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Los Angeles

Grounds for Eviction: Race, Mobility, and Policing in the Antelope Valley

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Sociology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Grounds for Eviction: Race, Mobility, and Policing in the Antelope Valley

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Professor Darnell Montez Hunt, Co-Chair

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This dissertation links research on residential mobility with research on policing and the criminalization of poverty. It does so through a case study of Black movement to Los Angeles' Antelope Valley through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, a federal housing assistance program that is increasingly replacing public housing and one designed to promote residential mobility and racial integration.

Fifty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act banning discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, and the publication of the Kerner Commission report urging integration-oriented housing policy, social policy has turned towards residential mobility as a mechanism of combatting segregation and, by extension, racial inequality. Though the effects of mobility programs like vouchers are known to be smaller than expected, less is known about why this might be the case.

I look to the Antelope Valley to examine what voucher experiences there might reveal about this process. Tracing the region's decades-long history of racial segregation and inequality, I show how racial hierarchy has adapted to changes in laws, racial composition, and economic

circumstances. I then illustrate how the Great Recession drove Black voucher movement to the valley over the past decade.

Turning to qualitative findings, I show how Black voucher renters moving to the Antelope Valley are met with racism, economic resentment, and gendered stereotypes in their new communities. This social context of reception is key to understanding the mobility process. I then trace how one local government reflected and encouraged these sentiments by developing policies designed to reverse voucher movement by criminalizing, policing and evicting Black voucher renters in the area. While some of these schemes were abandoned, changes to the municipal code structure that encourage individual policing remain a highly effective mechanism of intimidating, impoverishing, and evicting Black voucher renters. This participatory policing regime, wherein local residents surveil their neighbors and file complaints with municipal code enforcement and other local authorities, illustrates an understudied contemporary mechanism of maintaining segregation. Finally, I show how Black voucher renters interpret, experience, and navigate these conditions, focusing on how they maintain their housing and avoid eviction.

The dissertation of Rahim Kurwa is approved.

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This work is dedicated to Black voucher renters in the Antelope Valley, who have been enduring the daily violence of hate, harassment, and policing for far too long.

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- 2013 Barriers to Integration for Section 8 Voucher Users in Los Angeles County. American Sociological Association, New York

Chapter 1: Introduction

Michelle Ross moved to the City of Palmdale in the Antelope Valley in 2009, with assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Choice Voucher program. Palmdale is a suburb of Los Angeles County located roughly eighty miles north of downtown Los Angeles. It is one of the main destinations for voucher tenants moving within Los Angeles County. Today, the valley is home to nearly 8 percent of the county's voucher population, a group that comprises just over 3 percent of the county's overall population. Most voucher tenants in the valley are Black, like Ross, and most households are headed by women who are raising children.

Michelle's move to Palmdale was a consequence of the voucher program's relationship to the housing market. Vouchers are analogous to a coupon. Households qualify for the program based on income. Once a household receives its voucher – usually after several years on a waiting list – the renter must find a landlord or property owner willing to participate in the program. Landlords accepting vouchers for the first time must demonstrate to the local housing authority that the property is safe and habitable. When voucher tenants move in, the housing authority pays rent on their behalf based on a regional fair-market calculation, while tenants pay roughly 30% of their income to the housing authority. In Los Angeles County, voucher tenants often move to places like the Antelope Valley out of necessity rather than preference. In Los Angeles, rental properties that are affirmatively available to voucher tenants are generally scarce, but many property owners in the valley have turned to the voucher program to fill vacancies caused by the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession of 2008. In 2004, before the Recession, roughly 9,549 voucher tenants lived in Antelope Valley. By 2016, that number had increased to 15,853. Roughly three-quarters of these tenants are Black. Over the past 35 years, total Black

residency in the Antelope Valley climbed from just 3% of the population in 1980 to 20% in 2015.

Things seemed normal for a time after Ross moved to Palmdale, until her neighbors learned that she was renting her home through the voucher program, also known as Section 8. In a video made by Public Counsel (2013), the legal aid organization that filed a lawsuit on her behalf, she referenced an “I Hate Section 8” website where Antelope Valley residents posted names and addresses of neighbors they believed were using the voucher program. Her name and information were posted on that page and eventually her home was vandalized: someone had spray-painted “I hate Section 8 n*****s” in big letters across her garage door. Soon after, according to a court filing, “young people drove by her home and threw what appeared to be urine at her children” (The Community Action League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale 2011). After this, Ross and her family chose not to sleep in their home at night out of fear for their safety.

This incident was just one of a series of transgressions committed against Ross and her children by neighbors, police, and local authorities, in the years since she moved to Palmdale. With the assistance of Public Counsel, Ross sued the city of Palmdale and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s department for discriminatory enforcement of housing rules against voucher tenants, which had contributed to a public climate of racist harassment and intimidation. The legal claim made by Ross and Public Counsel (The Community Action League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale) was resolved in her favor in 2012 along with subsequent agreements in 2015 that provided relief and protection to Ross and thousands of other Section 8 tenants in the Antelope Valley from some of the city’s worst practices.

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program that supported and incentivized Ross's move to Palmdale is the result of long-term changes to federal housing policy towards the poor, beginning with a pivot away from public housing in the 1960s. These were bipartisan changes that relied on free market and civil rights logics to create a system of federal support so that low-income households could rent in the private housing market. From the conservative perspective, vouchers moved federal housing aid from publicly-funded and built projects to privately-owned homes and apartments, a nimble and market-efficient system that also bolstered the private market. From a liberal perspective, vouchers allowed tenants to be residentially mobile, which was seen as not just a fulfillment of fair housing goals, but a chance to move out of disadvantaged neighborhoods to areas of greater economic opportunity and thereby see personal economic progress over time. Vouchers were a small, experimental part of federal housing policy in the late 1960s and 1970s but ascended to prominence in the early 1990s as the Clinton Administration, steadily dismantling the social safety net, officially turned federal policy away from public housing and towards vouchers.

When I first visited the Antelope Valley, I arrived knowing that there was hostility towards voucher renters, and that evictions were happening more often there than in the rest of Los Angeles County. Ross's lawsuit had not yet been filed, but as I began to interview voucher renters and local residents between 2011 and 2016 I came to find that what happened to her happened to other renters in varying ways, by varying actors, and with varying results. Sometimes it was the neighbors, other times it was administrators or police. Sometimes it was a confrontation with a neighbor, other times it was simply a consistent cold shoulder and stare. The Antelope Valley was something of a case study of the limitations of integration. For all its struggles during the recession, the Antelope Valley was still a wealthier area than neighborhoods

in South Los Angeles from which many Black voucher renters were moving. But for Black voucher renters, moving to a wealthier neighborhood did not result in improved quality of life. Existence in the valley was essentially conditional – you can stay, and at best be tolerated, as long as someone does not kick you out.

This condition prompts a number of questions: What are the economic and political reasons that explain how Ross and other Black residents of Los Angeles came to live in the Antelope Valley, a region distant and disconnected from Los Angeles proper? And how do white residents of the valley understand and react to Black voucher tenants? What explains the eviction spike there? Finally, how do voucher tenants navigate this context, and are their experiences an aberration from or continuation of historical processes of inequality in Los Angeles County?

These questions matter all the more because of this case's relationship to broader questions of residential mobility, integration, and economic mobility. Decades after the voucher program was implemented on a large scale, evaluations of the voucher and similar mobility programs show mixed results. The strongest positive outcomes appear in the lives of voucher renters' children, but renters themselves often see nominal change in their economic outcomes (Chetty et al. 2015; Katz et al. 2001; Kling et al. 2007). Somewhere along the way the promise of economic gains tied to residential mobility fell short. Some argued that voucher mobility never really resulted in tenants accessing high opportunity neighborhoods, so significant results would be out of the question (Sampson 2008). Others argued that more time was necessary between voucher movers settling in new neighborhoods and evaluations of the changes in their socio-economic circumstances, so small results now do not rule out larger gains later (Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008). These are persuasive arguments, but they do not cover all the possible mechanisms that could flummox mobility. Most importantly, they focus on quantitative

analyses of administrative data, leaving open the question of what happens from a social interaction standpoint when voucher renters make residential moves.

Without understanding the social interactions that occur between new and old tenant, voucher and local resident, often Black and white, we can only assume that social interactions are irrelevant to the mobility process and that movement should neatly translate to socio-economic change over time. But the history of racial hostility and its expression at the neighborhood level suggests that this assumption is untenable.

Returning to the Antelope Valley, the experiences of voucher renters there might speak to the questions raised in the wake of residential mobility programs. Whatever it is that explains what has happened to the voucher program in the valley could also shed light on the voucher program as a whole, certainly not to every renter and in every neighborhood, but perhaps to cases like the valley's, where voucher movement coincided with sharp racial and economic neighborhood changes.

Case selection

The Antelope Valley is a site that is conducive to a qualitative approach to the study of vouchers because there is a significant voucher population within a relatively constrained geographic area. This circumstance offers a solution to the challenges of accessibility that make voucher research more difficult than research on public housing projects and mixed-income developments. Voucher tenants are difficult to locate because of their relatively small numbers as well as their spread across metropolitan areas. Qualitative research on the experiences of voucher users requires a site like the Antelope Valley, where the high concentration of Section 8 housing makes it more feasible to locate voucher tenants and ensures that local residents who are interviewed will at least partly understand the program and have some opinions about it.

However, this approach raises important questions about selection and case applicability. These include suburban-urban differences, differences in scales of movement, differences in the role of federal policy in driving racial change in neighborhoods, and questions about how underlying economic forces may shape results attributed to the voucher program.

First, we can consider the difference between suburban, high voucher usage cases like the Antelope Valley and cases of suburbs with low levels of voucher usage, or cases of cities with either high or low levels of voucher usage. In each of these alternatives, outcomes may be markedly different. Suburbs with low voucher usage or movement may experience less social conflict because of lower awareness of the program. And cities with high or low voucher usage may see differences in relationships between voucher and non-voucher tenants due to attributes associated with the cities themselves, like racial composition.

Second, this case represents a case of policy-driven Black movement to a historically white neighborhood, a configuration which could be altered in other settings around the country. One alternative would be Black movement to white neighborhoods that is not facilitated by government policies like the voucher program, in other words purely market and choice-based movement. Other alternative scenarios could include Black movement to predominantly white neighborhoods that are economically different than the Antelope Valley, or white movement to Black neighborhoods with or without vouchers. Each of these may have markedly different outcomes. Third, to the degree that voucher movement is bound up with economic conditions in the Antelope Valley, one can also question the degree to which social relations between voucher and non-voucher residents are attributable to the voucher program or to those underlying economic forces.

While examining the social interactions between voucher and non-voucher residents in each of these alternative scenarios would increase the analytical power to isolate causal mechanisms, and lead to a fuller understanding of the role of the voucher program in the lives of low-income renters, studying the program as it has operated in the Antelope Valley can uncover social processes that may be present in the other categories of racial residential integration that I have outlined. Moreover, the voucher program is structured to encourage movement out of poor neighborhoods in central cities and into suburbs, and as it plays out in metropolitan rental markets, it often funnels renters into neighborhoods that are struggling economically. As an exemplar of both phenomena, the case of voucher movement to the Antelope Valley will shed light on dynamics of central concern to our understanding of the program.

Methodology and Limitations

Methods

This dissertation takes a mixed-method approach by combining a quantitative analysis of foreclosure and voucher usage trends with qualitative interviews of 82 voucher renters and local residents in a community chosen in the context of those macro-economic and policy trends. Because most research on voucher mobility relies on analyses of administrative data to gauge the outcomes of these programs, these studies are limited in that they cannot understand the mobility process itself. In this study, I use qualitative methods to understand what happens once Black voucher renters move to a suburban neighborhood. That is usually not a viable research strategy because in most suburban neighborhoods, the number of voucher users is very low, and the population is difficult to locate. But in the Antelope Valley, the rate of voucher usage is strong enough and the program is well known enough that a single researcher can use qualitative methods to understand how the program is working. This, of course, means that this case is not

representative of other neighborhoods with lower densities of voucher movement, but it is nevertheless a first step to understanding what may be happening in other settings.

Between 2011 and 2016, I interviewed 39 voucher renters, most of whom are Black, by visiting the Palmdale office of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, the administrative office for the voucher program which all renters must report to for various administrative issues. I recruited voucher renters and conducted audio-recorded interviews that did not collect names or other identifying information (all names used in the dissertation are pseudonyms), focusing on their social experiences and level of social integration in the Antelope Valley. Because voucher renters are extremely protective of the privacy of their voucher status, I chose not to record any identifying information such as name, date, or address. Never collecting that data meant it could never be divulged. In 2015 and 2016, I interviewed 43 local residents, most of whom are white, living in a Lancaster neighborhood identified as having a high rate of voucher residency. I solicited interviews door-to-door in this neighborhood so as to gain a coherent understand of one community's attitudes and responses. I also conducted anonymous, audio-recorded interviews with these participants, asking questions that focused on their opinions and actions in response to voucher movement. I expand on these methods and their strengths and weaknesses in Chapter 6.

Limitations

The methods described above suggest the role of positionality in this work. In the following section I hope to begin to address questions of positionality and accountability that are part and parcel of understanding and interpreting the contributions and limitations of this work.

I come to the Antelope Valley as a Muslim South Asian American man who is an outsider to the people living there. Although being an outsider to local residents not using a

voucher does shape my interactions and findings, this relationship is not the one I wish to focus on in this introduction (I comment further on these issues in Chapter 6). What is more important to address here is how my race, class, and gender positionality vis-à-vis the predominantly Black and female respondents using the voucher program has shaped and limited the nature and scope of the study and what kind of knowledge about these circumstances I have been able to produce. I have tried to be conscious of the long history of urban ethnography that replicates racism through the way it sees Black communities as well as the way it conducts its research. Nevertheless, I do not doubt that I have made more than my share of mistakes and that, even if I made none, the underlying dynamic of my outsider researcher relationship to the Black voucher renter community is itself problematic. The questions I ask, the access I am granted, and my interpretation of these answers are shaped by my intertwined privilege and ignorance. By this I refer to the privilege of ignorance (my ability to learn about a form of violence that those experiencing it already know), as well as my ignorance of privilege (though I know I have the ability to leave the valley after conducting interviews, I cannot fully understand the extent of the circumstances I do not have to experience).

I should also record a few words about why I am doing this work, in a community I am not a part of. I learned of this project when asked to assist with some small components of legal research about evictions in the valley, and I became passionate about it out of a sense of outrage at the injustices that were so plain to see there. Over time, I have also come to see how this case implicates society at large. First, the macro-level forces shaping the experiences of voucher renters are forces that the entire country is implicated in, through individual housing choices, the political and policy making process, and the participatory nature of policing. Second, what occurs in the valley is also echoed in other settings and for other communities (Mayorga-Gallo

2014). Indeed, my own community has experience on both sides of this coin, experiencing racial discrimination in housing, employment, and the siting of mosques, as well as perpetuating racial inequality through our own participation in the social structural processes that create and sustain anti-Black racism and segregation.

In doing this work I have recorded painful and violent passages and accounts of experiences in the valley. Although my aim is not to sensationalize these accounts, I recognize that reproducing them can still be harmful. Sometimes the harm of reproducing painful accounts is balanced by the need to document an injustice in order to understand it and push back against it. How that balance plays out in this work is not for me to judge, rather it is for Black voucher renters to judge. Although I did not collect identifying information about my respondents, I hope to find ways to ensure that this work is accountable to this community by bringing my findings to local organizers.

My hope is that, despite its shortcomings, what is contained in the chapters to follow faithfully represents the experiences and understandings conveyed to me and demonstrates the importance of further work on these issues.

