that a given jurisdiction's housing stock has undergone.[1]

The percentage increase in the single-unit share by jurisdiction, shown as the rightmost column in Table A4-1, suggests three groups of jurisdictions by level of housing stock informalization, at least as measured by this method. Among the places with the highest levels of informalization, the lowest income place, Bell,

[1] Of course, this assumption ignores the possibility that the net increase in single units is mostly accounted for via permitted construction. Method 2, explained below, addresses this potential objection to Method 1, although only for the 10 incorporated cities within the City of Gateway and not for the four unincorporated places.

appears in this group, and the two most densely populated cities in California, Maywood and Cudahy, do as well.

Table A4-1. Single-family units as share of housing stock by jurisdiction and year, City of Gateway. Note that the cells shaded in dark gray show the low point in the share of single units for a given place. Single-family units encompass both detached and attached single-family dwellings, as well as mobile homes, boats, vans, RVs, etc. Sources: Units in Structure tables from decennial censuses (1960 through 2000 inclusive), and from the American Community Survey (2007-2011).

Place	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007-2011	Increase from low point to 2007-2011
High level of informalization							
Bell	78%	61%	48%	57%	60%	71%	50%
Huntington Park	60%	51%	34%	47%	50%	52%	50%
Maywood	65%	59%	47%	56%	59%	67%	43%
Bell Gardens	90%	72%	75%	66%	70%	77%	17%
South Gate	75%	66%	61%	66%	65%	71%	17%
Cudahy	86%	61%	54%	58%	60%	62%	16%
Medium level of informalization							
East Rancho Dominguez	85%	78%	76%	84%	84%	85%	12%
Florence-Firestone	87%	81%	68%	79%	76%	76%	11%
Walnut Park	78%	81%	75%	79%	79%	82%	10%
Lynwood	72%	68%	63%	66%	67%	69%	10%
Compton	83%	77%	73%	78%	78%	80%	9%
Low level of informalization							
Bellflower	92%	71%	63%	61%	62%	63%	2%
Paramount	95%	78%	73%	66%	66%	64%	-
Willowbrook	96%	91%	79%	83%	79%	79%	-

Among the three places in the least informalized group, Bellflower, the highest income place in the City of Gateway, only barely exhibits the characteristic pattern in the single-family unit share over time. Paramount and Willowbrook do not exhibit the pattern at all; in these two places, the single-family unit share is lower as of 2007-2011 than at any other time in the past half century. In these two places, it may be that multifamily construction has been robust enough to swamp any effects of informalization in residential neighborhoods. In Paramount, at least, this explanation is plausible, given that nearly twice as many units in buildings of five apartments or more, 2,519, were permitted there between 1980 and 2010 than in the runner-up among the ten incorporated places in the City of Gateway, Huntington Park, with 1,326 (Building Permit Survey 1980-2010).

In Willowbrook, it is not possible to examine the level of permitted multifamily construction, since Building Permit Survey data for the unincorporated portions of counties is not disaggregated by place. Interviews and direct observation with Los Angeles County code enforcement officers, however, suggest that informalization in Willowbrook is, if anything, very high relative even to South and Southeast LA County (for more discussion about extralegal housing in Willowbrook, see Chapters 5 and 6). At least two factors could account for this disparity. First, with among the smallest residential lots in South LA, informalization in Willowbrook may be resulting in the conversion of single-family houses into multiunit houses, rather than the addition of new single family units in the form of detached houses or converted freestanding garages, as is frequent in other parts of the City of Gateway. Second, Willowbrook may have exhibited informalization in its housing stock for decades longer than in other parts of the City of Gateway.

Method 2: Comparing Increases in Single-Family Units Since 1980 to Building Permit Issuance

The other method of computing a proxy for the extent of informalization of the housing stock of the localities within the City of Gateway is to simply compare the total number of single-family units that have been added to the stock from 1980 until the present with the number of permits that have been issued for the construction of single units in that same time interval. Note that because permits for manufactured houses and habitable vehicles (such as recreational vehicles and boats) are not issued by localities, these types of dwellings are omitted from both sides of the comparison (Table A4-2).

The ratio between permitted single units and single units added should be interpreted with several caveats. First, undoubtedly some single unit permits are simply replacing demolished or destroyed single units. This fact, however, implies that the permitted construction ratio (the rightmost column in Table A4-2) is, if anything, an underestimate. The more replacement of single-family stock occurs, the greater the extent of this underestimate. Thus, it would be expected that the underestimate is greatest in more affluent (relatively speaking) jurisdictions, particularly Bellflower, where more frequent single-family housing replacement would be expected to takes place.

In addition, as discussed earlier, not all extralegal units would be classified by the Census as single-family dwellings. Thus, this analysis is missing whole categories of housing informalization, some of which may be systematically greater in some localities than in others. Finally, because of limitations in the Building Permit Survey data described earlier in this appendix, only incorporated cities can be analyzed in this manner; the four unincorporated places in the City of Gateway cannot.

Table A4-2. Comparison of single-family unit permits issued to housing stock increase in City of Gateway incorporated jurisdictions, 1980 to 2011. Sources: Units in Structure tables from decennial censuses (1960 through 2000 inclusive), and from the American Community Survey (2007-2011); Building Permit Survey (1980-2010).

Incorporated City	Increase in single-family units*, 1980 to 2007-2011	Permits issued for single-family units*, 1980 to 2010	Single-family unit* permits issued as share of increase in single-family units, 1980 to 2007-2011
Bell	2,155	211	10%
Maywood	1,322	316	24%
Lynwood	1,344	331	25%
South Gate	2,786	695	25%
Paramount	898	297	33%
Bell Gardens	591	259	44%
Huntington Park	2,453	1,088	44%
Cudahy	667	309	46%
Compton	2,916	1,458	50%
Bellflower	1,476	1,123	76%

** Note: in this table, "single-family units" includes detached and attached single-family units, but excludes trailers, mobile homes, RVs, vans, etc.*

Comparison and Interpretation of Results from Methods 1 and 2

While the results of Methods 1 and 2 are not identical, there are some striking similarities. For instance, in each one Bell ranks first in the level of informalization, and Bellflower ranks last or close to last. Maywood and South Gate exhibit a high degree of housing stock informalization according to both methods.

The results of Method 2 help explain an anomaly from Method 1, the City of Paramount. While Paramount's high levels of permitted multifamily construction appear to have swamped the effects of housing stock informalization in Method 1, Method 2 reveals that (at most, and ignoring housing stock replacement) only a third of the net gain in single-family housing units in the last 30 years can be attributed to permitted construction. Thus, Paramount appears to have been a locality that responded to intense housing market pressures since 1980 *both* by permitting large amounts of multifamily construction *and* via informalization of the existing housing stock in residential neighrborhoods. Bellflower, on the other hand, is consistent across the two methods as a locality with comparatively little housing stock informalization, as might be expected for the highest-income jurisdiction in the City of Gateway.

Finally, there is the possibility that the results presented here are artifacts of sampling error, as a result of the switch from the decennial census, up through and including the year 2000, to the American Community Survey (ACS) thereafter, which now is the source of data on "units in structure." The most dramatic results

presented herein are sufficiently robust to not be swamped by sampling error. For instance, the margin of error for the count of single-family detached units for 2007-2011 exceeded the net increase in such units from 1980 to 2011 only in Compton and Lynwood. For the six other cities that experienced an increase during this time period, the margin of error ranges from 21% to 50% of the net increase. In addition, it is telling that single-family units increased in every single City of Gateway incorporated jurisdiction from 1980 to 2007-2011; if this increase were a mere artifact of sampling error, it would be unlikely to be repeated in all ten cases. Thus, it appears that there is a significant and detectable real world effect that emerges from the analysis in Methods 1 and 2 that exceeds the sampling error brought on by the switch to the ACS after 2000.

A Note on How the US Census Identifies Unpermitted Units

Prior to each decennial census, the US Census Bureau relies upon a database (not available to the public), the Master Address File (MAF), as its starting roster of properties in which it will search for housing units and households living in them. The MAF is built from US Postal Service records, and is augmented by input from local (city or county) planners. The MAF is the starting point for determining where Census enumerators will make visits. If, in the course of their fieldwork, enumerators discover heretofore hidden (often unpermitted) housing units, they attempt to make contact with their residents in order to gather data about them and their occupants.

As discussed in Chapter 5, US Postal Service mailboxes can be added to properties irrespective of whether they are permitted by the cities or counties in which they lie, and without coordination or permission from the local government. Presumably, the MAF used for the City of Gateway included many addresses for unpermitted units that had been added to the database via these sorts of adhoc mailbox requests.

In the end, it is impossible to know that how many housing units the US Census Bureau "misses" during its decennial census. But it is clear that the Bureau makes a substantial effort to locate every unit, regardless of its permit status. Furthermore, many elected officials in the City of Gateway are supportive, or even demanding, of Census Bureau efforts to count as many units and people within their jurisdictions as possible. Undercounting of people and housing, which can harm efforts to obtain grant funds or to attract businesses, have been a sore point in many LA County communities for decades, and particularly in southeast LA County.

Reference for Appendix 4-1

Building Permit Survey 1980-2010. Data is from CD-ROM mailed by US Department of Commerce to author in May 2013.