Arguments

With the above limitations in mind, my central finding in this study is that the social context of reception for voucher movers matters, and that policing is an important part of that context of reception. Without an account of how racism intervenes in the residential mobility process, that framework cannot explain the outcomes in this setting – one of Los Angeles’ most important. Motivated by a tangle of prejudices – racism, sexism, and economic resentment – local residents socially isolate incoming renters, denying the creation of social bonds that may serve as necessary intermediary factors between movement and economic progress. Most

importantly, I find that a wide basis of hostility serves as a foundation for a new set of practices aimed at accomplishing the old objective of segregation. Now, instead of using tactics banned by the Fair Housing Act or deemed to be in violation of civil rights, local residents and their city leaders use policing to evict Black neighbors and reassert segregation. By structuring the municipal codes to reward private vigilantism, the city encourages local residents to monitor their neighbors and call the code enforcement hotline to report violations of an expansive, vague, and subjective set of municipal codes. By reporting Black neighbors, local residents trigger investigations, fines, police visits, and landlord pressure, all of which serve as a symbolic assertion of authority and control as well as increased pressure to leave. Landlords whose renters receive five complaints are themselves put in jeopardy of fines or rental license revocation, and thus feel even greater pressure to evict their tenants. These developments reflect not just the criminalization of poverty and the erasure of privacy rights for poor women and families, but also the extension of this criminalization and privacy removal to the realm of housing aid (Bridges 2011; Brown Hayat 2016; Gustafson 2009; Ocen 2012).

These practices suggest an important new way to think about the relationship between segregation and policing, as well as the reach and shape of the carceral state. While prior literature on the relationship between policing and segregation focuses on the ways that policing takes advantage of or builds upon segregation, I argue that policing can actually be used to produce segregation. Moreover, policing produces segregation in the Antelope Valley precisely because it is performed in a participatory manner. By this I mean that local residents, often deeply hostile to Black voucher renters, participate in the system of policing by surveilling voucher renters and watching for infractions that they can then report to administrative and policing hotlines that would visit voucher renters to assess violations and assess penalties. This

behavior is not *sui generis*; rather, it is the product of the city's participatory policing regime, which enables local residents to surveil neighbors and file nuisance and other complaints against them through various authorities, whose responses can include fines and eviction.

These phenomena illustrate how the criminalization of poverty has extended to the criminalization of the voucher program, an expansion of what Beckett and Murakawa (2012) call the *shadow carceral state*. This extension is understandable in the context of a long term and widespread growth of institutions and practices of carceral punishment (Alexander 2010; Camp and Heatherton 2016; Gottschalk 2006; Gottschalk 2016; Hattery and Smith 2017). The city's use of the municipal code structure in this way is itself an evolution from prior strategies for evicting Black voucher renters that failed due to legal and practical challenges. It highlights the dangerous ways that municipal codes might be used to reinforce and reproduce racial segregation (Legewie and Schaeffer 2016; Mead et al. 2017), as well as assert a form of what Miller and Stuart (2017) refer to as *carceral citizenship* over voucher renters. Finally, we can read the macro-economic and public policy forces pushing Black voucher renters out of cities and into far-flung suburbs like the Antelope Valley and the subsequent effort to evict them so as to protect racial segregation as a spatial fix analogous to rural prison siting or as a form of racial banishment (Gilmore 2007; Harvey 1981, Harvey 2001; Roy 2017).

Next, I argue that the reality of suburban, historically white neighborhoods using policing to evict Black movers complicates the prevailing sociological understanding of segregation and integration as uncomplicated negative and positive phenomena. The quest to achieve integration through residential mobility programs underestimates the number of mechanisms that can be used to protect segregation, and this form of policing represents just the latest way for white society to reinforce racial barriers to housing. This mechanism is particularly effective today

because it adapts to the changes in American society that have made old methods of segregation illegal while adopting a discourse of suspicion that legitimizes the heightened surveillance of Black residents, particularly women, and continues a long legacy of surveillance as part of the project of racial formation (Browne 2015). I conclude that policing voucher renters in order to evict them from a neighborhood is a legally effective mechanism of reasserting racial segregation that can also gain popular support. Social policy that is overly focused on desegregation or poverty deconcentration without sufficient attention to these findings may risk simply shifting the geography and vectors of racial inequality rather than meaningfully dismantling that inequality.

Finally, I interpret what has happened in the Antelope Valley as evidence that segregation and integration are secondary to racism. Racism remains the first-order problem in the question of racial residential inequality. As the Kerner Commission (1968) stated, white racism created system of racial residential inequality based on segregation, but as Kenneth Clark (1965) warned, a racist society can preserve inequality despite government policy that promotes integration. Here, I am guided by Tommie Shelby's (2016) distinction between 1) forced segregation, 2) self-segregation, 3) integration by choice, and 4) integration as a policy remedy for segregation. As Shelby points out, the first is an unalloyed evil, whereas the second and third represent individual preferences that should be respected, and the fourth represents a possibly effective policy remedy, but one that carries significant philosophical and political questions, and which attempts to repair the problem of a racially unequal society by attacking its symptom rather than its cause. When thinking about the policy implications of these findings, I rely on John O. Calmore's model of spatial equality which advances a model focused not on segregation or integration but rather on rights and resources – the right to live in in a city or suburb, in segregated or diverse

neighborhoods, and the resources to enjoy a good life in any case (Calmore 1992). Advancing this agenda is a simple but ultimately radical confrontation to the system of racial residential inequality that continues to prevail in this country.

Roadmap of the dissertation

In Chapter 2, I trace the historical and ideological roots of the voucher program, as well as the major moments in federal low-income housing policy that produced the Section 8 housing program that exists today. This review contextualizes the voucher program by illustrating the political and ideological forces that led to its creation. I argue that vouchers were the product of a broad consensus from conservative, liberal, and academic streams of thought that saw benefits to using vouchers as an alternative to public housing.

In Chapter 3, I review how the lives of low-income renters have been affected by vouchers and other mobility programs, summarizing the positive effects, negative consequences, and the open questions that I intend to answer in this dissertation. I argue that the breadth of literature on residential mobility demonstrates that mobility alone is an insufficient remedy to poverty, but clear explanations as to why results were not stronger continue to elude social science. I suggest that the social context of reception for movers is an underappreciated part of the process and that it might explain lower-than-expected voucher outcomes. Finally, I argue that we can link policing and segregation by understanding the ways that policing is used to reinforce racial residential boundaries. I argue that policing plays a role in shaping the context of reception greeting voucher movers.

In Chapter 4, I trace the history of the Antelope Valley from the 1940s up to the Great Recession, focusing on the shifting operation of racial inequality in the region. Here, I outline a history of segregation and racism that provides necessary political and historical context. I show

how the Antelope Valley began as a fully segregated region, with Black homeowners only allowed to purchase in Sun Village, a town adjacent to the main cities of Lancaster and Palmdale. As these walls came down in the 1960s, racial inequality began to be seen in discrimination in housing, employment, and schools. In the 1980s and early 1990s, spectacular moments of white supremacist violence came to dominate the region. I argue that the present moment represents yet another shift in the way racism is asserted in the valley, moving from hate crimes to policing. As the mechanism of vectors of racial inequality change over time, much of the underlying relationship remains unchanged.

In Chapter 5, I shift to the contemporary history of the Antelope Valley, focusing on the effect of the Great Recession on the region and the subsequent movement of voucher renters to the valley. Here, I use a quantitative analysis of census tract level voucher and economic data to illustrate the macro-economic forces shaping racialized voucher movement to the Antelope Valley between 2008 and 2016. I show how, contrary to hopes and expectations, the voucher program in this case is operating almost precisely backwards – pushing low-income households to neighborhoods smashed by foreclosures and thus unlikely to be good places to settle and find socio-economic success. This finding helps us understand the aggregate outcomes of the voucher program by offering an explanation as to why some cases in the distribution end up in neighborhoods poorly poised to support them. Addressing this problem in the voucher program's organization could lead to better overall neighborhood attainment and economic outcomes.

In Chapter 6, I describe the data and research methods used in the qualitative portion of my research and provide population and sample-level descriptive statistics about voucher renters and local residents in the Antelope Valley. I explain how I located respondents, how I conducted interviews, describe limitations based on my sampling approach, and the challenges I faced

conducting interviews with both parts of my interview pool – voucher and local residents. I discuss the methodological limits in more detail and comment on areas where I had difficulty getting full data, and types of questions I did not think to ask or was not in position to ask.

In Chapters 7 through 9 I turn to describing my qualitative findings and sketching the contours of the participatory policing regime I have theorized. In Chapter 7, I outline the reasons voucher tenants move to the valley and describe the context of reception that greets them. I show how local residents see voucher movement as a form of group threat. They significantly overestimate the percent of homes in the city occupied by voucher renters, likely a result of their association of race and voucher status. Older local residents link Black voucher movement to long-term decline in the quality of life in the Antelope Valley traceable to the “tragedy,” as they experienced it, of desegregation in the 1960s. Overall, local residents hold significantly negative views about voucher tenants across a variety of measures, and demonstrate resentment on racial, gendered, and economic grounds. Finally, they support invasive and harsh policies to limit the residency and benefits of voucher holders. I argue that these attitudes constitute a foundation from which some residents take increasingly extreme actions, backed by the broad base of hostility towards their targets.

Chapter 8 traces the rise of a suburban policing regime shaped by the local government and resident action, and which is designed to evict Black voucher renters from the valley. I show how deeply implicated the leadership of the City of Lancaster has been, as it attempted a variety of tactics to criminalize, remove, and prevent voucher renters from entering the city. As the city turns to municipal codes as a mechanism for the control and eviction of voucher renters, it folds local residents into the policing process. They surveil their neighbors, report them to administrative and police agencies, and coordinate their actions amongst each other, knowing

that enough calls will result in a voucher tenant leaving or being evicted. Here, the erosion of privacy rights for families on federal aid coincides with increased legitimacy around policing and code enforcement to create a dangerous environment for Black voucher renters.

Chapter 9 describes how these renters understand and react to this environment. I show how staying unknown is a protective strategy, and when known as a voucher tenant, tenants strategize to stay out of the public eye. But doing so involves what Karyn Lacy (2002) terms *boundary work*, here referring to strategically curtailing a range of fully legal behaviors so as to remain strategically seen and unseen in ways that protect one's access to housing. This also amounts to a recognition that meaningful integration is impossible under these hostile circumstances. Tenants accept these conditions because the protection of housing is of highest importance, finding alternate housing through the voucher is extremely difficult, and being evicted or pushed out would also be disruptive to the lives of their children.

Finally, in Chapter 10, I discuss the sociological implications of this case and the conclusions I draw for housing policy and questions of racial inequality. I argue that this case suggests the presence of more intricate ties between policing and segregation, and that participatory policing may be a modern mechanism of segregation in a time when other segregation techniques have been outlawed by federal law and social mores. Building from this, I suggest that there are important differences between integration in a numerical sense of the term, and integration in the social sense of the term. I argue that the former has happened in the Antelope Valley in the absence of the latter. I argue that the social context of reception is crucial part of understanding residential mobility, and that mobility alone cannot be relied on to be a remedy for racial residential equality. Last, I suggest changes to federal policy that could alleviate these problems and argue for a consideration of the voucher program outside a

desegregation mandate – despite everything, so many voucher renters value the financial stability and support attached to the voucher. Obama-era reforms around the calculation of fair-market rates in smaller geographic areas, and a broad expansion of the voucher program would combine to dramatically change the locations where voucher tenants are incentivized to move, and an expansion of the program to more renters who qualify for it would help the program become more universal and potentially less stigmatized. Policy makers must also reconsider nuisance laws and other municipal codes as fulcrums of racial inequality at the local level. As evidence from Ferguson, Milwaukee, Cleveland and other jurisdictions shows, maliciously written municipal codes are hard to spot but extraordinarily influential determinants of the rights and well-being of low-income and non-white residents.

This dissertation adds to a small but burgeoning literature on policing in suburban settings and might over time contribute to a theoretical framework by which we can understand differences in the operation of policing as a determinant of racial inequality between suburbs and urban spaces. It also helps advance and encourage further qualitative research on the voucher program, a necessary complement to quantitative work assessing aggregate outcomes. Finally, as I have come to realize while documenting the region's history, the Antelope Valley is an important part of the map of Black life in America and has been for a long time (Hunter and Robinson 2018). This work, then, is intended to complement the wide-range of scholarship on Black Los Angeles (Flamming 2005; Hunt and Ramon 2010; Sides 2003). While much of what is written to date focuses on Black life in Los Angeles proper, it is my hope that this contribution helps widen the field by following Lacy's (2016) call for research on suburban experiences, in this case experiences that are shaped by the forces of gentrification and racial displacement anchored in the city itself.

Chapter 2: How Vouchers Came to Dominate Federal Low-Income Housing Policy

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to promote the general welfare of the Nation by employing its funds and credit...to alleviate present and recurring unemployment and to remedy the unsafe and insanitary housing conditions and the acute shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income, in rural or urban communities, that are injurious to the health, safety, and morals of the citizens of the Nation (United States Housing Act, 1937).

Public Housing's New Deal Origins

To frame questions about the voucher program's relationship to racial residential inequality, it is necessary to understand the policy context that produced it, along with the logics that motivated and continue to shape it. I suggest that we consider vouchers not as a unique program but as an evolution of federal policy dating back to the Great Depression. From this premise, I sketch a history of public housing in three broadly defined periods: 1) development of the policy idea from the Great Depression to 1950, 2) construction of public housing and subsequent criticism from 1950 to the mid-1960s, and 3) major reforms starting in 1968, culminating in the 1994 adoption of the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI program.

The federal role in building public housing can be traced back to at least 1933, during the Great Depression, when the Public Works Administration (PWA) was tasked with the construction of housing, in addition to other infrastructure. Although the PWA did not ultimately build much housing, it was the first of a series of efforts to use federal resources and power to create public housing for low-income households. These federal efforts were motivated by a number of objectives, including an interest in clearing urban slums, promoting public health through safer living conditions, and generating employment opportunities in construction (Schwartz 2014). Regardless, the public housing program was a fundamentally socially democratic one. The construction of public housing supported the Housing Act's goal of decent

shelter for all Americans. The government's intervention operated as a tacit acknowledgement that the private market was not capable of achieving this goal on its own (Arena 2012:xxxiii).

In 1937, towards the end of the New Deal era, the federal government passed the Federal Housing Act (FHA), a major new attempt to put federal muscle behind increased public housing. The FHA authorized the construction of large-scale public housing that would clear the slums and replace shabby, inadequate, and unsafe buildings with formalized and dignified housing (Schwartz 2014). The program immediately ran into three problems: one legal, one practical, and one financial. First, it was administratively difficult for the federal government to actually begin constructing public housing in cities. Second, a court ruling barred the federal government from using eminent domain to acquire land for the construction of public housing. Third, the 1937 Housing Act did not allocate sufficient funding to support its ambitious goals. To solve these problems, the government supported the creation of local Public Housing Authorities, which as agencies of local governments could use eminent domain to acquire land for construction, then proceed with that construction using federal funding and backing. Funding for the construction of public housing came attached to a subsequent housing bill passed in 1950.

The segregatory context into which public housing was born

It is difficult to critically examine the emergence of public housing under federally legislated mandates without an understanding of racial segregation prior to construction. As Massey and Denton (1993) document, the rapid segregation of American cities after 1900 (and in the face of Black movement out of the south and into northern and western states) was facilitated by several processes and historical events. One, white people rioted against Black homeowners and renters encroaching into previously white-only neighborhoods. These riots occurred throughout the north in the early 1900s, evolved into targeted and strategic forms of intimidation

and culminated in physical violence over the course of time. Next came the neighborhood associations that allowed homeowners to collectively organize to deny Black homebuyers access through restrictive covenants and attempts to use zoning and neighborhood improvements to reduce building and increase property values. These tactics were also replicated in social institutions like the real estate agencies that engaged in redlining and blockbusting and federal agencies like the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), whose home loan program entrenched discrimination by patterning decisions on discriminatory redlining maps (Massey and Denton 1993; Rothstein, 2017). When the color line was broken - by a Black family purchasing a home or a housing authority issuing a plan to build public housing in a white neighborhood - white flight ensured that white residents could continue to avoid living in integrated communities. Over the first half of the 20th century, racial segregation intensified dramatically in the North and settled at relatively extreme levels, declining only modestly in the decades since.

Considering public housing in this construct, it is difficult to see how equitable, integrated public housing could have been built during the 1900s. It would have required some internal force or external social movement exercising overwhelming political power to break the patterns of housing segregation. As the next section details, no such thing appears to have happened.

Construction varies across cities but always fits inside racial boundaries

The accelerated construction of public housing in the 1950s was, in some ways, doomed from the start. Public Housing Authorities' control of the process ensured that local political considerations would shape the siting, design, and administration of housing. As a result, Public Housing Authorities focused on construction in Black neighborhoods, and built that housing using cost-cutting measures to placate public criticism. These sites were poorly designed,

characterized by cramped units, a lack of public space, and no access to public transportation, which impeded normal life for tenants. Racially and economically segregating public housing may have been the price paid to build units without upsetting the racial order of cities like Detroit and Chicago, but it ensured that public housing residents would be disadvantaged over the long-term.

The respective histories of public housing construction in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles help illustrate the variance in motivations, enemies, and outcomes across the mid-century public housing boom. New York's public housing construction began early; in response to the public advocates documenting intensely miserable conditions of the urban slums, and the minority groups agitating for public housing, the city chose to embark on an ambitious public housing construction project. This project relied on New Deal funding, and it made a lasting impact on the city (both in terms of units and establishing the viability of public housing) even before the passage of major federal housing legislation in the late 1930s. Between 1934 and 1939, public housing construction constituted almost a quarter of the total housing built (Lughod 1999:180). Once federal legislation and funding were in place to support it, New York experienced an even greater boom in public housing. Such large-scale construction during the Depression also operated in the interests of construction workers, a point confirmed by Sugrue (2005) in his comparison of public housing support across cities. He notes that, unlike in Detroit, contractors and construction workers in both New York and Chicago played a major role in backing public housing construction.

By comparison, Chicago's public housing was motivated in some part by a liberal vision of social upliftment of the poor, as demonstrated by the efforts of local advocates like Jane Addams. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) did this clearing slums and replacing them with

more formal and decent housing. However, this also served to perpetuate racial segregation; creating formalized housing on former slum sites (in segregated areas) helped to contain Black renters on those sites and kept them from further encroaching on white suburbs—a major source of tension in Chicago. Abu Lughod notes that, unlike in New York, Chicago’s public housing construction spree was launched by the passage of the 1949 Housing Act, which recommitted the nation to the provision of public housing and contributed more funds to the effort. This provoked massive and immediate pushback from white homeowners, renters, community organizations, and politicians, which prevented construction in white neighborhoods and presented the Chicago Housing Authority with a Hobson’s choice: segregatory building or none at all (Meyerson and Banfield 1955).

While federal housing legislation was presented as an effort to provide decent shelter to all Americans, it may also be understood as a solution to the problem of insufficient housing in major cities experiencing population growth. Many of these cities, for example were absorbing a population of returning veterans during and after the Second World War. This was clearly true for Detroit. As Thomas Sugrue writes, “Tens of thousands of returning veterans were putting pressure on a housing market that could not even absorb the thousands of defense workers who had migrated to the city during the war” (Sugrue 2005:57). The private market, which had little incentive to build for poor people or minorities, could not be entrusted to create such a solution. Liberal community groups like the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Council lobbied hard for public housing, using the same “slum clearance as virtue” logic as in other cities. But these market functions and liberal values ran aground on the shoals of racism, as white homeowners’ groups obstructed every housing plan that proposed sites outside majority Black neighborhoods. By defeating pro-public housing officials, the white community was able to prevent significant

public housing from being built and corral what public housing was built within the city's de-facto color line.

Finally, turning to Los Angeles, we can see a story of public housing construction and opposition that is quite dissimilar from other cases. In Los Angeles, federally-funded housing was built to accommodate the army and a veteran population; it was later repurposed as public housing after the war. However, the large-scale public housing movement was actually bolstered by a spirit of progressivism that viewed decent housing as the foundation to a healthy community and a strong city (Parson 2005). The speedy creation of a public housing authority in Los Angeles — designed to interact with the federal government and take advantage of its funding offers — was animated by what Parson as cites as a popular desire for social democratic reform. But shortly after the program began working to identify sites for construction, the Authority was met with elite opposition, which framed public housing as a dangerous step towards socialism. The anti-public housing campaign successfully managed to stifle the movement, leaving Los Angeles with a relatively small stock of public housing that in no way resembled the scope of housing built in comparable cities like New York and Chicago. Nevertheless, this housing construction largely matched emergent patterns of segregation and spatial disadvantage, with most projects located in South Central Los Angeles or East Los Angeles, or in predominantly Black neighborhoods in Venice, like Oakwood (Deener 2010).

Stepping back to survey these cases, we can see how contingent public housing construction was on the racial and political environment in major northern and western cities in the United States. Regardless of the forces prompting construction, the sources and success of opposition, and the eventual outcome in terms of scale of construction, in each case public housing fit within emergent patterns of racial and economic segregation. Although the voucher

program presented a significant shift from public housing, as this dissertation will demonstrate, it has not been completely successful in overcoming these race and class boundaries.

A confluence of liberal and conservative forces turns away from public housing

By the mid-1960s, political and public opinions about federal housing began to reflect a deeply negative view of public housing. This narrative might be parceled out into three major arguments: that public housing was a dramatic failure, that public housing failed to uphold civil rights, and that public housing contradicted free market principles. I theorize that together, these three pressures explain the adoption of vouchers in public housing. Proposals to implement vouchers in other areas of federal policy, such as Medicare and K-12 education, have not been as successful, and the confluence of logics from left, right, and academia may explain the unique ascendance of vouchers in federal housing policy.

First, the effects of segregating public housing and functionally depriving its tenants of access to opportunities and a decent quality of life soon became reasons for skepticism about public housing itself. In cities like Chicago, where public housing policy was used to deepen segregation, tenants were exposed to high crime, few economic opportunities, and had access to poor schools and substandard health care. The residents of these communities had difficulty achieving economic or educational success, a circumstance that was then used to illustrate their inferiority as individuals or the failures of public housing, rather than to implicate the political and structural processes that placed public housing beneficiaries at such a disadvantage. These narratives were reinforced by broader trends in the national debate about public housing. From the right, Kain and Persky (1969) argued that alternatives to “ghetto dispersal” would only “gild” the ghetto’s human cage. From the left, politicians such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan embraced the culture of poverty hypothesis and concluded that breaking up concentrated poverty could also

break up bad cultural practices (Moynihan 1965). Both policy ideas, it should be noted, are fundamentally punitive in nature, punishing residents for shortcomings attributed to them rather than addressing the macro-economic and political forces shaping their lives. Finally, the media's increasingly frenetic and manipulative portrayal of public housing succeeded in building a narrative that de-legitimized the institution in the eyes of the public and portrayed the program in simplistic and apocalyptic terms (Goetz 2013).

The Civil Rights Movement's focus on eradicating segregation did not overlook public housing. By rejecting the logic of "separate but equal" in education, employment, and public accommodations, civil rights activists also began to apply this perspective to public housing, increasingly seeing it as an important front in the effort for residential integration. As built, public housing was denying its residents the right to access housing throughout the metropolitan areas where they lived. For both activists and policymakers, this changed the reputation of public housing from a program with the potential to reduce material deprivation to one that entrenched segregation. The Kerner Commission on Civil Unrest, established to study the causes and consequences of uprisings in major American cities in the 1960s, issued conclusions in 1968 that pinpointed segregation as the central cause of racial inequality. In the quote below, the commission outlines, in broad strokes, the direction it believed the federal government should take with respect to housing:

We believe that federally aided low and moderate-income housing programs must be reoriented so that the major thrust is in nonghetto areas. Public housing programs should emphasize scattered site construction, rent supplements should, wherever possible, be used in nonghetto areas, and an intensive effort should be made to recruit below-market interest rate sponsors willing to build outside the ghettos. (Kerner Commission 1968:263)

These prescriptions provide a clear template for a desegregation strategy, one focused on moving low-income Black households out of public housing and into low-density scattered

housing or suburbs. The commission weighed the desegregation approach against upliftment strategies – which would have directed federal spending to poor minority communities as a means of achieving equality – but ultimately rejected upliftment as a political non-starter. This served as an implicit admission that solutions to the crisis of racial inequality, as experienced by public housing tenants, could not challenge the larger political and social structures that created that inequality – at least not too sharply.

One of the most important implementations of this desegregation model took place in Chicago. In the late 1960s, civil rights lawyers and public housing residents sued the Chicago Housing Authority over the segregated siting of public housing, arguing that siting the projects in economically depressed and segregated areas violated tenants' rights to fair housing. Litigation in the Gautreaux case continued for nearly a decade, resulting in a final ruling by the Supreme Court in favor of the plaintiffs in 1976. But the remedy endorsed by the court mandated that the CHA begin siting public housing more broadly across the city, and it was hailed first and foremost as a major civil rights victory. The Chicago Housing Authority was made to deconcentrate public housing by providing a program of vouchers and counseling that facilitated tenant movement into suburban neighborhoods throughout the city of Chicago. After the court's orders were implemented, legal activists such as Andrew Polikoff (2007) argued that, given the positive results of the Gautreaux desegregation remedy, it should become the template for new national policy:

We don't know whether the right combination of factors will ever move us to offer justice in the form of a national mobility program to black Americans trapped in ghettos. What does appear certain is that America confronts two courses. The first is to continue to coexist with its black ghettos. The second is to dismantle them.

The prospect along the first course, as Tocqueville prophesied, is that America's black-white race problem will not be resolved. Integration of some middle-class blacks will not change the prospect. Until the vast proportion of black Americans is securely middle-class, says the noted sociologist Herbert J. Gans, so long will

whites continue to treat middle-class blacks as surrogates for the poor who might move in behind them. So long as black ghettos exist, entombing black souls within their pathology, white Americans will fear the entry of blacks, any blacks, into their communities. And so long as that is the case, America's black-white problem will continue to afflict the nation. [...]

The alternative is to dismantle our black ghettos, thereby to lessen the fear and the fearful conduct they generate. Nothing can accomplish dismantling overnight. Any approach will take time, and will be fraught with difficulties and uncertainties. But a national Gautreaux mobility program is a sensible way to begin a task we postpone at our peril. (Polikoff 2007:390)

It is worth pausing here to think about what the pre-eminent civil rights lawyer, fighting the racial impoverishment engineered by the CHA, is saying. Although Polikoff himself does not embrace narratives of Black pathology, as Moynihan and others did, he accepts a set of policy choices based on white America's racism and assumptions of Black pathology. And his vigorous embrace of the forced dismantlement of the ghettos can also be interpreted as support for the dismantlement of poor Black neighborhoods and communities to serve larger public policy ends. For what other population would such a prescription be so readily vocalized as a liberal solution?

Tommie Shelby calls this a "new integrationist" approach – a policy approach that focuses on increasing interracial contact in neighborhoods as a means to ending racial residential inequality (Shelby 2016: 49). While a de-segregationist approach focuses on eliminating the forces that create segregation, the new integrationist approach advocates policies that aggressively push for Black movement out of poor neighborhoods and into predominantly white, less poor neighborhoods. Shelby critiques this approach as one that subordinates Black residential preferences, ignores the valuable forms of social capital that exist between within poor Black neighborhoods, and which "reinforces the symbolic power whites have over blacks by encouraging whites to see their relationships with blacks not as intrinsically valuable forms of interracial community but as an avenue for blacks to share in (not abolish) white privilege" (Shelby 2016: 69-70).

While the late 1960s was marked by a movement to challenge public housing on egalitarian terms, the end of Democratic control of the White House and the inauguration of the Nixon presidency meant that these policies would be extended to achieve conservative ends. As the backlash to Democratic governance at the federal level intensified towards the end of the 1960s, Republicans and free-market adherents criticized public housing as an inefficient means of providing housing support, one that should be replaced using free-market principles and the devolution of governance from the federal government towards the most local actors possible. This meant that, while other elements of the War on Poverty were reversed by the Nixon administration, the repudiation of public housing had preceded his office, originally initiated by the left and resumed by him.

In the early 1970s, the Nixon administration introduced a pilot program called the Experimental Housing Allowance Program (EHAP), which used cash transfers as a new model for housing assistance (Arias 2013; Orlebeke 2000; Winnick 1995). Participants who would otherwise be living in public housing were instead given cash allotments to pay for housing expenses on their own, through the private rental market. EHAP abandoned public housing's important edict to create homes for the poor outside of the private housing market, instead embedding housing assistance directly into that market. This program later became the basis for reforms made to Section 8 of the Federal Housing Act (the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act) that introduced vouchers as supplement to more traditional forms of housing assistance. On one hand, these programs freed tenants from the spatial constraints of public housing, allowing them to "access" housing in metropolitan areas and satisfying the articulated goals of fair housing. On the other hand, a vast social structure of inequality also constrained

voucher access to rental housing across metropolitan areas, muting the practical consequences of that access.

The Carter Administration tried to return to a more housing-production oriented approach, re-inserting public housing in its budgets through the end of his term, but its signal contribution was not so much in the battle between public housing and vouchers but in the policing of public housing. As Elizabeth Hinton documents, the Carter Administration created an Urban Initiatives Anti-Crime Program, which supplemented the 1978 Public Housing Security Demonstration Act. Together, these measures were intended to comprehensively address a range of social issues, including crime, in 152 problem public housing developments (Hinton 2016: 287-8). What transpired, however, was a dramatic increase in the policing and surveillance of public housing, with policies that governed physical security (such as the requirement of electronic card readers for entry, security booths, and fencing), programs that paid young residents to participate in safety and community-building work, tenant patrols, floor watches, and increased police patrols (Hinton 2016). Intentional or not, these programs criminalized public housing, making conditions more prison-like. This also meant neglecting to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of other parts of the physical infrastructure. These trends often signaled to tenants that they should leave public housing (Hinton 2016).

In addition to testing the viability of vouchers through the EHAP program, Nixon began to significantly restrain HUD's ability to functionally maintain or grow the public housing program. The Reagan administration effectively picked up where Nixon left off, denying legislators the ability to significantly expand or improve the program, and pushing it towards more market-based alternatives, such as vouchers. Without additional funding for the maintenance of public housing, the program's stock continued to decline in quality and became

distressed. Although demolition was rare from the 1960s through the 1980s, the steep cuts to HUD's budget imposed by Nixon and Reagan – as well as the deterioration of public housing stock – set the stage for future demolition-focused policies in the 1990s (Goetz 2013). The Reagan administration also saw the development of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, introduced during the 1986 tax reform process, a free-market and supply-side alternative to federal construction or implementation of affordable housing. These credits were used to effectively subsidize the private construction of low-income housing, and evaluations of the program have suggested that it is a useful incentive for construction but has a mixed effect on the deconcentration of poverty (McClure 2006; Williamson et al. 2009). Moreover, these tax credits included no integration mandate, so they could be used to build low-income housing in already low-income neighborhoods, compounding the concentration of poverty.