Appendix 4-2: Methodological Details of the Housing Stock Model for the City of Gateway

Basic Description and Purpose of Housing Stock Model

Inspired by analyses estimating the "shadow" housing stock performed by Gellen (1985), Baer (1986), and Hardman (1996) at the nationwide level using Components of Inventory Change (CINCH) reports published by the Census, in this appendix I describe a related but distinct housing stock analysis I developed for the City of Gateway. Its purpose is to gauge the relative contribution that informal housing has made to the housing stock in relation to permitted housing construction since 1980. This appendix provides methodological details. The model's important results are summarized in the main body of Chapter 4.

Estimation of Annualized Loss Rate

My housing stock analysis requires an estimate of the *annualized loss rate* of housing in the City of Gateway for the period from 1980 to 2010. This is the rate at which housing stock is lost due to every mechanism except for i) physical removal, and ii) loss due to conversion or construction. The loss rate includes abandonment, destruction by fire, conversion to nonresidential uses such as workshops and stores, and other means of removal.

The starting point for estimating the annualized loss rate is the forward-looking approach to modeling housing stock used by CINCH. In it, housing stock that exists at a time period 1 is compared with what exists at a later time period 2. The forward-looking analytical approach seeks to account for either the continued existence or disappearance of the units that existed in time period 1 by time period 2 (Figure A4-1).

Barring widespread societal breakdown, housing stock is relatively stable even in places experiencing rapid population growth. For this reason, the largest category of housing units is those that existed in time period 1 and continue to exist (even if modified) as housing units in time period 2. This mechanism is shown as Box B in Figure A4-1. Box C accounts for units existing in time period 1 that no longer exist in time period 2 because they have been lost due to conversion or merger.[1] Box D accounts for units that have disappeared between time period 1 and 2 because they have been physically moved.[2] While houses are occasionally lifted off their foundations and moved by truck to another site, this process is relatively rare

[1] A unit that is converted, in CINCH parlance, disappears but is then replaced by two or more new units, as in the case where a single-family house is divided into a duplex. Conversely, in a merger a unit is combined with another unit; thus, both units disappear and are replaced with a new one.

[2] The same unit would register as a new unit wherever it was moved to, assuming it continued to be used as housing. This "other side of the coin" would be apparent only in backward-looking analysis, however, not the forward-looking analysis described here.

and is far more common with mobile homes, boats, recreational vehicles, and other unit types that are vehicles or have vehicle-like characteristics.

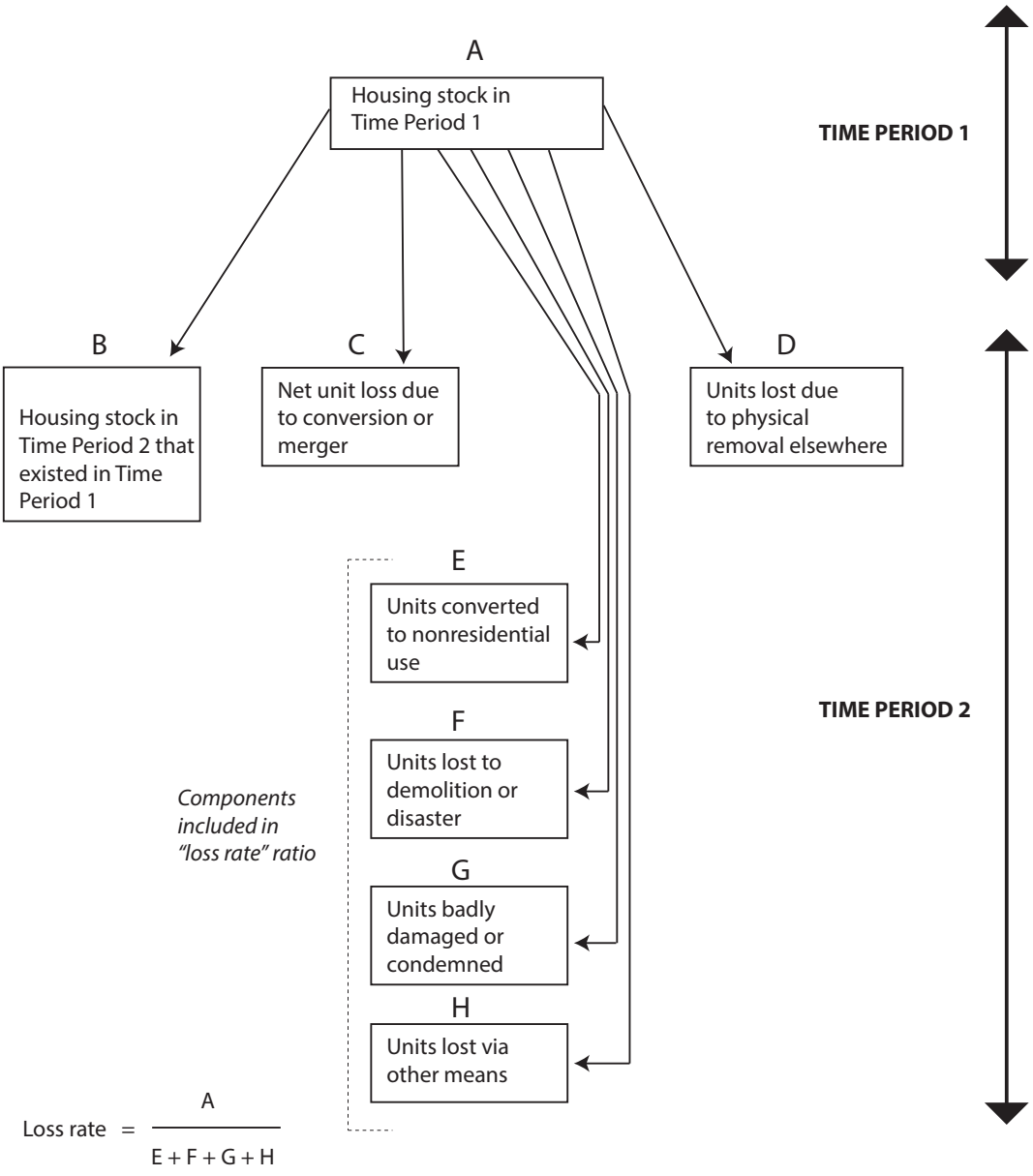

Figure A4-1. A pictorial representation of the forward-looking housing model used in the Census Bureau's Components of Inventory Change (CINCH) reports. (Diagram by author.) The components that are included in the "loss rate" assumed in the housing stock model described in this appendix are shown, along with the formula for the loss rate at lower left.

Boxes E, F, G, and H account for the other ways in which units that exist in time period 1 are absent in time period 2. Collectively, the total number of units lost through these four mechanisms by time period 2 as a fraction of the total number of units existing in time period 1 is a ratio that I define here as the *loss rate,* or the *annualized loss rate* when expressed in terms of the rate of loss per year.

Annualized loss rates can be easily calculated from CINCH reports, but the data that are presented there are geographically coarse, with a spatial scale no smaller than multistate regions of the US.[3] More usefully, CINCH reports publish the components needed to calculate the annualized loss rate for housing stock of differing characteristics, including age. I thus estimated loss rates, as I have defined them here, from two CINCH reports (from 1985-1987 and from 2007-2009), assuming that the housing stock had an age profile equivalent to what existed in the ten incorporated cities of the City of Gateway during 1990 and 2010, respectively (CINCH 1985-1987; CINCH 2007-2009; ACS 2007-2011).[4]

These calculations resulted in an estimated loss rate in the ten City of Gateway incorporated jurisdictions in 1990 of 0.75% per annum, and a higher rate of 0.87% in 2010. The 1985-1987 equivalent rate for the nation as a whole was higher than the estimated 1990 rate for the City of Gateways' ten cities, at 0.80%. By 2010, the City of Gateway's rate was considerably higher than in the nation as a whole in 2007-2009, at which point the national rate had dropped to 0.58%. These general trends are consistent with steady nationwide improvements in fire safety and improvements in building codes, which might be expected to contribute over time to a lower loss rate. Meanwhile, in the City of Gateway, the stock of buildings used for housing aged between 1990 and 2010, as relatively little new construction replenished the existing inventory. Thus, the increase in the City of Gateway's estimated annualized loss rate well beyond the nationwide rate by 2010 is consonant with what intuition would suggest.

Housing Stock Model Description

I ran the housing stock model forward, year by year, beginning in 1981 (1980 provided a starting baseline that provided the initial conditions for 1981) and ending in 2010. Note that in this model, I defined "housing stock" as all housing excluding mobile homes, trailers, boats, and other forms of housing not permanently attached to foundations. This allowed me to safely ignore housing loss via the mechanism of physical removal of housing units (Box D in Figure A4-1), which mostly affects housing units not attached to permanent foundations.[5]

The model incorporated the assumption that housing stock was added or replenished in the ten incorporated jurisdictions of the City of Gateway *only* via permitted construction. Furthermore, it assumed that housing stock was depleted

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[3] Periodically the US Census releases CINCH reports for metropolitan areas, providing much more geographic specificity. Unfortunately, no CINCH report has been released for the Los Angeles region in the last two decades.

[4] Unfortunately, the unincorporated areas of the City of Gateway are omitted from the analysis presented here. This is because my housing stock model relies on Building Permit Survey data, which is not disaggregated at the level of unincorporated communities.