Public housing is partially dismantled and replaced

A National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing and an Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, created in 1989, was tasked with studying the conditions of public housing and determining the number of units considered “severely distressed.” This composite measure accounted for resident income, physical condition of the units, criminal frequency, and management quality. The Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program was renamed Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) and became the HUD's vehicle for carrying out reforms based on the Commission's report. The Commission assessed that 86,000 units, or 6% of the public housing stock, was severely distressed and should be rehabilitated (Popkin et al. 2000). Critically, this suggested that 94% of housing stock was in good or acceptable condition and could be fixed without extreme measures. This should have stood out as *prima facie* evidence of public housing's feasibility. The commission concluded

with a set of recommendations emphasizing the steps required to rehabilitate public housing stock and preserve its viability.

Meanwhile, attempts to solve the problem of ghetto poverty were only increasing. Social science began to generate estimates of the detrimental effects of concentrated poverty (Schill and Wachter 1995). Prominent academics argued that when segregation was coupled with a concentration of poverty, it reduced access to economic opportunities, prompted the flight of middle-class members of communities, and deprived inner-city tenants of vital social capital (Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993). Similarly, the idea of the co-location of multiple disadvantages, or the idea of cumulative disadvantage, became increasingly dominant in social science-informed policy (Jencks and Meyer 1990). In tandem, the idea of using residential mobility as a means of spurring economic mobility became a dominant housing policy and an academic theory of interest, as well as a plausible solution to the problems of cumulative disadvantage and social capital formation.

The academic community's shifting focus to concentrated poverty and the relationship between residential and economic mobility can be seen as either facilitating or coinciding with changes in the larger political environment. By the early 1990s, the narrative stressing failures of public housing had become a dominant one (Goetz 2012; Kotlowitz 1991). The idea that public housing concentrated poverty and deprived tenants of access to social capital became accepted wisdom. This new focus on desegregating public housing tenants and breaking up pockets of concentrated poverty corresponded with the logic of vouchers and the priority to slow the growth of and eventually devolve federal programs — one of the main agenda items of the Nixon administration in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Clinton administration — motivated by these narratives, pressure from a Republican Congress, and its own broader goal of reinventing

the federal government and making dramatic changes to the social safety net — abandoned the rehabilitation approach to instead embrace demolition. In addition, it implemented new screening procedures for drug and criminal convictions, imposed “one strike” policies authorizing the eviction of households for even pre-trial evidence of drug possession or drug-related criminal activity, and allowed local housing authorities to impose work requirements (Popkin et al. 2000). These developments paralleled the Clinton Administration’s changes to welfare policy (O’Connor 2009). HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros thus used HOPE VI to terminate the growth of traditional projects, demolish the most distressed ones, and introduce new “mixed-income” developments in their place. Mixed-income developments replaced public housing with public-private housing, attempting to use economic diversity to reduce stigmatization and improve the lives of public tenants. In so doing, the replacements often replaced the prior stock of public housing units with far fewer truly public units.

The HOPE VI reforms came in effect in 1993, shrinking public housing and supplanting it with market-based alternatives, a civil rights agenda of promoting fair housing for poor Black households, and a broader liberal and academic agenda of deconcentrating poverty and increasing residential mobility. They fundamentally transformed the orientation of federal public housing assistance. This program did much more than its original mandate to rehabilitate and rebuild severely distressed public housing. It shifted federal housing support towards smaller scattered-site projects and mixed-income developments. The funds required to finance this effort were generated by eliminating the one-for-one rule requiring that each unit demolished be replaced by a new unit built, effectively shrinking the total number of people served by public housing. Outside of place-based reforms, HOPE VI continued to move housing support towards the voucher program, which integrates housing assistance into the market by directly offsetting

rental costs in the private market. These trends represent a fundamental shift in the logic and delivery of federal housing support for the poor.

Thus, the conservative agenda was advanced by a reduction of HUD's budget and staff, creating conditions of disrepair that forced the shrinking of public housing stock and channeled tenants into market-based vouchers. The civil rights agenda was furthered by the ascension of a housing support program that at least hypothetically promoted access housing across metropolitan areas and age-old racial barriers. And the academic theories of mobility were served by enacting vouchers as a practical experiment in mobility and its economic consequences.

Cisneros anchored his program of demolition and partial replacement in the logic of mobility put forward by a decade of American social scientists. Citing, among others, Massey and Denton's *American Apartheid* and William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Cisneros' brief (first reported on by Goetz 2013) stated:

The consequences of the interaction of "place and race" in limiting opportunity among the poor, overwhelmingly minority residents of high-poverty areas are evident in the growth of severely distressed neighborhoods or "under-class areas," which are distinguished by high incidences of several problems associated with long-term poverty. Increasingly segregated and isolated from the larger society and with few perceived options, many residents of "underclass" neighborhoods make decisions that tend to perpetuate their poverty. (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 1994)

Here Cisneros places blame for poverty on two forces at different points in time. At time one, specific social forces limit opportunity and create distressed neighborhoods. At time two, residents of those neighborhoods entrench themselves more deeply in poverty as a result of their own choices. But Cisneros' solution to these problems focuses on individuals rather than social forces. He writes:

Residential mobility policies are promoted as ways of overcoming some of the constraints imposed by place and race. They attempt to circumvent residential

segregation and discrimination in the housing market by helping low-income minority families obtain rental housing in suburban areas with a less restrictive opportunity structure, places that would otherwise be effectively inaccessible to them. (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 1994)

While the Clinton administration is better known for its role in fundamentally reshaping and diminishing the welfare component of the social safety net, its changes to low-income housing assistance were comparable in scale, direction, and substance. Since its inception, HOPE VI has allocated over six billion dollars in grants to local housing authorities to tear down distressed housing, subsidize, and incentivize new construction, and to fund services and other programs.¹ Between 1994 and 2013, the HOPE VI program alone was responsible for facilitating the demolition of 110,000 units, a figure which represents only an approximation. Meanwhile, the tenant-based assistance program has grown to support 2,117,000 total households in 2017 (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2017). The often extremely painful demolition process is what most defines tenants' public housing experiences in the two decades since HOPE VI was adopted. Replacement construction often fell far short of matching the number of housing units previously available to program participants. In addition to enacting a massive change in the shape and scope of federal housing support for the poor, these reforms also constituted a major shift from a social democratic model of support to a market-based model, one reliant on new and expanded screening and disqualification rules (Popkin et al. 2000). In contrast to public housing, which sidestepped the housing market, each of these replacement programs, to a varying extent, is embedded within the market. The market determines the amount of housing being provided by these programs, the locations of affordable housing, and the experiences of tenants in these programs.

¹ Data is gathered from A Picture of Subsidized Households, a public dataset maintained by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. See <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html>.

The arguments and pressures detailed in this brief history of public housing and vouchers often had different underlying principles and end goals, but each of their logics supported the policy prescription of breaking up the concentration of poor Black public housing residents in inner cities, a prescription filled by the voucher program. Vouchers satisfied liberal preferences for fair housing and desegregation while also advancing conservative preferences for smaller government. They devolved housing policy from the federal to the local level while promoting academic and political arguments about the supposed impossibility of achieving racial equality through upliftment strategies. The conservative, liberal, and academic arguments that shaped the future of public housing largely omitted the preferences of public housing residents themselves, who often advocated for rehabilitation and the right to stay in their homes, and who engaged in significant activism for the future of their homes and communities (Feldman and Stall 2004). Indeed, in many ways public housing has been eliminated as a viable means of addressing the problems of insufficient and inadequate housing that continue to plague the country, and that remain influential in explaining the persistence of racial inequality.

As of 2016, per data from HUD's *Picture of Subsidized Housing*, there are 2,265,478 voucher units reporting data to HUD.² These vouchers support households of roughly 2.36 people per unit, equating to 5,350,188 total individuals benefiting from the program. The average voucher household income \$14,122 per year, which HUD estimates to be an average of 23% of the local median household income at the census tract level. The average monthly rent payment per unit is \$364, and the average size of the federal rent contribution to landlords is \$760 per month. Per the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 44% of voucher households are occupied by adults, disabled adults, or elderly adults with children; 23% are occupied by the elderly, 20%

² See HUD's website: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html>, and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/policy-basics-the-housing-choice-voucher-program>

by disabled adults, and 13% by childless adults (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2016). 31% of voucher households are white, 48% are Black, and 17% are Hispanic (1% report multiple races). In the census tracts where households use their vouchers, an average of 24% of the population is in poverty, and 55% of residents are minorities.

As vouchers and mixed-income redevelopment programs have increasingly replaced public housing in federal housing assistance policy, a new body of academic literature has emerged that evaluates the central premises of these programs. In the next chapter, I review literature on the results of the programs that largely replaced public housing and assess the state of evidence with respect to neighborhood effects, highlighting open questions that I seek to answer in the remainder of this dissertation.

Chapter 3: Research on Mobility and Vouchers Shows the Mixed Results of Reform

In this chapter, I turn to the social science literature on the outcomes of programs that have increasingly replaced public housing. Summarizing evidence from the Gautreaux program, the Moving to Opportunity experiment, the voucher program, and other studies of residential mobility, I argue that at present we cannot conclude that residential mobility is an effective remedy to poverty. In what follows, I trace life outcomes for tenants in the voucher program from measures of neighborhood attainment to those of economic, health, and social well-being, outcomes for children, and long-term effects. I conclude that the constraints of the broader social structure, the lack of consistent positive effects across social indicators, the necessity of companion programs to make mobility successful, and the relatively small scale of program implementation suggest that mobility alone is insufficient to combat poverty. After reviewing the existing literature, I highlight gaps in our knowledge about the forces shaping mobility outcomes, particularly with respect to the persistence of racial hostility and the dynamics of policing as a tactic of governance and demonstrate how this dissertation will address those topics.

Gautreaux is seen as positive evidence of the potential of vouchers

Implemented in Chicago in 1976, the Gautreaux program was not just the fulfillment of civil rights activists' legal demand for desegregated public housing for CHA tenants, but also the practical application of a residential mobility framework for combating poverty. Over the next several decades, Gautreaux became the template for future federal housing policy and social scientific experiments. The program incorporated two remedies. The first originates from a lawsuit against the CHA demanding that the agency build low-density public housing throughout predominantly white neighborhoods, as a corrective to past intentional segregation. This was

difficult to implement, largely due to the political intransigence of the CHA and city government. The second remedy stemmed from the lawsuit against HUD. The court required HUD to provide rental certificates (a precursor to vouchers) for public housing tenants that they could use to move out of public housing and into the city or surrounding suburbs, accompanied by intensive relocation counselling services. Participation was voluntary, and movers were subsequently considered city movers or suburban movers.

After their relocation, Gautreaux's suburban voucher movers reported that they felt safer and experienced less crime. Despite high levels of racial hostility, especially upon their arrival in predominantly white suburban neighborhoods, social integration did occur over time and reports of harassment slowly decreased (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2000). Adult movers to the suburbs were more likely to be employed than city movers (Rosenbaum 1995), and hourly wages and hours worked were the same between suburban and city movers. Children experienced the greatest change in measurable outcomes. The children of Gautreaux's suburban movers were more likely to remain in school, in college, and employed, and over time they reported higher wages than Gautreaux city movers (Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2000). One possible but speculative explanation for the difference in child and adult experiences is that, over the life course, children were less exposed to the injuries of poor schools and other conditions in disadvantaged neighborhoods. They also had greater exposure to better schools and other improved conditions in middle-class suburbs, while adults would have had relatively less exposure to this "treatment."

Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum (2000) caution against irrational exuberance when considering just what the Gautreaux results meant. They conclude their book on the program this way:

In all likelihood, only a fraction of low income families will be served by mobility programs. Moreover, such programs cannot serve people who do not wish to move or who do not qualify, such as large, poor families or those with serious credit problems; nor can they quickly provide the kind of scale called for in the public housing demolition process. Most poor families will continue to live in urban neighborhoods or move away from those areas on their own if their incomes increase and they choose to relocate. (P. 192)

Despite the caveats about selection, motivation, attrition, counselling, and scale, the Gautreaux results would come to be seen by policymakers as proof positive that the mobility and integration model was the right solution for low-income Black residents of public housing. In effect, Gautreaux's results gave policymakers permission to tear down public housing, because although it was not programmatically feasible, it was theoretically possible to achieve these results for tenants in those projects. But as Rosenbaum and Rubinowitz point out, there is a difference between proof of concept and proof of viability. For the most part, only the voucher part of the Gautreaux program was carried forward into public policy; other components of the program – like relocation counselling and attention to issues of selection and attrition, which could help ensure positive outcomes – were abandoned. It would be extremely unlikely to reproduce those results in nationwide implementation of the program without considering those factors. So, despite high expectations based on the promising results of the Gautreaux project (Cisneros and Engdahl 2009; Keels et al. 2005; Polikoff 2007; Rubinowitz and Rosenbaum 2000), and ongoing evidence that well-executed dispersal programs can be of tremendous benefit to tenants (Massey et al. 2013), studies of housing vouchers have produced mixed outcomes.

Life outcomes for tenants in the voucher program

Neighborhood attainment and its limits

Residential mobility typically serves to reproduce urban inequality instead of disrupting it...even when individuals or families make moves that disrupt patterns of racial and ethnic inequality, the changes such moves induce are undermined by

system level processes that serve to reproduce inequality in the urban landscape. (Sharkey 2012:9)

A broad survey of social science literature on the voucher movement shows two important findings with respect to where voucher tenants are able to move: first, voucher recipients have significantly constrained movement outcomes, and second, the neighborhoods they move to are often disadvantaged in important ways. In terms of the first finding, Sampson (2008) evaluates the movement trajectories of Chicago public housing tenants who are given vouchers in the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) demonstration program, a quasi-experimental version of the voucher program. He finds that “the vast majority of all MTO participants moved to areas close by other South Side Chicago communities that are in the upper range of concentrated disadvantage” (Sampson 2008:202). In other words, MTO’s voucher desegregation mechanism, even with motivated selection and movement counseling, was unable to overcome Chicago’s social structure—tenants merely moved to neighborhoods that were economically and racially very similar to their prior residences. Moreover, as Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008) find, “over time there was widespread movement out of low-poverty neighborhoods back into poor settings” (238).

Second, a number of scholars evaluating the neighborhood outcomes of voucher users (in contrast to the studies cited above, which evaluate a more experimental demonstration program) observed patterns that corresponded with Sampson, Clampet-Lundquist, and Massey. Schwartz and Taghavi (2014) find that, in the 50 largest metropolitan areas, only one-fifth of voucher households live in low-poverty neighborhoods. Covington et al. (2011) demonstrate that the suburbanization of poverty is matched by the suburbanization of housing choice vouchers. Nearly half of all voucher holders and a majority of black voucher holders lived in suburbs by 2008. However, as Covington et al. add, “between 2000 and 2008, metro areas in the West and

those experiencing large increases in suburban poverty exhibited the biggest shifts in HCV recipients to the suburbs” (1). This link between voucher movement and poverty-stricken neighborhoods suggests a corollary point to the one made by MTO scholars. Even when voucher recipients can move greater distances from their origin neighborhoods, or even out of the city center, there remains a serious danger that vouchers end up in neighborhoods characterized by economic disadvantage (Metzger 2014).

More recent work also suggests a relationship between foreclosures and voucher locations post-Great Recession, a relationship I will focus on in Chapter 5 (Pfeifer and Lucio 2015). Basolo (2013) reports that among Southern California recipients of housing vouchers, voucher movers do not reach neighborhoods that are qualitatively better than non-movers; they do, however, reach neighborhoods that are measurably better than their pre-move neighborhoods. When disaggregating Southern California voucher movement patterns by race, Basolo and Nguyen find that only white renters reached improved neighborhoods when moving through the voucher program (Basolo and Nguyen 2005). However, when comparing the neighborhoods of voucher holders to the neighborhoods with project-based housing assistance (public housing, scattered site housing, and mixed-income redevelopments), voucher tenants tend to live in neighborhoods with less concentrated poverty (Newman and Schnare 1997).

These findings suggest that the social structure in which poor households exist functions like a set of invisible guardrails, constraining their ability to actually move to opportunity. As Sampson (2008) concludes, “poor people moved to inequality, with opportunities embedded in a rigid and likely reinforcing dynamic of metropolitan social structure” (213). Findings from the voucher program, as implemented across the country, help flesh out some of those invisible guardrails. They can be divided into market- and tenant-side factors. On the market side,

landlords often work to avoid voucher tenants and are likely to discriminate against them at higher rates than they discriminate against minority renters (Pendall 2000; Rosen 2014; Teater 2011). This can occur in a variety of ways, from the formal ability to reject renters based on their source of income (Freeman 2012), to the strategic sorting and channeling of voucher tenants to particular properties and neighborhoods in the landlord's or real estate companies' menu of openings. These forms of sorting are referred to by Rosen as "reverse selection," whereby tenants — instead of selecting their desired housing and neighborhoods — are *selected by* landlords who use their market position and information advantage to essentially choose their residents.

On the tenant side, movers are subject to what Krysan and Crowder (2017) call a "social structural sorting process that helps perpetuate and reproduce segregation. They argue that residents do not make moves based on complete information or with all neighborhoods and possibilities open for consideration at the same time. Decisions are often based on cognitive shortcuts derived from social definitions and information. Thus, they argue that "members of different racial-ethnic groups are, in many ways, operating in drastically different residential worlds and therefore choosing from racially distinct sets of neighborhood options" (13). Similarly, Sharkey (2012) uses the term "cognitive constraints" to refer to renters' understandings of which neighborhoods are viable options for movement, arguing that these constraints on what is perceived as a realistic move must also be considered in the panoply of forces shaping movement and its outcomes. Skobba and Goetz (2013) show that relationships, rather than neighborhood attributes, are the driving force in residential mobility decisions, challenging the basic assumption of mobility programs that, given the choice, poor households

would move to neighborhoods with higher scores on objective measures of economic and other well-being indicators.

This social structural sorting process likely applies to voucher tenants, whose knowledge, choices, and decision making is further shaped by the features of the voucher program itself. Voucher renters must make residential location decisions that balance factors such as poverty rates, crime, and access to transportation against considerations of housing cost, quality, and space (Blumenberg and Pierce 2014; Reul et al. 2013; Rosenblatt and DeLuca 2012). Their choices are defined by when they receive a voucher, how much time the housing authority gives them to find housing, whether the voucher will allow them access to housing of a particular type and cost, and whether they can persuade a private landlord to accept the voucher or must instead opt to rent from a landlord who has already opted into the program. These factors reflect the broader idea that neighborhood quality, as measured by the poverty rate, is only one component of a more comprehensive set of life condition considerations that voucher renters evaluate when deciding where to search for housing.

Thus, a variety selection issues likely contribute to the ongoing economic and racial segregation of voucher users (Metzger 2014; Wang and Varady 2005). While many voucher movers have difficulty moving out of cities and into suburbs, those who do move to suburbs also experience differences by race. Black tenants tend to move to higher poverty suburban tracts than whites do (DeLuca, Garboden, and Rosenblatt 2013). And among tenants who were able to successfully move to low-poverty neighborhoods, many eventually made second or third moves into neighborhoods that were in worse economic positions (Rosenblatt and DeLuca 2012).

Summing up the policy implications of these findings, Sharkey writes, “Any housing program or

policy that relies on families navigating the private housing market on their own is unlikely to reduce neighborhood inequality in a meaningful way” (Sharkey 2012:27).

But the constraints of social structure, based on this broad assessment, are not unique to vouchers. We can expect that the forces shaping the movement of low-income households in general also apply to the specific experiences of voucher renters. Changes to federal housing support are intertwined with larger changes in the organization of cities and communities. For example, recent evidence reveals that poor individuals and families are increasingly moving to the suburbs, complicating the classic model of urban life in which cities are zones of economic depression and racial segregation while suburbs feature vitality and stability. This pattern has a specific racial aspect to it: Schafran and Wegmann (2012) find that the Black population of San Francisco dropped by half as a combination of increased urban prices and a boom in the suburban housing market incentivized movement towards the outer Bay Area region. While at first these trends were considered simple and positive evidence of decreasing segregation, Schafran and Wegmann contend that they fit a greater pattern of urban and suburban change in which lower-income minority groups are displaced from cities into segregated suburbs.

There is no reason to believe that vouchers would be an exception to this pattern. Indeed, as Sharkey (2012:9) observes, “changes in families’ neighborhood environments arising from residential mobility are often temporary and are diluted by subsequent changes occurring around families.” Compounding this problem, Allard and Roth (2010) demonstrate that social services have not caught up to the suburbanization of poverty. They document the level of strain on underprepared and under-resourced suburban cities, which are unable to keep up with rising social service needs due to both increased movement and the Great Recession. This not only means that voucher movement to suburbs might continue to expose voucher tenants to poverty,

but it may also put them in a position to have to overcome that poverty without formal and informal safety nets.

Zooming out from this picture, Patrick Sharkey (2013) argues for an understanding of the intergenerational inheritance of neighborhoods. Using data from the *Panel Study of Income Dynamics*, he calculates that the intergenerational association of neighborhood income across all races is .67, meaning a 10% change in the parents' neighborhood income predicts a 6.7% change in the child's neighborhood income. Looking at just Black families, Sharkey finds that 67% of Black families living in the poorest quarter of neighborhoods remain there in the next generation (compared to 40% for whites). Finally, Sharkey finds that “[o]ver the past two generations, 48 percent of all African American families have lived in the poorest quarter of neighborhoods *in each generation*” (Sharkey 2013:40). The equivalent figure for whites is just 7%.

What are we to make of these findings? In my view, they show that vouchers are a program with limited potential to move poor households out of high-poverty neighborhoods and into neighborhoods that are well-poised to support their economic and social well-being. Furthermore, the voucher program's outcomes resemble the broader realities measured by studies of the movement of poor families in the private rental market. These geographic constraints are a problem in and of themselves, but they also serve as a limitation on the economic and social outcomes of the voucher program.

Measures of economic, health, and social well-being

Evaluations of voucher movers in the Moving to Opportunity demonstration project show mixed results in the areas of earnings and employment. Early evidence from Boston, based on evaluations roughly two years after the voucher move, suggests that voucher movement did not impact employment rates, earnings, or welfare enrollment among the heads of voucher

households (Katz et al. 2001). In a broader assessment conducted four to seven years later, Kling et al. (2007) find no significant impact of voucher movement on adult economic self-sufficiency (a composite of employment, earnings, and receipt of public assistance). However, after attempting to deal with selection in rule compliance, neighborhood choice, and continued participation, Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008) find that movement to an integrated, non-poor neighborhood through MTO is associated with a 1.1% increase in the odds of holding a job and a \$1.89 increase in weekly earnings.

Evidence from the evaluation of MTO in Boston also suggests there are benefits related to crime exposure. Movers reported experiencing lower levels of crime and rated their safety as higher than in their previous neighborhoods (Katz et al. 2001). Movers also reported higher self-rated physical health (Katz et al. 2001), and better mental health as measured by lower rates of reported distress (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2003). More broadly, Lens et al. (2011) find that voucher renters move to neighborhoods that are about as safe as neighborhoods occupied by average poor renting households, but significantly safer than the neighborhoods occupied by households receiving place-based housing assistance. These patterns are more strongly positive for Black voucher households. Thus, while movement often enabled tenants to reach better housing and safer, less stressful neighborhoods, the evidence of muddled economic outcomes contradicts expectations that dispersal itself could undo the negative results of concentrated poverty.

Children, schools, and long-term effects

Results for children did appear more positive. Children whose families moved to low-poverty neighborhoods through MTO quickly demonstrated fewer behavioral problems, had lower levels of reported injuries and crime victimizations, and had fewer asthma attacks (Katz et

al. 2001). Educational outcomes appeared mixed, however. Though early evaluations noted gains in educational outcomes, a five-year evaluation found that children in moving families saw early educational gains dissipate, exhibiting lower grades and educational engagement than the control group of non-movers who remained in public housing (Leventhal et al. 2005). One explanation may be related to the quality of schools in the neighborhoods to which voucher tenants relocate. Ellen et al. (2016) find that the nearest schools in the neighborhoods to which Housing Choice Voucher participants have lower proficiency rates than the schools nearest to the comparison groups of other poor households and renter households with children. Inside the voucher moving population, there is additional inequality by race and household income. These results may be explained by selection factors that are not observed in the study. But more broadly, children of low-income and minority families who move into wealthier and whiter neighborhoods and schools may have difficulties stemming from the social dynamics of racial inequality in education, ranging from tracking and treatment by teachers to interpersonal dynamics between students.

Still, as mentioned earlier, moving out of neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage through the MTO experiment did improve children's experiences across other social and health indicators. And in the long run, MTO children also grew up to have significantly higher annual incomes than their counterparts in the experiment's control group, a trend possibly explained by their prolonged exposure to a lower-poverty neighborhood (Chetty, Hendren, and Katz 2015). Long-term results, as measured by linking MTO administrative data to tax return data, indicate that for children who moved before they turned 13, movement to a lower-poverty neighborhood had a measurably positive effect on college attendance and future earnings. These children lived in better neighborhoods and were less likely to become single parents than the control group of

children who were not offered a voucher and who remained in public housing. The effects decline as the age at which children moved rose, and children who moved after age 13 had negative long-term outcomes compared to the public housing control group.

Summary

Based on the MTO experiment and analyses of the administrative data, the voucher program has achieved mixed results. Voucher movers often reach neighborhoods with lower poverty than the neighborhoods they previously lived in, but not as low-poverty as might be necessary to achieve strongly positive results. In that sense, one might interpret poor results as a product not of a poor intervention, but of low exposure to the intervention. The longstanding market and social forces that corral the movements of poor and minority renters in the United States appear to play a strong role in limiting the movement possibilities of households that receive vouchers. Be that as it may, voucher movers have mixed economic outcomes, and their fortunes after movement are not clearly positive. Children's outcomes, however, represent the most important positive takeaway from the mobility paradigm. The strikingly positive gains in earnings and college attendance, seen as children grow up in new neighborhoods, lends credence to the expectation that mobility can, over long periods of time, combat poverty.

It would be an error, however, to speak of the outcomes of these mobility programs without addressing the views of tenants themselves and the broader critiques of the program's role in changing urban environments. As public housing projects were dismantled in cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, New Orleans, and Baltimore,³ tenants often found their housing circumstances changing in ways that either defied their will or left them without viable

³ These are the cities with the largest numbers of public housing units demolished. As a percentage of units removed, the top 5 cities are Hartford, Memphis, St. Petersburg, Detroit, and Atlanta (Goetz 2013).

alternative housing. In Chicago, tenants engaged in sustained organizing to try and stop demolitions and to advance different policies that would preserve housing (Feldman and Stall 2014). In New Orleans, tenant opposition to the demolition of public housing culminated in sustained protests of the city council's final votes (Arena 2012).

Tenants forced to leave severely distressed public housing reported that the process was extremely difficult: they lost important and useful bonds with their neighbors, were uprooted from places and communities that had significant meaning to them, and faced tremendous uncertainty in where they would end up living and what their lives would be like (Manzo et al. 2008). Public housing communities would be broken up, with tenants dispersed throughout cities. Those who managed to return to redeveloped public housing (even though it almost always had a smaller number of units than were demolished) often reported higher rates of satisfaction, lower hardship, and better economic outcomes than a comparison pool of public housing tenants given vouchers to move within the city (Brooks et al. 2012). Tenants often expressed a belief that housing stability precedes other forms of social and economic stability and were skeptical of the public housing authority's intentions and efficacy. Even though the housing that was lost during redevelopment had significant problems, tenants still grieved that loss. These experiences were not uniform across the public housing population. Research on the racial composition of public housing units demolished for redevelopment finds that those units contained a higher fraction of Black residents than units not marked for redevelopment, suggesting a disparate racial impact on public housing tenants (Goetz 2013). Goetz notes,

Local officials have energetically pursued demolition of older public housing projects in many cities to clear away the physical and social impediments to renewed private-sector investment in inner-city neighborhoods. These efforts have displaced hundreds of thousands of very-low-income families since the 1980s and have had a disproportionate impact on African Americans. The disparate impact,

furthermore, is not merely the result of the fact that Blacks are over-represented in public housing. Faced with a range of public housing projects to sweep away, local housing authorities have systematically chosen projects that, even by the standards of their own city, are disproportionately inhabited by Black families. (Goetz, 2011:1600)

Many of these tenants were given certificates and vouchers to move out, so to the degree that the voucher program fits the broader reorganization of housing aid to distribute tenants broadly throughout urban and suburban space, it is also implicated by critiques about displacement and gentrification. Laying out an alternative model of approaching the intersection of race, space, and inequality, John Calmore writes,

Fair housing must be reconceptualized to mean not only increased opportunity for blacks to move beyond their socio-territorial disadvantage but also to mean enhanced choice to overcome opportunity-denying circumstances while continuing to live in black communities. Spatial equality is a group-based remedy that focuses on opportunity and circumstances within black communities and demands that both be improved, enriched, and equalized. Short of this, blacks, as a group, will be left with the inadequate “remedy” of individuals choosing, or being forced, to move to “better” space somewhere else. (Calmore 1992:1495)

This evidence of the voucher program’s limited effect has contributed to a growing perception that the mobility framework has been something of a detour from addressing the fundamental causes of racial spatial inequality. Mobility’s most tangible effect might be that it has enabled the large-scale reorganization of federal housing policy which has reduced public housing, moved its tenants out of important urban real estate, and facilitated redevelopment and gentrification (Goetz 2010; Goetz 2011; Goetz 2014; Joseph 2013; Sharkey, 2013; Sharkey, 2012, Vale and Freemark 2012; Vale 2013; Venkatesh 2013). With increasing hindsight, many voucher researchers advocate rethinking the assumptions of poverty deconcentration (Khadduri 2001) and finding new ways to address issues of concentrated poverty (Popkin, Levy, and Buron 2009; Sharkey 2013).

Why might vouchers have fallen short of the stated expectations of their proponents? In the next section, I first argue that the social contexts of reception, i.e. the social relationships between existing community members and incoming voucher tenants, are an important part of the mobility story, and need to be examined as a potential mediator between movement and economic and social outcomes. Second, I argue that policing, both as a form of governance and as an expression of racial hostility, must be seen as part of that social context of reception, and as one crucial explanation for the outcomes that voucher movers might experience.

This dissertation's contributions to understanding voucher movement outcomes

Setting aside the broader critiques of vouchers and public housing redevelopment implicated in gentrification, and their failure to live up to the full rights to equality outlined by Calmore, I argue that there is still much to learn about why voucher movement garnered the mixed outcomes documented in this chapter. During the early studies of Gautreaux relocation programs, significant attention was paid to the social consequences of movement, with studies attempting to measure movers' exposure to racial hostility and their ability to socially integrate into their new neighborhoods. That focus has waned in the decades since, as the literature has focused on economic, criminal, health, and educational outcomes. But in the following section, I argue for a serious consideration of the social context of reception as a potentially important mediator between movement and well-being. Following that, I claim that social science on residential mobility programs should also consider the ways that racial segregation is protected and reinforced in the post-Civil Rights Movement era and must pay attention to questions of criminalization and policing when trying to understand Black movement to predominantly or historically white neighborhoods. In what follows I review the state of social science on these topics before summarizing how I tie them together in the coming chapters.