[5] Even though such housing plays a role in both the permitted and extralegal housing markets in the City of Gateway (as discussed more in Chapter 5), I excluded mobile homes and other forms of housing that are not permanently attached to foundations because they are not permitted by local jurisdictions. Including them in a model that relies on local building permit data thus would have been tantamount to "comparing apples to oranges."

each year at a rate equivalent to the annualized loss rate estimates computed above. From 1980 to 1990, I used the lower, 1990 estimate for the annualized loss rate, and from 1991 to 2010 I interpolated the loss rate until it reached its maximum (estimated) value of 0.87% per annum in 2010. In each year, the housing stock (again, exclusive of mobile homes and similar forms of housing) is modeled as the previous year's stock depleted in an amount given by the assumed annualized loss rate and increased by an amount equivalent to the building permits issued within the ten cities during the previous year.

I ran the model in two slightly different ways. The first model run, summarized in Table A4-3, runs continuously from 1981 until 2010, without being corrected at each decadal transition, when decennial Census data becomes available. It is most useful for quantifying aggregate housing stock trends over the entire three-decade period.

The second model run, summarized in Table A4-4, "resets" at the beginning of each of two intermediate decades: the 1990s and the 2000s ("the Oughts"). This allows rates of informalization to be compared across the three decades of the 1980s, the 1990s, and the Oughts. It is thus useful for comparing the timing, rather than the overall magnitude, of the informalization of the housing stock in the three-decade period that is analyzed.

Because of these two different sets of assumptions, the decadal components of the second model run do not exactly total to the results calculated in the first model run. While the model output is shown here in Tables A4-3 and A4-4, the main discussion of their implications is left for the main body of Chapter 4.

Table A4-3. Housing stock model results, City of Gateway (incorporated cities only), 1981 to 2010. Note that the analysis only applies to the ten incorporated cities in the City of Gateway, and omits the four unincorporated areas. The year 1980 is included only to begin the model; fully incorporating it would have required 1979 building permit data, which is not available. Similarly, year 2010 building permit data is excluded because it would have had no effect until the following year, 2011, which is not included in this model.

Year	Actual Housing Units*	Modeled Housing Units* (Excluding Permitted Construction)	Modeled Housing Units*	Assumed Annualized Loss Rate	Building Permits Issued
1980 (Census)	**136,654**	**136,654**	**136,654**	0.751%	668
1981		135,627	136,295	0.751%	626
1982		134,608	135,897	0.751%	302
1983		133,597	135,178	0.751%	555
1984		132,594	134,718	0.751%	935
1985		131,598	134,641	0.751%	817
1986		130,609	134,447	0.751%	1,580
1987		129,628	135,017	0.751%	1,772
1988		128,654	135,774	0.751%	1,686
1989		127,688	136,441	0.751%	1,443
1990 (Census)	**137,356**	**126,729**	**136,859**	0.751%	1,030
1991		125,777	136,861	0.757%	682
1992		124,824	136,506	0.763%	345
1993		123,872	135,810	0.769%	313
1994		122,920	135,079	0.775%	343
1995		121,967	134,375	0.781%	292
1996		121,015	133,618	0.787%	271
1997		120,063	132,838	0.793%	135
1998		119,111	131,920	0.799%	228
1999		118,160	131,094	0.804%	164
2000 (Census)	**143,129**	**117,209**	**130,204**	0.810%	170
2001		116,260	129,319	0.816%	321
2002		115,311	128,584	0.822%	207
2003		114,362	127,734	0.828%	318
2004		113,415	126,994	0.834%	264
2005		112,469	126,199	0.840%	526
2006		111,525	125,665	0.846%	292
2007		110,581	124,894	0.852%	279
2008		109,639	124,109	0.858%	285
2009		108,699	123,329	0.864%	109
2010 (Census)	**145,462**	**107,760**	**122,373**	0.870%	
				Total	**16,958**

** "Housing Units," as used here, excludes trailers, RVs, boats, etc.*

Table A4-4. Housing stock model results, City of Gateway (incorporated cities only), by decade. These are the results of a model run that "resets" at 10-year intervals, making possible decadal comparisons.

Year	Actual Housing Units*	Modeled Housing Units* (Excluding Permitted Construction)	Modeled Housing Units*	Assumed Annualized Loss Rate	Building Permits Issued
1980 (Census)	**136,654**	**136,654**	**136,654**	0.751%	668
1981		135,627	136,295	0.751%	626
1982		134,608	135,897	0.751%	302
1983		133,597	135,178	0.751%	555
1984		132,594	134,718	0.751%	935
1985		131,598	134,641	0.751%	817
1986		130,609	134,447	0.751%	1,580
1987		129,628	135,017	0.751%	1,772
1988		128,654	135,774	0.751%	1,686
1989		127,688	136,441	0.751%	1,443
1990 (Census)	**137,356**	**126,729**	**136,859**	0.751%	1,030
				1981-1990 Subtotal	*10,746*
1991		136,324	137,354	0.757%	682
1992		135,292	136,996	0.763%	345
1993		134,260	136,296	0.769%	313
1994		133,227	135,561	0.775%	343
1995		132,195	134,854	0.781%	292
1996		131,163	134,093	0.787%	271
1997		130,131	133,309	0.793%	135
1998		129,100	132,387	0.799%	228
1999		128,069	131,558	0.804%	164
2000 (Census)	**143,129**	**127,038**	**130,204**	0.810%	170
				1991-2000 Subtotal	*2,943*
2001		141,970	142,140	0.816%	321
2002		140,811	141,300	0.822%	207
2003		139,653	140,345	0.828%	318
2004		138,496	139,501	0.834%	264
2005		137,341	138,602	0.840%	526
2006		136,188	137,963	0.846%	292
2007		135,036	137,088	0.852%	279
2008		133,885	136,200	0.858%	285
2009		132,737	135,316	0.864%	109
2010 (Census)	**145,462**	**131,590**	**134,257**	0.870%	73
				2001-2010 Subtotal	*2,674*

** Excluding trailers, RVs, boats, etc.*

Housing Stock Model Assumptions

The housing stock model presented here is, owing to data limitations, necessarily crude and has numerous simplifying assumptions embedded within it. These are listed and discussed below.

- *The model ignores extralegal housing that existed prior to 1980.* Effectively, it assumes that all housing in the ten incorporated jurisdictions in the City of Gateway was, as of 1980, permitted. This simplification is necessary because Building Permit Survey data extends back in time only to 1980. Thus, the housing stock model presented here should be seen as more useful for assessing the rate and timing of informalization from 1980 forward rather than the absolute share of extralegal housing in the housing stock.

- *The model assumes that all building permits translate into completed dwellings in the following year.* In actuality, some buildings take more than a year to complete. In addition, not all building projects that are permitted are actually completed. However, the effect of any time lag would be relatively minimal, and would do little to alter the overall conclusions drawn from the model over the span of one or more decades; results from one year would simply be shifted to the next if (nonexistent) data on building completion times were to be somehow incorporated into the model. In addition, due to the expense of engaging architects and engineers to create construction drawings sufficient for review by city building departments, it is reasonable to expect that relatively few units that are permitted remain unbuilt. Finally, if some permitted buildings are not actually built this will result, in the model, in an underestimate of the level of informalization in the building stock. Assuming that all permitted units get competed is therefore a conservative assumption.

- *The model assumes that additions to the stock that do not receive building permits are extralegal.* While obtaining formal approval for many types of incremental additions to the housing stock that commonly take place in the City of Gateway, such as the construction of back houses, entails receiving permits of the type counted by the Building Permit Survey, this is not always inherently the case. For instance, Building Permit Survey permit totals do not include permits granted by localities for conversions. Thus, it is possible that some of the housing being reported here as extralegal in fact consists of legal conversions. There are various reasons, however, to believe that such cases are relatively minimal. First, Chapter 7 reports evidence from code enforcement officers that extralegal housing in the City of Gateway ranges from common to ubiquitous. Furthermore, entire categories of conversions, such as those from garages to apartments,

are essentially impossible to have permitted due to the zoning regulations that exist in all of the City of Gateway's jurisdictions (also briefly discussed in Chapter 7). Finally, as discussed in Chapter 6, where conversions are mentioned in Housing Elements released by City of Gateway jurisdictions at all, they are vanishingly small in number.

- *The model ignores housing not permanently attached to foundations.* As previously described in this appendix, this model by necessity ignores trailers, RVs, boats and similar housing. However, given that this type of housing accounted for only 2.8% of the stock as of 2007 to 2011, the distortion its omission represents is likely quite minor (ACS 2007-2011).

- *The model assumes that the Census accurately counts housing units.* As discussed in the main body of Chapter 4, Census population undercounts are a well-recognized issue that is particularly acute in the City of Gateway. While some uncounted persons are either homeless or reside in group quarters, a substantial number of them reside in housing units. This implies that the Census Bureau's inability to identify and count some people is also likely tied to its inability to locate and identify some housing units. The difficulties faced by code enforcement officers in gaining access to extralegal units, many of which are well-hidden towards the rear of residential properties (discussed in Chapter 7) are no doubt shared by Census enumerators. Regardless, the Census is the single best and most comprehensive source of data on housing units, and has at least the stated intention of locating every housing unit, irrespective of permitted status or lack thereof. In any case, Census undercounts of housing units suggest that this model's reliance on Census data is a conservative assumption.