Social contexts of reception

The contemporary literature on vouchers has given greater attention to economic, health, criminological, and educational outcomes than it has to the social changes that might accompany movement between dissimilar neighborhoods. But there are strong reasons to consider the social changes experienced by tenants moving between neighborhood contexts as a vital means to understanding the consequences of voucher programs. Wilson (1987) argues that concentrated poverty creates forms of social isolation that exacerbate the economic disadvantages already affecting residents of poor communities. As a corollary, Briggs (1998) has argued that various forms of social capital are crucial to enabling voucher movers to capitalize on the new opportunities available to them in lower-poverty neighborhoods. Social capital can help tenants simply survive on a day-to-day basis (what Briggs calls social support) or grant them to access to better jobs or other economic opportunities (what Briggs calls social leverage). If social connections mediate between movement and economic success, then it is possible that poor economic outcomes might be explained by poor social integration, while strong economic outcomes might be explained by strong social integration. Clampet-Lundquist (2010) documents the destabilizing effect of public housing relocation on the strength of individuals' local social ties, as well as their feelings of safety and control. In a similar vein, social capital can be thought of as a possible bridge between movement and economic progress.

A comparison of the social experiences of tenants in both voucher and mixed-income programs can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of the shift from traditional public housing to the new mixed-income/voucher schemes. Further, studying the social experiences of voucher tenants is important because the voucher program is large and

expanding,⁴ and potentially less conducive to stigma than its mixed-income counterpart. Additionally, the social integration of tenants may be an intermediate step between leaving a neighborhood with concentrated poverty and realizing economic gains. Specifically, recent studies of the social experiences of tenants in mixed-income developments show that even after moving out of traditional public housing structures, tenants can still be socially excluded and stigmatized by their new neighbors and communities (McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin, 2012; Fraser et al., 2012). Two critical studies (one inside and one outside a mixed development) bear further investigation and can serve as a basis for comparison with findings on the voucher program.

In the first setting, McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin (2012) interviewed tenants transitioning from large projects to mixed-income sites to gauge their social experiences. While the mixed-income format is designed to reduce the level of stigmatization experienced by tenants,⁵ the authors instead discovered that while some modes of stigmatization have been reduced (tenants no longer feel associated with poor housing quality and poor surrounding conditions), other forms of economic and racial stigma emerged to provoke strong feelings of isolation. These forms of stigma include demeaning and invasive screening of tenants prior to residency, constant and intrusive forms of monitoring (through cameras in buildings), and aggressive rule-making (from regulations that enforced cleanliness in units to racialized behavioral restrictions on noise, the size of gatherings, and permission to barbeque).⁶ As the

⁴ Covington, Freeman, and Stoll (2011) estimate that it benefitted at least 3.4 million people in 2008. Schusheim (1998) estimates that this number was 1.4 million in 1998.

⁵ These include the purposeful renaming of sites so as not to reference or recall former public housing structures whose reputations became entangled with crime and violence, and efforts to design new developments so as to be indistinguishable from private developments for passersby.

⁶ See Graves (2010) and Joseph and Chaskin (2010) for other examples.

authors describe, these rules largely do not apply to private tenants and serve to make public tenants feel as though they are constantly under surveillance and in danger of violating a rule. Although the program is supposed to erase public-private distinctions inside the developments, private tenants assume that their black neighbors are using federal support. Finally, the looming possibility of eviction implicitly enforces behavioral expectations, a particularly effective threat given the scarcity of available public or affordable housing. These dynamics undermine the program and produce social traumas for many tenants.

In the second setting, Fraser et al. (2012) observe how individuals who live around public mixed-income developments understand and interact with those tenants. Through interviews with neighbors living in communities directly adjacent to a mixed-income development, the authors discover a deep and self-perpetuating pattern of resentment and discrimination towards tenants in the mixed-income development. These tenants construct a binary based on race and socio-economic status, thinking of their subsidized and largely minority neighbors as a homogenous and different population. They define themselves as a community *not* sharing the deficiencies of their publicly supported counterparts, while constructing and believing narratives that define public tenants as violent, poorly behaved, lazy, and criminal. Neighbors use these stereotypes to justify support for external monitoring, enforcement, and behavioral modification.⁷

These studies show that mixed-income developments affect tenants in more than just economic ways, and in some cases, they produce social difficulties for their participants.⁸

Although life in mixed developments is not evaluated with the same public scrutiny as the

⁷ However, as interviews proceeded, many private neighbors revealed that although they think of the mixed-income development as a site of crime, they could not in fact name or recall any instances of crime occurring there. In fact, the interviews reveal a lack of meaningful interaction with publicly supported residents, showing how strong a discourse around public housing is in creating these shared meanings.

⁸ These findings echo other (non-voucher) scholarship around the Black suburban experience, including that by Feagin (1991), Tatum (1999), Feagin and Eckberg, (1980), and Lacy (2007).

projects, tenants continue to experience a hostile climate within and outside their residences. These findings complicate the theoretical basis for poverty deconcentration through the HOPE VI agenda, indicating that hostility to subsidized minority tenants may undermine or forestall any predicted social and economic gains. These findings provide important motivation to study the social consequences of the voucher program.

There are some reasons to believe that vouchers are inferior to mixed-income developments when considering their capacity to promote social integration. Mixed-income developments can be sited in a planned and conscientious manner, they can be managed in a more intentional way, and their composition requirements can help prevent extreme re-concentrations of low-income tenants. Vouchers, in comparison, have less direct administration and possess fewer restrictions on where they can be used. Comparatively little can be done to ensure that voucher tenants are integrated into their new surroundings. This hands-off approach introduces more variation in the possibilities for voucher movement: the benefits of additional spread can just as easily be counterbalanced by movement into economically struggling neighborhoods, concentration in distressed pockets, or the spread of voucher units that situates them away from access to social services, community support, and public transportation.

Other features of these programs, however, suggest that vouchers may do a superior job of ensuring tenant privacy. Whereas tenants in mixed-income settings can easily lose their privacy, tenants in the voucher program benefit from its use of privately built and owned units, which make it more difficult to distinguish voucher housing from private housing. Only program administrators, landlords, and the tenants themselves would have direct knowledge of a tenant's voucher status. In an ideal scenario, voucher tenants are able to find housing across a wide range of a city's affordable rental units and are indistinguishable in their homes and apartments from

their private counterparts. To the degree that this ideal is possible, there is a reason to expect that voucher tenants would not experience the same types of stigma that mixed-income tenants in other studies have experienced.

These studies only reinforce the notion that social scientists have an ongoing responsibility to consider how racial dynamics might shape the experiences of voucher tenants as they enter new, unfamiliar, and potentially even hostile communities. Decades of research documents white preferences for racial segregation. These preferences are rarely challenged due to the resilience of social structures of segregation, but to the extent that the voucher program transgresses those boundaries, they may be operationalized, and may play an important role in the outcomes of movement for voucher recipients. This operation of racial hostility in the context of housing is detailed in the following section.

The persistence of white opposition to integration

While racist sentiment was traditionally expressed explicitly, today it is also expressed in new, more “symbolic” forms of hostility towards Black people based on their violation of certain—ostensibly universal—values (Sears et al. 1997). This symbolic racism is complemented by the concept of colorblind racism, defined by Bonilla-Silva (2006) as a racial ideology made up of a number of frames that work to justify and reproduce racial inequality. Meanwhile, a number of ideas about the poor, such as the culture of poverty and welfare queen tropes, have been used to cultivate disgust for the poor, justify relative and absolute deprivation, and delegitimize government actions intended to support them (Gilens 2009; Hancock 2004; Lewis 1966; Seccombe 2007). These attitudes undergird many public policy changes towards the poor, including those in the realm of housing policy. Since the 2016 election, a number of scholars have documented how explicit racism has reclaimed a more prominent footing in public

discourse, controverting popular assumptions that the Obama administration would usher in an era of subdued racial animus (Bobo 2017).

Regardless of its mode of expression, racial animus also operates spatially. Research demonstrates that perceptions of the size of minority groups are often inflated (Alba, Nee, and Nee 2005), and that whites grow more hostile towards Black people, and towards policies seen as benefiting them, as the Black share of the local population grows (Pickett et al. 2012; Quillian 1996; Taylor 1998). Research on stated preferences shows that whites prefer to live in neighborhoods with less than 30% Black residency and would leave a neighborhood if more than one of three neighbors were Black (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Farley et al. 1978). Social institutions reproduce these attitudes in their structuring of the housing market. Real estate agents and property owners steer and discriminate against Black renters and buyers, and often offer buyers unequal purchasing rates and terms (Boehm, Thistle, and Schlottmann 2006; Ghoshal and Gaddis 2015; Turner and Ross 2005; Williams, Nesiba, and McConnell 2005; Yinger 1995).

These findings help explain why rates of Black-white segregation have remained relatively high and declined relatively slowly since the 1970s (Logan 2013; Massey and Rugh 2014; Massey and Tannen 2017). However, what remains difficult to fully grasp is how individuals or groups that are hostile to Black movement react when that unwanted movement actually occurs. In the first half of the 20th century, white communities used protests, threats, violence, arson, and bombings as responses to Black migration to northern cities. As Massey and Denton (1993) document, these episodes of racial violence were specifically located at the boundary lines where Black residents might traverse into traditionally white areas. This hostility was also exercised through the imposition of “sundown” laws against any Black presence in white neighborhoods after sunset, and the active enforcement of racially restrictive covenants

(Gotham 2000; Loewen 2005). White backlash also focused on the possibility of public housing construction and racial integration in educational settings (Bobo 1983; Delmont 2016; Green and Cowden 1992; Hirsch 2009; Sears and Kinder 1985; Sugrue 2005; Weatherford 1980).

Recent scholarship on Black movement into majority-white neighborhoods suggests that active white backlash to Black movement is not a relic of the past. As Jeanine Bell documents, the use of physical violence to terrorize, halt, and reverse Black movement did not end when social institutions and government policies began to codify racial segregation. Rather, this “move-in violence” has continued to persist in neighborhoods across the country to the present day (Bell 2013). Bell argues that the expression of this violence transformed, however, from collective to individual action:

Collective action opposing integration was rarer in the 1970s and 1980s than it had been in the time before the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Potential explanations for the decrease in collective action included the availability of a legal remedy to address such violence and the lack of social support for open displays of racial hatred (Bell 2013: 58).

Using an analysis of newspaper stories reporting on episodes of anti-integration or move-in violence, Bell finds 455 such incidents that took place between 1990 and 2010. These include 162 cases of vandalism, 102 cases of harassment and verbal threats, 96 cross burnings, 44 arson incidents, 28 physical attacks, 20 racially motivated shootings, and 3 homicides. “Frequently, the incidents directed at the integrating family occur within days, weeks, or a few months of their move to a predominantly or all-white neighborhood” (Bell 2013: 68).

Other responses to Black movement include collective action. In a long-term study of affordable housing construction in New York State in the wake of a court ruling that mandated desegregation remedies to public housing siting, Massey et al. (2013) illustrate the suburban public’s opposition to the placement of affordable housing units in their neighborhoods and their use of coded language to voice opposition to tenants on the basis of race. Enos’ (2016) study of

responses to the temporary relocation of public housing tenants in Chicago demonstrates that whites living in neighborhoods where Black people were relocated to tended to increase their political participation through voter turnout in the election following such movement. This suggests political mobilization as a negative response to increased Black residency. There is also growing evidence that city governments play a role in attempting to remove voucher tenants (Brown Hayat 2016). Research on whites' responses to living with former public housing tenants in a mixed-income redevelopment exposes the ways private renters police former public housing tenants (McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin 2012). Tenants living in proximity to such redevelopments likewise displayed heightened animus and preferences for policing (Fraser et al. 2013). In the next section, I continue to flesh out the relationship between policing, race, and housing, and suggest that not only do whites continue to resist racial integration in suburban settings, but they may also employ policing as part of their responses to Black movement to their neighborhoods.

Policing and segregation

A final and important omitted explanation for the outcomes of voucher movement is the role of policing in the production and maintenance of racial boundaries. We know from work by Rios (2011) and others, that policing often takes advantage of or builds upon patterns of segregation. That policing often includes the persistent surveillance of members of these groups, itself a form of intimidation, stigmatization, and punishment that transforms the relationship between members of these groups and the state (Anderson 2013; Herbert 1997; Jones 2009). As Rios demonstrates, police are able to deploy extraordinarily harsh measures against Black and Latino youth because of their spatial concentration in Oakland's neighborhoods. But we can also

think of this relationship going in the opposite direction. In this dissertation I will demonstrate that policing can also operate as a mechanism to create segregation.

Returning to Bell's (2013) history of violence in response to Black movement summarized in the preceding section, we can read the instances documented in her work as not just racially motivated violence but also as efforts to maintain segregation through surveillance and violent action. If we accept that reading, we can begin to think of segregation as maintained not just by individual discrimination, institutional action, and government policies, but also by policing. Sociologies of racial inequality often describe segregation and policing as distinct and important pillars of racial inequality, but the framework I advance here views these as intertwined.

I use the term policing to refer not just to the police themselves, but to practices, structures, and relationships that extend beyond their actions and which also work to produce social control. Policing can include individuals and groups working informally as well as actions taken by municipal, state, and federal governments. Policing is increasingly understood not just as a cause of racial inequality and as a race-making institution, but also as a method of governing poor people and racial minorities in this country (Soss and Weaver 2017). The findings outlined in the following chapters of this dissertation add case-based evidence to this way of understanding the relationship between policing and governance and extend it by theorizing policing as a mechanism of re-asserting segregation and spatial dominance.

Three additional examples – calls to city hotlines, gang injunctions, and police use of excessive force – document some ways that policing can create segregation. First, recent social science on policing's spatial dimensions suggests that individuals police members of proximate racial groups they may feel threatened by. Neighborhood conflict measured by complaints made

to a city hotline is found to be more frequent at “fuzzy” neighborhood racial boundaries than at boundaries with informal but clear racial lines, suggesting that the state is mobilized as a defense against demographic change (Legewie and Schaeffer 2016). The deployment of various government agencies to regulate others is often referred to as third-party policing and can also operate through pressure on rental property managers and landlords (Buerger and Mazerolle 1998; Desmond and Valdez 2012; Koehle 2013). These studies suggest the persistence of active resistance to Black movement and include evidence that this resistance operates through various forms of engagement with government.

Second, gang injunctions also serve as a powerful tool of spatial policing, demarcating who can go where and what extra sanctions can be applied to them within a particular space, based on the police and city attorney’s essentially unchecked definition of individuals as gang members. As Muñiz (2015) demonstrates, the designation of someone as a gang member can be essentially arbitrary as long as the person in question belongs to a subjugated racial or ethnic category. Functionally, the gang injunction operates like a modern mutation of sundown laws, with subjugated individuals staying out of (or even moving out of) demarcated areas for fear of arrest and imprisonment.