References for Appendix 4-2

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Appendix 5-1: Single-Family Residential Parking Standards

This appendix shows the off-street parking spaces required for single-family houses in the jurisdictions of the City of Gateway. One of the 11 jurisdictions, Bellflower, does not have its off-street parking standards posted online. In all 10 of the other jurisdictions, at least two off-street parking spaces are required for a single-family house. (In some cases, more than two are required for houses that have more than three bedrooms, but for simplicity these cases are not addressed here.) In 9 of the 10 cases, both of the spaces must be either enclosed (i.e., located inside a garage) or, at a minimum, covered (i.e., sheltered by an open-air carport). These standards are summarized in Table A5-1. The references to these standards are shown in Table A5-2.

These off-street parking standards are a formidable obstacle to creating permitted conversions of existing garages to apartments. Where, for example, two covered or enclosed spaces are mandated for a single-family house, legally converting an existing garage would trigger a requirement for the property owner to build a carport or a replacement garage. Building a carport or garage, in addition to being expensive for many homeowners, also requires space for both the footprint of the structure and for driveway access. In many cases, lots are too small or not configured correctly for compliance with the requirements to be feasible. Similar obstacles exist to creating legal garage conversions on properties with 2-4 units.

Table A5-1. A summary of the requirements for off-street parking for single-family residences in the various City of Gateway jurisdictions.

Jurisdiction	Minimum required off-street parking spaces for single-family residence	Spaces that must be covered or enclosed	Minimum standard: covered or enclosed parking spaces?
Bell Gardens	2	1	Covered
Bell	2	2	Enclosed
Bellflower	*Off-street parking standards not available online*		
Compton	2	2	Enclosed
Cudahy	2	2	Enclosed
Huntington Park	2	2	Enclosed
Unincorporated Los Angeles County	2	2	Covered
Lynwood	2	2	Enclosed
Maywood	2	2	Covered
Paramount	2	2	Enclosed
South Gate	2	2	Enclosed

Table A5-2. The online source and section reference for City of Gateway jurisdictions' off-street parking standards.

Jurisdiction	Parking standards reference	Zoning or parking standards URL
Bell Gardens	Chapter 9.38	http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/bellgardens.html
Bell	Chapter 17.76	http://www.cityofbell.org/home/showdocument?id=716
Bellflower	Chapter 17.88	http://qcode.us/codes/bellflower
Compton	Chapter 30-21	http://www.comptoncity.org/index.php/municipal-code.htm
Cudahy	Chapter 20.80	http://www.cityofcudahy.com/media/Parking.pdf
Huntington Park	Chapter 9-3.8	http://qcode.us/codes/huntingtonpark/
Unincorporated Los Angeles County	Chapter 22.20.130	https://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16274
Lynwood	Article 65	http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/lynwood/
Maywood	Section 4100	https://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16480
Paramount	Chapter 44, Article II	http://www.paramountcity.com/code.cfm?task=detail2&ID=20
South Gate	Chapter 11.08	http://codepublishing.com/CA/southgate/

Appendix 5-2: Methodology for Lot Coverage Analysis

I divided my procedure for performing lot coverage calculations and their comparison against locally applicable zoning standards into three phrases. First, I *screened lots* to eliminate parcels that were not pertinent to the analysis. Second, I *calculated lot coverage ratios* for all of the parcels included in the analysis. Finally, I *tabulated the lot coverage data* to yield three outputs for each of the City of Gateway's 14 jurisdictions: the average lot coverage ratio; the percentage of lots that exceed local standards for lot coverage; and the total amount of building footprint area that exceeds local lot coverage standards. Each of these three phases is described in turn below. All GIS operations were performed using ESRI's ArcMap (Version 10) software.

Lot Screening

I sought to only include "residential" parcels in the analysis. I defined "residential" parcels as those that have residential-only zoning—and not, for instance, lots with mixed use or commercial zoning designations that could permit residential use—and that allow a maximum of four units. For information on parcels in the City of Gateway, I used the Countywide Zoning GIS layer, which had been prepared for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in 2009.[1] This layer includes fields for the General Plan designation and zoning of every parcel in Los Angeles County. (Within the City of Gateway, zoning data for the City of Bell is missing and only General Plan designation is available.)

While most jurisdictions have single-family zoning categories, most jurisdictions also have housing-only zoning categories that allow for a range spanning between less than to more than four units, with the amount determined by the lot size. For these categories, I only included lots with those particular zoning designations whose areas were small enough such that the maximum number of permitted units was four or fewer. Table A5-3 shows the zoning categories and lot sizes of the parcels that were included in the analysis as a result. Note that for the City of Bell I had to rely on General Plan designations rather than zoning because of the missing data noted in the previous paragraph. After this screening was done, I eliminated the remaining lots that were one acre (43,560 square feet) or larger, on the assumption that such large parcels were either misclassified in the data set, or else likely to be lots awaiting development. I also eliminated lots listed as having an area of zero, which I assumed to be an artifact of missing or false data.

[1] At the time of writing, this data is available online at the Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, http://egis3.lacounty.gov/dataportal.

Table A5-3. The zone districts and lot sizes used to determine which parcels to include in the lot coverage analysis, by jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction	Zoning and Lot Sizes of Included Parcels
Bell *	SINGLE-FAMILY; MIXED SINGLE-FAMILY; MULTI-FAMILY (< 11,500 sf only) *
Bellflower	R-1; R-2 (< 16,750 sf only)
Bell Gardens	R1; R2; R3 (< 7,500 sf only)
Compton	RL; RM (< 7,500 sf only)
Cudahy	LDR; MDR; HDR (< 15,000 sf only)
Huntington Park	R-L; R-M (< 12,500 sf only)
Lynwood	R1; R2; R3 (< 12,100 sf only)
Maywood	R3 (< 11,000 sf only)
Paramount	R1; R2 (<18,750 sf only); RM (< 20,000 sf only)
South Gate	R1; R2 (<12,100 sf only)
Los Angeles County (Unincorporated)	R1; R2; R3 (< 7,260 sf only)

** General Plan designation rather than zoning used for the City of Bell because of missing data.*

Calculation of Lot Coverage Ratios

To calculate lot coverage ratios, I created a separate layer for each jurisdiction starting with the parcel layer described in the previous section. I then introduced a different GIS layer, also available from the LA County GIS Data Portal and described in the main body of Chapter 5, which consists of polygons corresponding to the outlines of all buildings in Los Angeles County of 400 square feet or larger, processed from aerial photography.

To associate building shapes with the residential lots on which they are located, I used a Spatial Join operation, selecting the JOIN_ONE_TO_MANY option. This allowed for one or more buildings to be associated with each residential parcel. I used the HAVE_THEIR_CENTER_IN match operation, meaning that a building was deemed to be located within the residential parcel in which its geometric center lay. (Having a firm rule of this sort prevented building footprints from being double-counted, or associated with more than lot.) This detail is relevant because in a small minority of cases, parcel boundaries crossed building footprints. In some cases this was likely due to data errors. In addition, according to code enforcement officers with whom I spoke, in the City of Gateway extralegal buildings are occasionally situated such that they span parcel boundaries. In other instances, surveying errors have likely led to similar situations.

Following the Spatial Join operation, I exported the attribute table of the new, combined layer and processed it using Microsoft Excel. I was now able to sum the area (in square feet) of all of the building footprints located on each residential parcel, and thus calculate a building footprint total for each residential lot. By dividing the building footprint total into the parcel's area, I calculated a Lot Coverage Ratio (LCR) for each parcel. Finally, I used the LCR to perform one further screening operations for the remaining parcels: I eliminated all lots with (nonsensical) LCRs exceeding 100%. (Likely these cases were caused by errors in the parcel boundaries, as noted above.)

Tabulation of Lot Coverage Data

Having calculated LCRs for all residential parcels still included within the analysis, it was now straightforward to count and tabulate, in Excel, the quantities that constitute the output of this analysis. These are, for each of the 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions, i) the number of lots; ii) the percentage of lots that exceed the LCR for the zoning district in which they are located; iii) the total square footage of noncompliant building footprint within the jurisdiction; and iv) the share of the jurisdiction's total residential building footprint comprised of noncompliant space. Note that the denominator in iv) excludes parcels that had been screened from the analysis, as described above, as well as the three jurisdictions (Compton, Cudahy, and Paramount) that have no specific lot coverage standards. Finally, using iii) and iv) in tandem, it was simple to estimate the total percentage of the City of Gateway's residential building footprint that is noncompliant (while making the two exclusions mentioned in the previous sentence).

The lot coverage standards for each jurisdiction are shown in Table A5-4. Two caveats must be mentioned: first, in LA County, the lot coverage standard (in this case, 40%) only applies to parcels that include secondary units. Because secondary units, whether legal or unpermitted (mostly the latter) are so ubiquitous, I made the calculations for LA County as though the 40% standard applied to all lots. Second, the City of Bell uses a Floor Area Ratio standard rather than an LCR limit. To make the calculation, I used the building height field in the building footprints GIS layer, and made two assumptions: i) buildings that are 22' or taller are two stories tall, while buildings less than 22' in height are one story; and ii) buildings with a second story have a floor area equal to 160% of their footprint (i.e., the full ground floor footprint plus a second floor with floor area equal to 60% of the ground floor).

Table A5-4. Lot Coverage Ratio and (in the case of the City of Bell) FAR maximum standards for residential zones. These were determined by a review of each jurisdiction's latest zoning ordinance available online.

Incorporated Cities	Lot Coverage or FAR Standards for Residential Zones
Bell *	0.5 FAR up to a maximum of 2,800 sf
Bellflower	45% (R-1 zone only)
Bell Gardens	45%
Compton	No specific lot coverage or FAR standard
Cudahy	No specific lot coverage or FAR standard
Huntington Park	45% (R-L zone) and 55% (R-M zone)
Lynwood	40% (R-1 zone), 50% (R-2 zone) and 60% (R-3 zone)
Maywood	65%
Paramount	No specific lot coverage or FAR standard
South Gate	40% (R-1 zone) and 50% (R-2 and R-3 zones)
Unincorporated	
East Rancho Dominguez	40% maximum for second units
Florence/Graham	40% maximum for second units
Walnut Park	40% maximum for second units
Willowbrook	40% maximum for second units

Appendix 6-1: Rental Market Analysis Methodological Details

Data Collection

Overview

To collect data on housing rents in the City of Gateway to create the Open Market Rental Data Set, I relied on the Padmapper website (www.padmapper.com). Padmapper aggregates data on apartments currently offered for rent from various sources, such as Craigslist, which is widely used in Southern California, but also other less well-known sources such as PadLister, Padmapper's sister site, rent.com, and others. The rental listings are displayed in a map interface, which makes it possible to systematically inspect all of them that lie within particular jurisdictions.

Downloading listings

To build the Open Market Rental Data Set, I used Padmapper to download all rental listing advertisements for properties within the City of Gateway on two different days: August 22 and October 10, 2013. I collected additional listings on November 4, 2013, although I omitted those of the most common types within particular overrepresented jurisdictions.[1] I manually inspected the map on Padmapper against the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Gateway, and clicked on the links that lay inside of them. After visiting each link, I invoked the web browser's "print" function in order to download a PDF file of that listing, which I then filed for later analysis.

Data Processing

Classification of listings by type

Once the complete data set had been assembled, the first step in processing the rental listings was to classify them into six categories. These categories, whose rationale is explained in the main body of Chapter 6, are as follows:

i) 5+ units with amenities
ii) 5+ units without amenities
iii) 1-4 units with absentee landlord
iv) 2-4 units with onsite landlord
v) mobile home

[1] On November 4, I collected additional listings, but only those that fell into categories (described below in the next subsection) and located in jurisdictions that were underrepresented. For instance, because Padmapper had, in the fall of 2013 at least, a high number of listings of apartments in 5+ unit complexes with amenities in Bellflower and Paramount, I refrained from collecting more listings of this type on November 4. Because I am not attempting to make comparisons between unit types on the basis of their share of the overall total in the data set, the more restrictive data harvesting on November 4 did not compromise the integrity of the data that was collected.

vi) extralegal

Classifying listings into categories i) through v) was mostly relatively straightforward, and was done using a combination of the data shown in the listing, the verbal description in the listing (most frequently in English, but also often in Spanish), searches of online Los Angeles County tax assessor records, and inspections of aerial and street-level photography using Google Maps. All of the units in these categories were assumed to have legal, permitted status.

Less straightforward was making a decision about whether or not a given listing represented an extralegal unit, i.e., whether it should be classified in categories iii) or iv), on the one hand (as a legal unit), or in category vi), on the other hand (i.e., as an extralegal unit). Making this decision required considerable judgment on my part, and relied on my knowledge of zoning and building code requirements in the area. In cases where the permitted status was ambiguous, I classified the listings as legal, i.e. in categories iii) or iv) rather than vi). Below I provide some examples of attributes that led me to classify listings as pertaining to unpermitted units:

- A unit listed as "duplex style" despite being located in a single-family-only zone district.
- A unit listed as a "downstairs unit," with a fractional street address number, despite being located in a single-family zone.
- An apartment with an address that does not appear on the county assessor's database, and appears from photos to be within an extension to the rear of a house.
- A listing with a photo showing an exposed hot water heater immediately adjacent to a kitchen sink, likely indicating non-code compliant construction.
- A listing with an aerial photo of a rear unit, indicating a lot geometry that could not accommodate the two covered parking spaces required of such a dwelling in that jurisdiction.
- A listing for a "back room not attached to the main house" and lacking a kitchen.

Note that only two of the 158 total listings collected were mobile homes; this category is reported here for completeness, even though it does not yield usable data. (Table 6.1 in the main body of Chapter 6 shows the breakdown by categorization type.) After removing the two mobile home listings, I was left with 156 observations.

Data collection

For every listing, I recorded the following information:

- Jurisdiction
- Address or nearest street corner (only for the purposes of internal data collection)
- Number of bedrooms

- Number of bathrooms
- Interior area (square feet)
- Monthly rent
- Accepts Section 8 (yes or no)

I discarded listings that did not include i) a location at least as precise as the nearest street corner; ii) the number of bathrooms; or iii) the monthly rent. In addition, I did not collect data on units with three or more bedrooms, due to their rarity. In one case, the number of bedrooms was not included in the listing; I imputed the unit to have zero bedrooms (i.e., to be a studio apartment) based on its reported interior area of 500 square feet. In all cases, I assumed that landlords did not accept Section 8 unless the listing specifically stated that it did.

Interior area imputation

104 of the 156 listings in the data set lacked information about interior area. These therefore had to be imputed. In 60 cases of the 104 imputation cases, I was able to impute the interior area by finding the unit, or the larger building that contained it, on the LA County tax assessor's website. In some cases, the individual unit and its square footage were listed; in those cases, the imputation was straightforward.

In other instances, the assessor reported the square footage of a larger building that contained the unit in question. In cases where all of the units in the larger building had identical bedroom and bathroom counts, imputing the listing's unit square footage was as simple as performing long division. In cases where units within the building varied in bedroom and bathroom count, I used systems of two simultaneous linear equations to solve for the square footage of the listing's apartment. This, of course, assumed that each bedroom and each bathroom in a given building contributed an equal amount to its overall assessor-reported interior floor area, and that bedrooms and bathrooms accounted for *all* of the square footage. These assumptions, of course, do not necessarily hold true, but they allowed for a reasonable approximation for imputation purposes.

In 44 of the 104 imputations, no square footage was reported on the tax assessor's website. Not surprisingly, these instances were disproportionately (19 of 44) concentrated within the extralegal unit category. In these cases, units were simply assigned square footages equal to the averages of identical units in the data set within the same category. The one exception was in the extralegal category: here, I used the average square footage of units in the 2-4 units with landlord onsite category, as I assumed these to be the most likely to be similar.

Closed Market Rentals

As discussed in the main body of Chapter 6, I relied on interview data to gather information about closed market rentals of extralegal units, i.e. rentals of extralegal units whose tenants had been sourced via personal kinship, friendship, or acquaintanceship networks rather than via open advertising. This data is shown below in Table A6-1.

Table A6-1. Summary of data on specific closed market extralegal units or commonly-recurring extralegal units. "BA" refers to "bathroom" and "BR" refers to "bedroom."

Identifier	Description	Location	Extralegal mode**	Characteristics	Monthly Rent
City of Gateway					
COG #1	Converted garage	Bell Gardens	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space	No BA	$400 to $500
COG #2	Unit carved out of single family house	Compton	Conversion: creation of extra units by partitioning a house	2 BRs, makeshift kitchen, BA, separate entrance	$900
COG #3	Converted garage	Florence-Firestone *	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space	Kitchen, BA, living room	$600
COG #4	Various trailers	Florence-Firestone *	Addition: emplacement of a habitable vehicle	Parked on residential property; utilities hooked up	$400 to $500
COG #5	Various converted garages	South Gate	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space		$800 to $1,200
COG #6	Inhabited storage sheds	South Gate	Addition: construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure	12' x 12'; four of them; electrical service but no plumbing; BA attached to main house.	$1,500
COG #7	Converted garage	Willowbrook *	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space		$500
COG #8	Bunk in a bunkhouse	Willowbrook *	Conversion: transformation of a house into a dormitory	Created from large house built as a single-family residence during boom. Up to 3 double-decker bunks beds per BR (LR converted too), so up to 6 people per room. One communal kitchen. 40 people sharing 3-4 bathrooms.	$400 to $450 per bed
COG #9	Inhabited site-built shed	Willowbrook *	Addition: construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure	Just a place to sleep, nothing more. I witnessed this myself.	$200 (max.)
COG #10	Room in a 3BR unit. (Two houses on lot, the 3	Willowbrook *	Addition: construction or emplacement of a separate	BR, sharing BA and kitchen	$700

	BR unit is one of the two.)		backyard structure		
COG #11	Freestanding backhouse	Willowbrook *	Addition: construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure	1 BR, 1 BA, kitchen. Middle house of three on the lot.	$700 (negotiated down from $750)

Identifier *Non-City of Gateway jurisdictions*	**Description**	**Location**	**Extralegal mode ****	**Characteristics**	**Monthly Rent**
NCOG #1	Backhouse	East Los Angeles *	Addition: construction or emplacement of a separate backyard structure	Caught fire; discovered by fire department.	$500
NCOG #2	Separate unit created from rear house enlargement	A city in north Orange County	Addition: enlargement of a house	Created by extralegally infilling a permitted patio.	$400 to $600
NCOG #3	Bunk in a bunkhouse	A city in north Orange County	Conversion: transformation of a house into a dormitory		$400 to $500 per bed
NCOG #4	Various converted garages	Harbor Gateway, Los Angeles City	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space	BA is in main house.	$500
NCOG #5	Various converted garages	Westmont *	Conversion: inhabitation of nonresidential space	Kitchen, bathroom, living quarters	$900 to $1,200

* *Unincorporated Los Angeles County.*

** *As defined in Chapter 5.*

Appendix 6-2: Property Sales Data Set and Hedonic Analysis Methodological Details

The Database

My intention in assembling the hedonic property value database was to include sales transactions from within the last three years that i) were on properties that were (formally) classified as residential-only, and consisting of from 1 to 4 units (and thus eligible for residential mortgages in the US mortgage finance system); and ii) included verbal descriptions to allow at least the possibility of identifying extralegal living space where it existed.[1]

Geographical selection by jurisdiction

By creating a login identity on the www.redfin.com website (which was free of charge), I was able to download Microsoft Excel spreadsheets containing data associated with sales transactions in the City of Gateway. I downloaded the transactions separately for each of the 14 jurisdictions (10 cities and 4 unincorporated communities) so that each entry (i.e., each sale) could be uniquely associated with one jurisdiction. This prevented ambiguities: for instance, sales within Willowbrook are frequently described in the sales narrative as though they are located inside Compton). The Redfin website displays a map with a selected jurisdiction's boundaries, making it possible to be precise about the locations of the sale transactions.