Third, Smith and Holmes (2014) illustrate that excessive force incidents are linked to the relative size of a minority population in a city, as well as to the city’s level of racial segregation. The authors conclude that these patterns of excessive force are understandable within a framework of policing that designates minorities as a group threat. This example suggests that the spatially and racially disparate presence and enforcement of laws and tactics — such as stop-and-frisk tactics, police sweeps, traffic stops, broken windows policing, and expansion of criminal and civil codes — might also serve as ways that policing can reinforce segregation. It is

possible that police use excessive force at higher rates as minority populations increase, thereby pushing back against integration and reinforcing segregation. These processes reflect ongoing shifts from policy focused on poverty amelioration towards policing and punishment of the poor (Hinton 2016; Wacquant 2001, 2009). They may result not just in incarceration, but also in eviction (Desmond 2016; Hartman and Robinson 2003).

Finally, recent events suggest the importance of studying both policing outside of urban settings and the prevalence of new forms of subjugation and exploitation employed in specifically suburban settings. Lowery (2016) documents the role of policing in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis where a nearly all-white police force used arbitrary stops and fines to criminalize and impoverish the city's Black residents. Boyles' (2015) years-long study of the relationship between Black residents and police in Meacham Park, another suburb in Missouri, provides further evidence of the ways that policing shapes the lives of Black people in suburbs and defines them as criminals who are subject to policing at any time.

Criminalizing vouchers

Finally, I argue that policing may dovetail with housing aid in a manner similar to how it has melded with welfare. This process, which Kaaryn Gustafson calls the criminalization of poverty, is defined by an expansion of rules governing the receipt of federal aid to the poor, and a commensurate increase in surveillance and policing to enforce those rules (Gustafson 2009; Gustafson 2011). This phenomenon serves as a way to morally shape the behavior of aid recipients, extend greater state control over their private lives, and cut down the number of people receiving aid by revoking eligibility based on transgressions. Gustafson illustrates how localities treat recipients of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) are increasingly treated as criminals or possible violators of program terms prior to any evidence of their guilt and shows

how the municipalities craft policies that allow deep invasions of the privacy of aid recipients prior to establishing any expectation that they are breaking rules. Gustafson highlights the gendered function of these rules, such as 60's era "man in the house rules" that used midnight raids to catch men in the bedrooms of single welfare recipients and revoke their aid based on moral unfitness. In addition to the role surveillance plays in allowing the state to enforce policies, Kimberly D. Bailey argues "[t]hese privacy invasions also have an expressive aspect because they send the message that the state does not trust these individuals to engage in valued activities in legitimate ways, therefore they must constantly be watched" (Bailey 2014: 1539). Khiara Bridges (2011) argues that these dynamics do not indicate that the poor are exchanging privacy for state aid, but rather highlight how poor women and families have never had a meaningful right to privacy. Gurusami (2017) illustrates how the erosion of that privacy extends to ongoing forms of state surveillance that continue to shape and constrain Black women's lives post-incarceration.

Gustafson also highlights how surveillance and sanction for violation of welfare rules moved from the jurisdiction of welfare system itself to the criminal justice system. Data about welfare recipients is shared between the welfare and criminal justice system, and, for example, is used to make arrests based on outstanding warrants. Finally, Gustafson traces the state of legal challenges to invasive searches of welfare recipients. She shows how these practices are upheld by courts despite challenges based on the 4th Amendment prohibition of unreasonable searches and seizures. Courts have interpreted the state's interest in efficiently administering funds and avoiding waste, fraud, and abuse as making welfare recipients substantively different than other citizens whose privacy the state would not be allowed to invade in the manners described above.

Priscilla Ocen argues that the criminalization of poverty extends to the criminalization of housing, writing that

The presumed criminality, racialization, and gendering of welfare and the erosion of constitutional rights for subsidy-dependent households combine to create the perfect storm of regulation of Black female-headed households in predominantly white communities. What has been deemed the legitimate regulation of welfare recipients masks the racial profiling and policing of bodies and geographic borders (Ocen 2012: 1567-1568).

Ocen describes this criminalization process in the Antelope Valley and Antioch, California as the functional replication of racially restrictive covenants. Norrinda Brown Hayat argues that schemes to police voucher tenants are potentially more dangerous than restrictive covenants in that they are organized around removal rather than prevention, and because they tend to criminalize otherwise non-criminal behavior (Brown Hayat 2016: 77). Extending Ocen and Brown Hayat's arguments, I argue that while the criminalization of poverty is carried out by the administrative bodies of the welfare system, district attorneys, and police officers, it can also be enforced by local residents, a privatized version of the street level bureaucrats who hold so much control and decision-making power over how the law is applied to marginalized populations in an area of increasingly diffused and devolved policing (Lipsky 1971; Stuart et al. 2015).

Shedding light on the "shadow carceral state"

By illustrating the use of policing as a mechanism to reassert segregation in the Antelope Valley, this study also contributes to scholarship on the nature and contours of the carceral state. I understand this term to refer to a broader understanding of the state's punitive relationship to subjects that includes not just jails and prisons but also the broader forms of control that extend the punitive relationship between state and subject far outside the boundaries of formal prison institutions. Beckett and Murakawa (2012) argue that "a comprehensive understanding of the

nature, operation, and effects of carceral state power requires attention to subterranean politics and covert institutional innovations that, along with overt policy developments, shape penal practices and outcomes” (223). Tracing the expansion of punishment practices through administrative practices (like immigration detention and parole management), civil commitment (of debtors and sex offenders), and civil regulations that function to criminalize populations and behaviors (anti-panhandling ordinances, trespass laws, and codes aimed at disorder), they conclude that “our understanding of carceral state power must be as capacious, complex, and adaptive as the policies and institutions involved in it” (223). Bonds (2018) argues that carcerality has historically been connected to housing and space and that, at present, “we must theorize the politics of residential property – including the protection of white propertied interests and resistance to such formations – as fundamentally connected to practices of policing and carceral management of urban space” (7). By showing how the expansion of carceral relationships extends to white homeowners weaponizing a city’s municipal codes to evict Black renters, I extend these authors insights into the carceral state’s role in policing space.

How participatory policing curtails integration in the Antelope Valley

In Chapter 2, I outlined how public housing, built in a social democratic spirit, devolved into a market-oriented voucher program after the 1960s. In this chapter, I first review the literature on the effects of voucher programs and, more broadly, illustrate the limits of residential mobility in producing socio-economic advancement for poor Black movers. I then illustrate that while the literature has shown relatively small or mixed effects of mobility, it has not explained the causes of these effects – i.e.: what happens between movement and measurement that might explain why mobility has not lived up to expectations. I suggest that here, continued white opposition to racial integration, combined with the criminalization of poverty, and the expansion

and devolution of policing power have combined to create a mechanism for white residents to effectively dominate, punish, and evict Black voucher renters. Under these conditions, I suggest that if there could be positive effects of residential mobility to the Antelope Valley, this policing apparatus will effectively defeat them.

In the following chapters, I first describe the history of the Antelope Valley and ask what role the foreclosure crisis has played in Black voucher renters' movement to the Antelope Valley in such high numbers. I argue that the foreclosure crisis has only exacerbated the racially unequal patterns of spatial dispersal seen in other studies of the voucher program. Next, I flesh out the reasons why voucher tenants move to the Antelope Valley and describe how local residents perceive this movement, documenting a sense of racialized group threat that poisons subsequent interactions and outcomes. These findings suggest the importance of understanding the context of reception that voucher movers are encountering in the Antelope Valley.

I then illustrate how local residents and the city government developed, over time, a participatory policing regime designed to evict Black voucher renters and reassert racial segregation in the Antelope Valley. I argue that this phenomenon is the material expression of the social context of reception described earlier and show how this policing regime replicates and extends the criminalization of poverty to the arena of housing. This adds qualitative data that supports and extends the insights of Brown Hayat (2016) and Ocen (2012) into the role of criminalization and policing in blocking Black movement, and the insights of scholars of carcerality concerned with its evolving manifestations in society. Finally, I show how voucher movers assess this environment and strategize to stay in their homes, illustrating how surveillance and the threat of eviction create produce a form of carceral citizenship, despite these renters not actually having criminal records (Miller and Stuart, 2017). To conclude the study, I

offer summary thoughts on what this case means for the reproduction of racial inequality post-integration, for our understandings of policing and its participatory component, and for our understandings of the successes and shortcomings of the voucher program and mobility paradigm, 50 years after the publication of the Kerner Commission report and the passage of the Fair Housing Act.

Chapter 4: The Antelope Valley from Black Arrival to the Great Recession

The California Department of Water Resources' (2011) California Indian Tribal Homelands and Trust Land Map suggests that the Serrano tribe was indigenous to the Antelope Valley. Other resources suggest that Kitanemuc, Tataviam, and Kawaiisu peoples also lived in the area (Antelope Valley Indian Museum 2012). The arrival of handfuls of white settlers appears to have started in the 1850s, but it was only after the Southern Pacific Railroad was built near the valley that larger numbers began to trickle in. The Black history of the Antelope Valley dates back to this period as well. Although Black movement to the valley did not occur in significant numbers until decades later, one of the earliest major figures in the valley was a former slave named Charles Graves. Graves was born on a plantation in Kentucky in 1856. His father died in the Civil War, and sometime after its end he decided to move west, reportedly travelling mostly by rail, not unlike the later years of south to west movement that defined Black migration to Los Angeles (Flamming 2005). In 1882, Graves landed in Rosamond, just north of Lancaster, and eventually built a ranch there. Over the next several decades he made a significant discovery of gold, served as the local postmaster, and built Rosamond's first school (Kern-Antelope Historical Society 1984). Graves died in Lancaster in 1938, but the Rosamond school and other historic sites still bear his name.

A slow influx of settlers continued through the early 1900s, including the 1914 establishment of Llano del Rio, a socialist colony founded by Job Harriman. Harriman had unsuccessfully run for mayor of Los Angeles in 1911 and afterwards turned to building the socialist colony. The colony had 1,000 members living in it by 1916, but collapsed by 1918 due to water shortages, with many members moving to Louisiana to start anew (Davis 2006: 3-4; County of Los Angeles n.d.).

Like much of contemporary Los Angeles, the Antelope Valley traces its viability to the ability to secure a source of water. The Los Angeles Aqueduct's path brought it close to the Antelope Valley, but the community's fledgling Chamber of Commerce was not successful in petitioning the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to let it divert some of the aqueduct's water to the region for irrigation. However, by 1922, residents had found a way to acquire water from underground sources in the valley, in large enough quantities to support farming. Proclaiming "Great Stores of Water Await Pumps in the Antelope Valley," the Los Angeles Times wrote in 1922 that, "with its altitude and dry, invigorating atmosphere...the climate is unusually healthful, and many who can't live near the coast continually can find health here and still be within reach of the pleasures and advantages afforded by Los Angeles and its environs" (Abbott 1922). This description of the valley largely held in the decades to come. Its economy overwhelmingly relied on farming, and it gained a reputation as a place of relative freedom and quiet for Angelenos who preferred not to live in the busier city.

As unique as the Antelope Valley's early years were, in the decades that followed it would first be militarized as a home to air force bases and testing, and then suburbanized like much of the rest of Southern California. As Mike Davis wrote, "as developable land has disappeared throughout the coastal plains and inland basins, and soaring land inflation has reduced access to new housing to less than 15 per cent of the population, the militarized desert has suddenly become the last frontier of the Southern California Dream" (Davis 2006: 4).

Along with this population growth and suburbanization, the Antelope Valley has also become a major center of Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher usage, a product of political decisions discussed in Chapter 2 and economic forces detailed in Chapter 5. Studying the voucher program and its reception in the Antelope Valley is not just a way to understand

questions about mobility, policing, and housing policy, but also a way to understand the evolution of racial inequality in the Antelope Valley. Using newspaper accounts from the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Sentinel*, I trace how and why Black residents of Los Angeles moved to the Antelope Valley, and where they settled before the passage of fair housing law. I then show how the passage of fair housing law forced a rearticulation of racial inequality in the valley, shifting from total housing segregation to discrimination in housing and employment, public spectacles, and racial terror. I argue that these phenomena represent attempts to reassert the pre-civil rights hierarchy of the Antelope Valley. This history helps set the stage for the Great Recession period of the valley's history, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

Sun Village rises

The Second World War saw the Antelope Valley gain its major non-farm industry: aerospace. Edwards Air Force Base was built in the valley, bringing 20,000 jobs and attracting homebuilders, service providers, and other businesses into the region. Soon after, Lockheed and Northrop located facilities in the valley, contributing to the employment boom. A 1954 edition of the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, a weekly paper dedicated to covering the Black community, described the region in glowing terms, remarking that, due to the aerospace industry, the population had grown by 30% in 1953 alone and was scheduled to grow even more in 1954. The *Sentinel's* encouragement of its readers to move to the valley is understandable given the entrenchment of racial segregation and discrimination in Los Angeles (*Los Angeles Sentinel* 1954). Similarly, a report on Sun Village reported that some of its residents were “drawn by advertisements broadcast in Los Angeles on Hunter Hancock’s popular rhythm-and-blues show” (Rotella 1989). Hancock was the most popular deejay in Los Angeles among Black listeners.

Starting in the 1940s, Black families who moved to the Antelope Valley settled in an area known as Sun Village, about a mile and a half east of Palmdale. “Blacks couldn’t live in Palmdale,” recalled William Shaw, president of the Sun Village Chamber of Commerce. Palmdale residents “would tell you that directly to your face” (Rotella 1989). Until the passage of California’s Fair Housing Act in 1963, Sun Village was the only part of the Antelope Valley in which Black residents were guaranteed the ability to rent or own property, because an early resident named Melvin Ray Grubbs had managed to secure acres from the Sun Village Land Corporation that would be made available to Black families. As a result of the Antelope Valley’s de jure and de facto segregation, Sun Village became a thriving Black neighborhood. Residents established a chapter of the NAACP, built the First Missionary Baptist Church, paved roads connecting the city to the rest of the valley, initiated an annual Juneteenth celebration, and dedicated a park in honor of Jackie Robinson. By the 1960s Sun Village had roughly 2,000 residents (Rotella 1989). The Sun Village thus constituted a suburban example of what Hunter et al. (2016) refer to as Black placemaking.

As segregation ends, inequality shifts to employment and housing discrimination

In 1962 Lois Patton – the president of the NAACP’s newly founded Antelope Valley chapter – and her husband, Patrick, became the first Black family to move into Palmdale (Gurba 2013). Although Black residents had gained the legal ability to move into homes across the Antelope Valley, the region’s white majority continued to find strategies to enforce de facto segregation. In 1964, the school district voted 653-254 to locate an elementary school in Sun Village, which the NAACP charged would advance segregation by isolating nearby Black students who would no longer enroll in elementary schools in nearby white cities (*Los Angeles Times* 1964). Although many Black families moved to the Antelope Valley following its air

force and aerospace boom, they found themselves excluded from equal employment in those sectors. A 1977 report in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* described a meeting of the Antelope Valley branch of the NAACP where attorneys and advocates discussed systematic and widespread discrimination in the Edwards Air Force Base's Flight Test Center. Employees charged that Black employees comprised only 4% of the center's workforce (86 of 2,300 people) and were completely shut out of top-level policy and decision-making positions. Others reported harassment and demoralization linked to being denied promotions over the course of several decades, while white employees enjoyed steady rises in status in the center (Sentinel, 1977). Other aerospace industry employees later reported being routinely stopped and searched as they drove from Sun Village into Palmdale to get to work (Rotella 1989).