Criteria for downloading sales transactions

Prior to the downloads, I selected criteria on the Redfin website intended to prevent, as much as possible, downloading properties that were not of the types I was seeking. To this end, I made the following selections:

1) *Property type*: House or multifamily.
2) *Include:* Sale records (past 3 years)
3) *Bathrooms:* 1 or more
4) *Maximum Homeowners' Association Fees:* No HOA fees.

Criteria 1, 3, and 4 listed above were intended to screen out all properties except for those that have between 1 and 4 units sold together, i.e. not as condominiums, and with a minimum of one bathroom. Criterion 2 screened out all

[1] There are undoubtedly many properties in the database with unidentified extralegal conditions. Mukhija (2014) estimated that in his analysis of Redfin data he was identifying perhaps only half of the listings with extralegal space. This is unavoidable, and must be expected as part of the difficulty and ambiguity of working with data that represents a large amount of extralegal economic activity such as housing. The prudent course of action is to look for broad trends in such data, while avoiding undue expectations of exactitude from them.

transactions that were older than three years, and also eliminated all transactions other than sales that had already taken place. For instance, properties listed for sale at the time of the analysis were filtered out by Criterion 2. As a result, the sale dates of the transactions spanned from January 4, 2011 through January 4, 2014, inclusive.

Using keywords

Redfin makes it possible to download only those listings from past sales that contain user-specified keywords. I used four keywords that are sometimes associated with real estate agents' or sellers' descriptions of extralegal conditions on residential properties. These keywords were the following:

1) "permit"
2) "legal"
3) "verify"
4) "conver"

I selected these four keywords after extensively reviewing the verbal descriptions in the sales listings on Redfin. They appeared to be consistently and commonly used in phrases that described extralegal space on 1-4 unit properties. "Permit" and "legal" were terms often used in the listings to describe the legal/permit status of extralegal space, sometimes on their own, or sometimes as components of other words (such as "permitted" or "unpermitted" or "illegal" or "illegally"). Keywords that formed part of words in a verbal description were identified in this manner. For instance, if a keyword search was performed on the word "legal," a listing containing only the word "illegal" and not the word "legal" would nevertheless be included in the filtering by keyword procedure.

I included the term "verify" because my interviews with real estate agents and code enforcement officers revealed that the phrase "buyer to verify" is commonly (though certainly not always) included in real estate listings that include extralegal space. In addition, I included "conver" because it is the common root of words, such as "converted" or "conversion," commonly found in such listings to describe garage or shed conversions and other extralegal living arrangements.

Many entries that were identified as including one keyword also contained another keyword. For instance, some listings included both the word "illegal" (screened by the keyword search on "legal") and "conversion" (screened by the search on "conver"). In such cases, each keyword search yielded a download of the same sale transaction. This did not result in duplicates, since duplicate transactions were subsequently eliminated (as described above).

Note that the properties identified through the keyword searches were not identified as having extralegal space; they were only identified as being *candidates* for having extralegal space. The additional filtering that took place required human judgment (i.e., my judgment), and is described below.

Systematic filtering

Following the procedures described above, the listings that were downloaded were combined into one spreadsheet per jurisdiction. This was simply for the purpose of working with the data in manageable increments, since eventually all remaining usable listings from the 14 jurisdictions were combined into a single data file, with a field added for jurisdiction. An additional field identified which entries had been associated with one or more of the four keywords (sometimes) associated with extralegal space, as noted above.

Next, I performed further culling to eliminate unwanted entries from the database using systematically applied criteria. These filtration criteria were as follows:

1) Sales transactions for properties with a "Home Type" listed as anything other than "Single Family" or "Multi-Family (2-4 Units)"—i.e. those that had not been filtered out by the downloading criteria, for whatever reason—were eliminated.
2) Duplicate sales transactions for the same property (as identified by street address and jurisdiction) were eliminated. In cases with repeat sales of the same property more than once, only the most recent sale was kept.
3) Sales for properties lacking location data (i.e. meaningful entries in the latitude and longitude fields) were eliminated.
4) Sales for which the "Source" field was blank—indicating that only public records, and no verbal descriptions from property listings, were available for the property—were eliminated. Sales with a populated "Source" field—filled in with, for example, "California Real Estate Technology Services" (CARETS) and other databases—included verbal descriptions, albeit of varying descriptive quality and comprehensiveness. Listings lacking verbal descriptions severely compromised my ability to judge whether or not they included extralegal space, and so I omitted them from the final data set.

Populating fields for describing extralegal space

I manually inspected all of the sales transactions that had been flagged for having the four keywords indicating possible extralegal conditions, as indicated above. I then read the verbal descriptions of the sales, and used them in combination with the records' reported bedroom, bathroom, and square footage counts, as well as the public records for the properties and zoning maps, to populate five variables that indicated various aspects of extralegal conditions. Doing so required the exercise of judgment on my part. In some cases, I supplemented this information with examinations of the properties using aerial photography or street-level photography from the online Google Maps utility.

In some cases, listings included matter-of-fact statements that the properties included unpermitted space. In other cases, even when lacking such direct statements, the presence of unpermitted space was easy to discern. There were also cases that were equally obviously *lacking* unpermitted space, as in cases where listings pointedly stated "all work has been carried out with permits" or similar declarations. In general, I strove to be relatively conservative in my assessment, i.e. to only assume that a property had extralegal space if this was quite apparent and

obvious from the information available to me. Altogether, I manually inspected 1,235 out of the 6,717 properties included in the final database based on the presence of the four keywords listed above, and of these I deemed 533 to have extralegal conditions of some sort.

In the relatively rare cases where I manually inspected sales records that were not suited for inclusion in the database, and that had not been filtered out by the procedures listed above, I eliminated them. For instance, I came across a small number of mixed-use commercial/residential properties, properties that were in the midst of construction, and properties that were clearly being marketed to developers or investors for teardown and redevelopment rather than for use value by owner-occupants or by investors seeking to own and operate an investment property. All of these were eliminated from the dataset.

The six fields pertaining to extralegal housing that I populated for the listings I manually reviewed were as follows:

Extralegal rooms: This field counts the number of unpermitted rooms, apart from bathrooms, that appear to be present on the property. In cases where it was clear that extralegal living space existed, but it was unclear how many rooms, I set this field to 1.

Extralegal bathrooms: This field was set in the same way as the extralegal rooms variable, but for bathrooms rather than bedrooms. Unlike rooms, which were in integer numbers, extralegal bathrooms (as is the case for the overall bathrooms variable) could be listed fractionally.[2]

Extralegal rooms included dummy: If set to 1, this field indicated that the bedrooms and bathrooms captured by the extralegal bedroom and extralegal bathroom fields (described immediately above) were included in the property listing's bedroom and bathroom counts and square footage. In some cases, other fields were adjusted to make these fields mutually consistent and reasonable. For example, in the case of a property with one listed bedroom and one listed bathroom, with a reported square footage of 2,500 feet and three unpermitted bedrooms and one unpermitted bathroom mentioned in the verbal description, I would set the extralegal rooms included dummy to 1, change the bedrooms/bathrooms variables from 1/1 to 4/2, and assign 3 and 1, respectively, to the extralegal bedrooms and extralegal bathrooms variables. In some cases, it was necessary to adjust the listed property's square footage upward to account for an unpermitted unit: in these instances, I assumed that studio units were 400 sf and one-bedroom units were 500 sf.

Separate extralegal unit dummy: This dummy field was set to 1 in cases where it was obvious, either from the verbal description or from photos, or both, that the extralegal space constituted its own fully separated living unit. To be considered a separate living unit, it needed to have i) at least one bathroom; ii) its own kitchen,

[2] By convention, a half bathroom includes a toilet and a sink, a three-quarter bathroom contains a toilet, sink, and shower, while a full bathroom has a toilet, sink, and bath.

even if rudimentary, with at minimum kitchen plumbing; and iii) its own exterior entrance, so that an occupant would not have to walk through other living space to access it. In cases where a property had more than one extralegal living space, some of which was in the form of a fully separated unit, and some was not (for instance, an unpermitted house extension) this variable was set to 1 to account for the presence of the former. When the term "guest house" was used, I assumed that this invoked the typical local meaning of the term, which refers to a structure in which there is a bathroom and living quarters but no kitchen. Thus, I assumed that "guest houses" did *not* constitute separate units under this definition. Conversely, when the space was referred to as a "unit" or an "apartment," I assumed that it met the three criteria above.

Converted garage dummy: This dummy field was set to 1 in cases where it was apparent that space formerly intended as garage parking for automobiles had been converted into living quarters. This condition was not coextensive with the separate extralegal unit dummy: for instance, while converted garages usually have independent exterior access (meeting one of the three conditions listed above for an extralegal space to be considered a separate *unit*), they sometimes lack a kitchen or bathroom or both. Note that living quarters located above or adjacent to a garage did not lead to this dummy being set to 1;[3] only the actual conversion of previous garage space into current habitable living space did so.

Detached extralegal space dummy: This dummy field was set to 1 in instances where the extralegal space was fully physically separated from the main house.

Conversion of fields describing extralegal conditions into variables

The last three fields described above (separate extralegal unit dummy, converted garage dummy, and detached extralegal space dummy) became variables that were included in the dataset as incorporated into the hedonic model (as described in the main body of Chapter 6). The first three fields were used in combination to create four variables incorporated into the final data set. These four variables are as follows:

i) Extralegal rooms (not included): this variable counts the extralegal rooms present on the property, with the assumption that they are *not* included in the total bedroom and bathroom counts and listed square footage.
ii) Extralegal rooms (included): same as above, except in cases where the extralegal rooms *are* included in the bedroom and bathroom counts and listed square footage.
iii) Extralegal bathrooms (not included): identical to i) above, but for extralegal bathrooms rather than bedrooms.

[3] However, habitable, extralegal space above or adjacent to a garage resulted in setting the detached extralegal space dummy being set to 1 in cases where the garage is not physically attached to the main house.

iv) Extralegal bathrooms (included): identical to ii) above, but for extralegal bathrooms rather than bedrooms.

Imputation

Some records were missing values for certain fields, including bedrooms, bathrooms, interior area, parcel size, and age. For sales records for properties lacking information on bedrooms and bathrooms, I relied on the verbal descriptions in the listings in combination with online tax assessor records. Many such properties included extralegal space; one may presume that real estate agents had opted to not list the number of bedrooms and bathrooms on the property because of the ambiguity inherent in doing so.

In cases where no interior area information was available, and where the bedroom and bathroom counts were out of step with what was listed on the Los Angeles County tax assessor's website, I imputed this variable as the average interior area of all other properties in the same jurisdiction with the identical bedroom/bathroom configuration. For missing age and parcel area variables, in almost all cases I was able to find this information on the tax assessor website. In the very few cases where I could not, I used the average of properties with the identical bedroom/bathroom configuration within the same jurisdiction.

Other variables

As discussed above, a total of seven variables—extralegal rooms (not included), extralegal rooms (included), extralegal bathrooms (not included), extralegal bathrooms (included), separate extralegal unit dummy, converted garage dummy, and detached extralegal space dummy—were manually populated. All of the rest of the variables, except one (the Case-Shiller index), were either directly provided by data downloaded from Redfin or straightforwardly created from it. The variables' meanings are mostly straightforward, but for the sake of completeness they are described below:

Location dummies*:* A dummy variable indicated location within each one of the 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions. These geographic fixed effects variables are comprehensive and mutually exclusive, i.e. every data point has one, and only one, of these 14 dummies set to 1. I included these dummies for jurisdiction because (particularly within the incorporated cities) they capture distinct and relatively combinations of municipal service quality and taxation levels.

Interior area: The total interior area of the property, measured in square feet. In multiunit (2-4 unit) properties, this total includes interior space distributed among more than one separate dwelling unit.

Bedrooms: The number of bedrooms on the property. This figure includes all bedrooms present on multiunit properties except for those (if any) captured in the extralegal rooms (not included) variable. Bedrooms are listed as integer numbers.

Bathrooms: The number of bathrooms on the property. This figure includes all bathrooms present on multiunit properties except for those (if any) captured in the extralegal bathrooms (not included) variable. See footnote #2 above for the definition of fractional bathrooms.

Parcel size: This is the area of the land parcel, in square feet, that contains the residential property.

Age: This is the number of years that have elapsed since the oldest inhabited building still in use on the property was originally built. Rehabilitations or remodels, even extensive ones, do not reset this variable.

Parking spaces: This is the total number of off-street parking spaces, measured in whole numbers, that exist on the property, whether they are covered, enclosed, or open-air.

Garage dummy: This dummy variable, when set to 1, indicates that at least one of the property's off-street parking spaces is in a space that is both covered and enclosed, i.e., a garage.

Single family house dummy: This dummy variable, when set to 1, indicates a property that is classified by Redfin as one that is Single Family, i.e., formally a single unit. When set to 0, this variable indicates that a property is multiunit, i.e., that it has from 2 to 4 permitted units. In cases where extralegal space exists in addition to a single-family house, this variable would still be set to 1, because only one unit has legal status.

Short sale dummy: This dummy variable, when set to 1, indicates that the sale transaction was a *short sale*. In a short sale, the property owner, facing the imminent possibility of foreclosure, sells the house to another homeowner in a transaction arranged by the holder of the non-performing mortgage. Such sales occur under duress and allow the homeowner to escape the stigma and credit rating damage that come with the foreclosure process, and allow the mortgagor to avoid having the property on its balance sheet following a long, expensive, and sometimes contentious foreclosure process. Prices for short sales are typically considerably lower than they would be for "normal" sales; mortgagors agree to them in order to avoid the possibly higher costs they would incur to repossess, maintain, and subsequently resell the foreclosed property. While I considered excluding short sale transactions from the analysis, in my interviews I learned that many distressed properties, including those eventually sold in short sales, had extralegal conditions associated with them. For that reason, I decided to leave short sales in the database, while flagging them with this variable.

Case-Shiller index: This is the one variable in the model that is not directly derived from the data downloaded from Redfin. I included it in order to account for macroeconomic forces exerting differential influence on home sale prices in the Los

Angeles region over time. This helps control for fluctuating overall market forces that tend to influence residential sales irrespective of property-level or neighborhood- or jurisdiction-level attributes. The Case-Shiller index uses a repeat-sales methodology to quantify the overall sales performance of existing single-family houses. It is published by Standard and Poor's as a national index, as well as for selected individual markets, including Los Angeles. This variable was assigned the value of the Case-Shiller index for Los Angeles in the month in which the sale transaction took place. The Case-Shiller index is available online at http://us.spindices.com/indices/real-estate/sp-case-shiller-ca-los-angeles-home-price-index.

Latitude and longitude: Every sale included in the data set had a field for the latitude and one for the longitude of the property's location sufficiently precise to locate it within its city block. While latitude and longitude were not incorporated in the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model used to analyze the data, they were needed to run the Spatial Error Model (SEM), described below.

The Hedonic Models

I ran four hedonic models on the data set described above, with results described in the main body of Chapter 6. For all of them, the dependent variable was the price of the last sale for the residential property in question, in linear (untransformed) form. The four model runs are referred to as Models #1, #2, #3, and #4. They are described separately below.

Model #1: Spatial Error Model (SEM), full data set

In recent years, it has become standard practice to use spatial autocorrelation models to hedonically model real estate sales prices (cf. Dubin 1998). This is because Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models, when applied to real estate data, tend to yield residuals that are strongly spatially autocorrelated, which is not surprising given the inherently locational and spatial nature of real estate. Spatial autocorrelation is one technique for dealing with this problem. In addition, Pace *et al* (1998) noted that it is a technique for accounting for locational variation in real estate that is parsimonious in the number of independent variables needed to attain a given level of model fit, and that avoids the imposition of arbitrary boundaries that are so often required to capture locationally variable attributes of properties.

For all of these reasons, I used the Spatial Error Model (SEM), which incorporates spatial autocorrelation, to hedonically model the prices of the property sales data set. I performed all calculations using the R statistical software package, using the SPDEP library for SEM and other spatial statistical capability (Bivand 2002).[4] In addition, to convert latitudes and longitudes for every property into

[4] Both the R programming language and its SPDEP library are freely available online for no charge.

Cartesian coordinates, I performed a Mercator projection on them, using the MAPPROJ library.[5]

Following a methodology described in a tutorial by Luc Anselin, recognized as one of the founders of the field of spatial econometrics, I first performed the Moran's I test under normality, which diagnoses the residuals from an OLS regression (in this case, Model #2, described below) for spatial autocorrelation (Anselin 2003a). Because the p-value of the Moran's I summary statistic from this test was 2.2×10^{-16}, it was apparent that there was strong spatial autocorrelation and that therefore the use of a spatial autocorrelative model was warranted.

Next, I performed a LaGrange multiplier test in order to determine whether SEM or a spatial lag model was the preferable choice for modeling my data set (ibid). This test demonstrated that SEM was superior.

Running an SEM, or any other type of spatial autocorrelative model, requires making a decision about how to compute the spatial weights matrix that is used. I used the SPDEP library's "knearneigh" function to compute the spatial weights matrix using the 10 nearest neighbors to each data point (Anselin 2003b). Given the spatial density of the data points (Figure A6-1), the selection of 10 nearest neighbors seemed to pose little danger of transmitting influences from faraway locations.[6]

[5] MAPPROJ is also freely available online for no charge.

[6] I considered, but then rejected, a distance-based spatial weights computation method. This requires selecting a buffer for inclusion of points based on a fixed distance. Even within the relatively spatially homogeneous City of Gateway, this would lead to a situation where points in the densest areas would have far more points influencing them than those in small residential neighborhoods separated from other neighborhoods by large commercial or industrial areas. This seemed to be an unbalanced approach. I would also intuitively expect that in a denser neighborhood, sales would be more influenced by closer past sales than in a lower density neighborhood, which also pointed to using the nearest neighbors method.

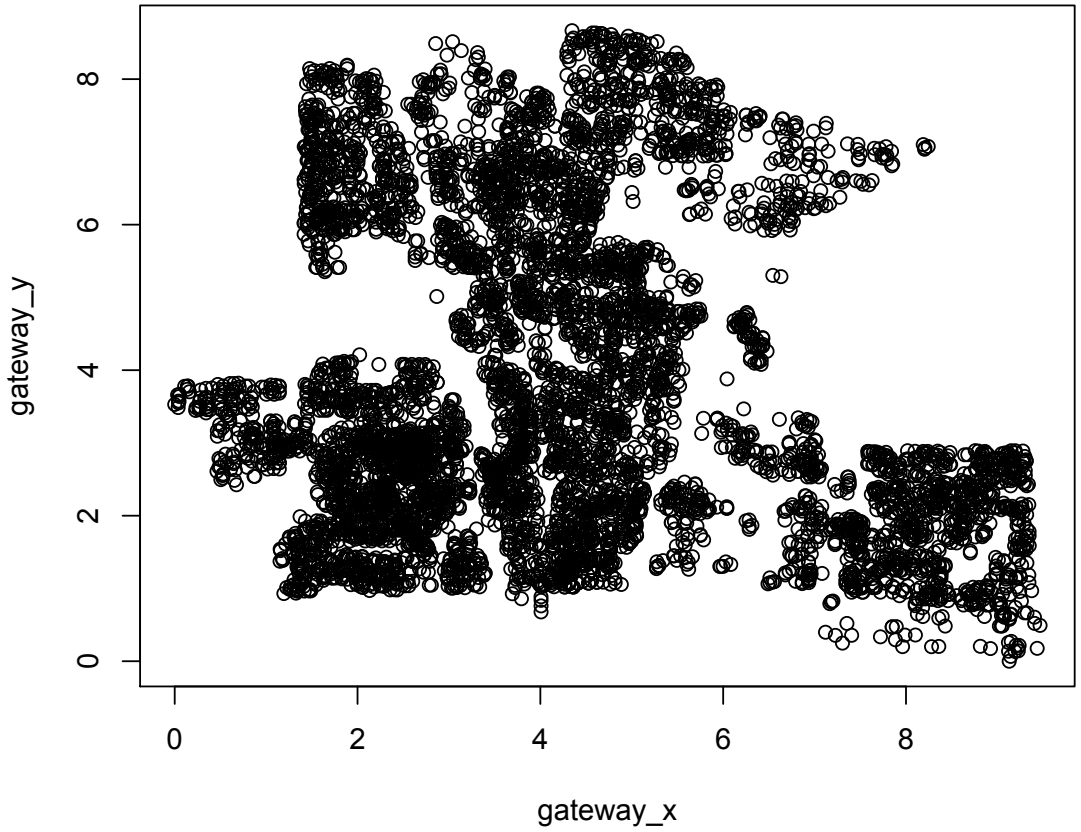

Figure A6-1. The spatial distribution of the data points included in Models #1 and #2 (i.e., all points in the Property Sales Data Set). The units for the Cartesian coordinates shown on the X and Y axes are miles.

With all of these elements in place, I ran the SEM model. Its results and specifications are summarized in the main body of Chapter 6, in Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

Model #2: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), full data set

Model #2 was a classic Ordinary Least Squares regression, with the results summarized in Tables 6.5 and 6.6 in the main body of Chapter 6. This model did not, apart from the geographical fixed effects dummies for jurisdiction, account for the location of the properties in the dataset.

Models #3 and #4: SEM model, data set partitioned by presale vs. non-presale jurisdictions

Models #3 and #4 used the SEM, but unlike Model #1 were run on subsets of the full data set. Model #3 includes only property sales from jurisdictions that do *not* impose presale requirements (described in the main body of Chapter 6) for sales of residential properties. These jurisdictions are the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, and Paramount, and the four unincorporated jurisdictions of East Rancho Dominguez, Florence-Firestone, Walnut Park, and Willowbrook. Bellflower's location dummy variable does not appear in the model; it is the "base case" against which all of the other location dummies' coefficients should be compared.

Model #4, on the other hand, includes only property sales from jurisdictions that *do* impose presale requirements. These jurisdictions are the cities of Compton, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, and South Gate. South Gate's location dummy variable does not appear in the model; it is the "base case" against which all of the other location dummies' coefficients should be compared.

References for Appendix 6-2

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Appendix 6-3: The Rank Order of City of Gateway Jurisdictions by Median Family Income and Model #1 Location Dummy Coefficient

Table A6-2 (below) shows the 14 City of Gateway jurisdictions in declining order of Median Family Income (MFI) for the period from 2008 to 2012. Alongside the localities' MFI rankings are shown the rank for the coefficients for their location dummies estimated from Model #1. Given the MFI margins of error and the standard errors estimated for the location dummy coefficients, small deviations in the rank order of the jurisdictions as measured by MFI and by the coefficients are not significant. For the most part, the location dummy coefficients are in roughly the order of MFI, as would be expected if properties' values had the quality of local public services capitalized into them, and if public service quality were in proportion to the jurisdiction-level MFI.

The three major exceptions to the pattern of MFI and coefficient rank order being largely the same are East Rancho Dominguez, Compton, and Bell. These are highlighted in Table A6-2. Reasons for these deviations are explored in the main body of Chapter 6.

Table A6-2. Jurisdiction-level Median Family Income (MFI) and rank order compared against the coefficients of the location dummies, and their rank order, estimated by Model #1. The three jurisdictions whose MFI and coefficient rank orders differ markedly are highlighted in dark gray. MFI data source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey, Table DP03 (Selected Economic Characteristics), www.americanfactfinder2.com.

Jurisdiction	Median Family Income	MFI Margin of Error	MFI Rank	Coefficient Rank	Coefficient	Coefficient Standard Error
Bellflower	$54,247	+/- $3,180	1	1	-	-
East Rancho Dominguez	*$50,590*	*+/- $4,683*	*2*	*11*	*-$106,490*	*$4,430*
South Gate	$44,347	+/- $1,605	3	2	-$49,489	$3,121
Paramount	$44,246	+/- $2,222	4	5	-$58,034	$3,921
Compton	*$44,653*	*+/- $2,041*	*5*	*12*	*-$110,860*	*$2,676*
Lynwood	$42,717	+/- $1,661	6	9	-$74,322	$3,319
Walnut Park	$41,267	+/- $4,946	7	3	-$55,344	$5,636
Bell Gardens	$38,554	+/- $2,016	8	4	-$57,980	$5,656
Cudahy	$38,288	+/- $3,166	9	10	-$78,699	$8,841
Huntington Park	$37,165	+/- $2,130	10	7	-$65,489	$4,392
Maywood	$37,094	+/- $2,364	11	8	-$66,952	$5,468
Bell	*$36,247*	*+/- $1,737*	*12*	*6*	*-$58,692*	*$4,820*
Florence-Graham	$36,138	+/- $1,780	13	13	-$113,740	$3,672
Willowbrook	$35,695	+/- $3,236	14	14	-$120,980	$3,454

Appendix 8-1: Housing Element Status and Source by Jurisdiction

Table A8-1. Housing Element status and source by City of Gateway jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction	Date of Most Recent Version Online as of April 14, 2014	City Council Approval Status of Most Recent Version Online	HCD Review Status as of March 24, 2014 *	URL as of April 14, 2014
Bell	December 1996	Adopted	Not yet submitted to HCD	http://www.cityofbell.org/home/showdocument?id=714
Bell Gardens	January 2014	Adopted	Approved by HCD	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/hrc/plan/he/he_documents/bell_gardens_5th_adopted012114.pdf
Bellflower	September 2003	Draft	Approved by HCD	http://www.bellflower.org/home/index.asp?page=131
Compton	April 2011	Draft	Not yet submitted to HCD	No longer available online
Cudahy	March 2013	Draft	Found to be noncompliant by HCD	http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/hrc/plan/he/he_documents/cudahy_5th_draft100813.pdf
Huntington Park	February 2009	Adopted	Not yet submitted to HCD	http://ca-huntingtonpark2.civicplus.com/documents/7/8/Housing%20Element_February%202009_web.PDF
Lynwood	August 2013	Adopted	Approved by HCD	http://lynwood.ca.us/sites/default/files/City%20of%20Lynwood%20Adopted%202014-2021%20Housing%20Element.pdf
Maywood	January 2014	Draft	Received after deadline; under review by HCD	http://www.cityofmaywood.com/images/NegDecIniStudy_Draft_HEU.pdf
Paramount	August 2013	Draft	Found to be noncompliant by HCD	http://www.paramountcity.com/download.cfm?ID=2255
South Gate	May 2009	Draft	Found to be noncompliant by HCD	http://www.sogate.org/sgcms/media/File/housing_Element_Public_Review_Draft.pdf
Los Angeles County	October 2013	Draft	Received by deadline*; under review by HCD	http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/official/official_20131203_housing-element.pdf