Despite the persistence of discrimination strategies focused against Black residents in housing, education, and employment, the end of legal segregation in the 1960s meant that, over several decades, Sun Village lost much of its population as it diffused into adjacent cities like Littlerock, Palmdale, and Lancaster. By 1989, the *Los Angeles Times* reported a bifurcated experience in the Antelope Valley, in an article titled "Black Enclave Withers Amid Antelope Bloom" (Rotella, 1989). The article described Palmdale and Lancaster as 1980s boom-towns, while Sun Village's population had dropped from 2,000 to 500 and its bustling downtown had been largely boarded up. Meanwhile, the Black population had increased from 3% to 5% of the Antelope Valley's population through the 1980s. Newspaper accounts in the early 1990s suggested significant Black migration from Los Angeles to the Antelope Valley, often framing it as an escape from inner-city violence. A 1991 lawsuit filed by two employees of an Orange County property management company renting homes in Palmdale revealed systemic practices designed to discriminate against Black renters in the Antelope Valley. Employees were asked to

mark rental applications made by Black applicants with a smiley face, and a white applicant who was told she was approved to rent an apartment was subsequently turned down the next day when she returned to the office with her Black husband. In the course of their research, the litigants “were contacted by a little more than 100 Blacks and Latinos who [the company] turned down for housing.” Perhaps most strikingly, the employees who filed the complaint after refusing to participate in the marking scheme stated that every lawyer they contacted in the Antelope Valley declined to take their case. It resulted, nevertheless, in a \$1.1 million settlement — the largest housing discrimination settlement of its kind at the time (Sentinel 1991).

As Sun Village shrank, its identity was superseded by the neighboring town of Littlerock, a mostly white farming neighborhood. In 1992, the Antelope Valley Union High School District established a high school in Sun Village but named it Littlerock High, alarming local residents about the possible erasure of the identity of their neighborhood. They petitioned to change the name to Sun Village High but were denied, with some Littlerock residents claiming that Sun Village no longer existed or would cease to exist soon. Other minor issues piled up. The Littlerock town council began holding meetings in Sun Village, in another attempt to claim that the village was not a unique place but rather just the eastern portion of Littlerock. Littlerock was listed on freeway signs; Sun Village was not. And when the postal system consolidated, it closed Sun Village’s branch but left Littlerock’s open. In 1992, residents tried to make a separate town council in the Antelope Valley to represent their interests but were unsuccessful. One resident, Eugene Washington, noted how the shift in the towns’ relationship was always driven by Littlerock’s interests:

Washington remembers when Littlerock didn’t want anything to do with Sun Village – when a black person “wouldn’t dare say you lived in Littlerock,” for fear of angering whites. “It’s all right for Sun Village to be Littlerock now?” he fumed. (Simmons, 2012)

Reflecting on the feeling that Black residential identity was being erased in the Antelope Valley, longtime resident James Brooks told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2012 that “the history of Sun Village is the history of the Antelope Valley and the history of America...[it] should be sung throughout the valley” (Simmons 2012).

During the period of racial segregation, racial dominance was primarily asserted spatially. Not only were Black families prevented from living in the main cities of the Antelope Valley, but even securing basic municipal services connecting Sun Village to those cities was a challenge. As barriers to fair housing fell in the 1960s and the valley came to be suburbanized and diversified in the 1990s, racial hierarchy in the Antelope Valley needed to be asserted through a variety of mechanisms. In the next section, I outline the economic and demographic changes that presaged a re-assertation of racial hierarchy from the bottom to the top of the valley’s social structure.

Macro-economic and demographic changes presage white backlash

In *City of Quartz*, Mike Davis described the Antelope Valley “both a sanctuary from [Los Angeles’] maelstrom of growth and crisis, and one of its fastest growing epicenters” (Davis 2006: 7). It was both refuge for white, conservative populations increasingly overshadowed by the county’s diversity, and the epicenter of confrontations centered around economic crisis and demographic change. The early 1990s also saw a major recession in Southern California, triggered by a decline in aerospace and defense industry activity. As shown in Table 4.1, this marked a turning point in the valley’s economic relationship to the rest of Los Angeles County, transforming it from an area that was wealthier than the rest of the county to one that was increasingly poorer. According to William Finnegan,

“Los Angeles alone lost more than half a million jobs, and property values throughout the region collapsed. Few places were hit harder than the Antelope

Valley. Housing prices fell by as much as 50 percent, land prices by as much as 90 percent. Abandoned housing tracts began to dot the subdivided desert. Boarded-up shopping centers and bankrupt school districts followed, along with a wave of personal financial disasters so severe that *USA Today* dubbed Palmdale “the foreclosure capital of California” (Finnegan 1998: 272)

Table 4.1: Median Household Income in the Antelope Valley and Los Angeles County, 1970-2010 (in 2010 Dollars)

	Antelope Valley	Los Angeles County
1970	\$54,991	\$53,123
1980	\$56,065	\$52,703
1990	\$70,508	\$62,961
2000	\$56,746	\$59,182
2010	\$53,953	\$60,481

Los Angeles County figures exclude the Antelope Valley

Yet despite this economic collapse, the 1980s and early 1990s saw the valley’s population continue to grow. This growth included a slow but steady rise in the Black population of the Antelope Valley. the valley continued to grow in size and become more diverse. As Finnegan describes it,

“Between 1990 and 1994, Palmdale was the second-fastest-growing city in the United States, Lancaster the sixth. As a rule, the valley’s newest residents were poorer and darker than their predecessors, lived in more crowded lodgings – new home construction having essentially stopped – and were more likely to rent. Still, the valley remained, in a county where whites were a minority, overwhelmingly white (68 percent), home-owning, and dominated politically by conservative Republicans of the pro-growth, anti-tax stripe” (Finnegan 1998: 272).

Finnegan describes the contradictory trends of population growth and diversity in the midst of economic decline as an environment in which “widespread white insecurity and downward mobility intersected with significant black and Latino upward mobility – an intersection that made for an altogether different kind of social friction” (Finnegan 1998: 273)

Davis described the public reaction to these contradictions as follows:

“Older Valley residents...are frantically trying to raise the gangplanks against this ex-urban exodus sponsored by their own pro-growth business and political elites.

In their increasingly angry view, the landrush since 1984 has only brought traffic jams, smog, rising crime, job competition, noise, soil erosion, a water shortage and the attrition of a distinctively countrified lifestyle” (Davis 2006: 6).

What becomes more important at this juncture is how white society in the valley raised those proverbial gangplanks. In the following sections, I describe the rise of skinhead groups in response to economic and social dislocation, and then illustrate the ways that this grassroots effort to assert white supremacy persisted over the course of at least a decade and was mirrored by public symbols of racial terror, acts by elected officials legitimizing white supremacy, and barriers to racial equality at the institutional level.

Reasserting racial hierarchy

White supremacist hate crimes

In *Cold New World*, Finnegan travels to the Antelope Valley during the mid 1990s to follow the rapid bloom of skinhead and white supremacist groups among white youth. Finnegan documents the growing popularity of crystal methamphetamine use among youths, who engaged in petty burglaries and joined gangs in an “apocalyptic” environment where children knew that, because the valley’s military industrial economy would never return, they would never reach the middle-class status of their parents. His narrative follows a young woman, who had dropped out of high school and joined the Nazi Low Riders. She joined the group as a way to get access to drugs and eventually became immersed white supremacist rhetoric and violence, witnessing several crimes including an attempted murder.

Her experience was not unique. The 1990s saw a string of hate crimes committed throughout the valley. A group of Nazi Low Riders threatened to blow up a Lancaster coffee shop because it served minorities; a Latino individual was beaten outside a 7-Eleven; a group of white supremacist students stabbed a Black student at Antelope Valley High School; Black

motorists were shot by three young white men in a racially motivated attack; and a homeless Black man named Milton Walker Jr. was brutally murdered by three avowed white supremacists in 1995, at least one of whom was a member of the Nazi Low Riders. That final case was closed after a cursory investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office but reopened two years later after federal intervention discovered witnesses to the case and evidence of racial motivation (Larrubia 1997). In 1996, racially motivated hate crimes against Black men in Los Angeles County were reported to have been 50% higher than in 1995, with a cluster of crimes located in the Antelope Valley. A summary of the report stated, "the increase 'does not say it had become open season on African Americans' but reflects increased hostility as blacks move to areas populated by other ethnic groups" (Sentinel 1997).

By 1997, the federal government had intervened, dispatching FBI officers to coordinate with the US Attorney's office in prosecuting hate crimes in the valley. Thirteen cases had been prosecuted in the Antelope Valley between 1993 and the 1997 federal intervention. In 1997, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported 17 cases of race-biased incidents just in Lancaster, a figure that was surpassed by only six cities in the state, each of which had populations at least three times larger than Lancaster's. Although Lancaster mayor Frank Roberts refused to acknowledge a problem in the area, federal investigators told the *Los Angeles Times* they were targeting three groups in the Antelope Valley – the Nazi Low Riders, Palmdale Peckerwoods, and Metal Minds – and said they were "concerned that white supremacists [were] trying to frighten minorities away from the area's working-class suburbs" (Sandoval 1997). Local police estimated that the Nazi Low Riders had between 200 and 300 members as of 1999. That year, Shaun Broderick and Christopher Crawford, two members of the Nazi Low Riders beat a Black

Wal-Mart employee after he approached Broderick's girlfriend to ask a question outside the store (Streeter 1999).

White supremacist hate crimes continued into the 2000s. They included attacks against Black residents, the vandalism of Temple Beth Knesset Bamidbar (the Antelope Valley's only synagogue), the defacement of a Black family's property with racial slurs and swastikas, and an incident in which an unknown person burned a six-foot swastika into the grass at a public park where a citywide picnic celebrating diversity was being held. The following year, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, a Latino man was attacked under the false impression that he was Iranian. As vicious as these incidents are, they represent only one category of efforts to reassert the valley's racial hierarchy. These public attitudes and hate crimes were mirrored by what I call public symbols of racial terror, designed to assert white supremacy in a way that was highly visible as well as targeting individuals at times. They were also accompanied by the statements and actions of elected officials in the valley, who shared, reflected, and legitimized white supremacy from positions of authority, and by institutional barriers to equal rights.

Racial terror through public symbols

In the 1980s, the Quartz Hill High School and, subsequently, the nearby Quartz Hill Elementary school adopted Confederate mascots and school symbols. The school mascot, a Johnny Rebel figure carrying a Confederate flag and sword, was printed on clothing, stationary, and other school materials, and the elementary school labelled itself "Home of the Junior Rebels" (Sentinel 1995). By 1995, the issue rose to public prominence as students, community members, and the NAACP organized to persuade the school board to mandate changes at the schools. The symbols were changed the following year, but some students of Quartz Hill High

voiced concerns to the *Los Angeles Times* that their heritage and school pride were being removed.

In 1993, two young white men from Lancaster planted a 6-foot-tall, 4-foot-wide wooden cross on the front yard of Eleanor (age 63) and James Pate (age 70). The cross was covered in “KKK” and white supremacist slurs and prompted an NAACP request to prosecute the incident as a hate crime. In 1994, “vile racist flyers exhorting their readers to violence in defense of a white and pure nation” were found throughout Los Angeles County, especially in San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, and the Antelope Valley. The fliers often contained anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic sentiments and were made by groups like “White Aryan Resistance.” They encouraged readers to take action, join white supremacist groups, and donate money to such groups, and were distributed in grocery stores and shopping centers in the Antelope Valley and nearby areas (Meyer 1994).

In the wake of the Los Angeles Uprisings of 1992, a hung jury resulted in acquittals, partial sentences, or time served for the attackers of white truck driver Reginald Denney, a case with high media visibility because it was filmed from a helicopter. In the wake of the jury results, a Washington state cartoonist named Chris Britt drew a cartoon depicting a Ku Klux Klan member lynching a Black man while holding a newspaper with a headline about the acquittals. Britt was part of a 300-paper syndication network, meaning that editors of those papers could choose to pick up his cartoon for inclusion in their papers. Although it is not known how many papers ran the cartoon, it generated controversy when it ran in Iowa in September of 1993, and again when it was published in November by the *Antelope Valley Press*. The publication provoked outrage across the Antelope Valley, culminating in, among other things, a

40-person protest in Palmdale. The paper's editor issued a rationalization of the cartoon and claimed not to have been asked to apologize, despite the protest.

Racial resentment from elected officials

In 1993, State Assemblyman William J. (Pete) Knight, representing Palmdale, expanded the climate of racial hostility to focus on the Antelope Valley's growing Latino population by writing and distributing an anti-immigrant poem.

Called "I Love America," the five-stanza poem written in a mocking style tells the story of an immigrant who crosses the border illegally, goes on welfare, asks friends to help invade an Anglo neighborhood, and jokes that Americans are crazy to support them with their taxes. (Johnson 1993)

Knight publicized the poem widely, and even read it into the California Legislative Record in 1993 (Bender 2003). Its lyrics included:

Write to friends in motherland, tell them come as fast as can...

They come in rags and Chebby trucks, I buy big house with welfare bucks...

Everything is mucho good, soon we own the neighborhood.

We have a hobby, it's called breeding.

Welfare pay for baby feeding...

We think America damn good place.

Too damn good for white man race. (Bender 2003)

Knight's actions incited a major controversy in the region and contributed to the wave of nativist hostility during the early 1990s. But while his behavior generated significant opposition, Knight also aroused a groundswell of support, which became evident when a local talk radio show covering the issue found its phone lines overwhelmed with calls in support of his views. In 1994, State Senator Don Rogers, an Antelope Valley Republican, became the subject of another controversy when it came to light that he was scheduled to speak at the annual banquet of a white

supremacist organization called Jubilee. Jubilee was part of the Christian Identity movement, which endorsed white supremacy and believed non-Northern European races were “mud people,” the same phrase found on many of the fliers distributed throughout the valley in that year. Rogers was scheduled to speak alongside a former leader of the KKK and a member of the Aryan Nation, but refused to cancel the talk, claiming that the organization was composed of patriotic Americans simply “working to preserve and restore individual rights and freedoms” (*Los Angeles Times* 1994).

Continued institutional barriers to racial equality

The 2000s appeared to bring a decline of violent hate crimes like those seen in the 1990s, but a number of issues around racial inequality persisted. In many cases, these issues were structural rather than interpersonal. In 2002, for example, Antelope Valley College was charged with race and gender discrimination in hiring and promotion practices. That same year, Lockheed was sued for racial bias at the workplace. Black employees reported discrimination in hiring and promotion, incidences of being called “boy” and “n*****,” and nooses hung in the workplace and racial epithets written on walls. In 2007, at Knight High School in Palmdale, named after former state Assemblyman Pete Knight, a security guard fractured the wrist of a young Black female student. She and two other students were arrested and suspended, and the security guard was put on leave. The incident prompted pushback from community members and families and compelled several more students to come forward to report cases of racial harassment and mistreatment at the school (Simmons 2007). And in 2014, Palmdale came under scrutiny for maintaining at-large balloting for city council seats, a system that helped ensure that the city only elected minorities to the city council twice since it was incorporated in 1962. When found to be in violation of the Voting Rights Act by the Los Angeles County Superior Court,

Palmdale refused to adopt alternative systems like district balloting or cumulative voting and filed appeals with the state superior court. The city eventually adopted district balloting in the 2016 election.

This history illustrates how racism has shaped the lives of Black residents of the Antelope Valley, from the earliest Black movement in the 1940s to the period just before the Great Recession in 2007. In the next chapter, I focus on the foreclosure crisis, its effects on the Antelope Valley, and how it shaped the trajectory of voucher movement to the Antelope Valley in the years since. Then, in the chapters to come, I will demonstrate how this history of racial inequality contextualizes the experiences of Housing Choice Voucher renters. By telling their stories of housing discrimination, I will show how the policing of voucher renters extends and transforms the history of racial oppression in the valley.

Chapter 5: The Great Recession and Voucher Movement to the Antelope Valley

Since the 1990s, Antelope Valley has undergone three major demographic and economic changes: economic diversification, demographic diversification, and the foreclosure crisis. The first and longest trend has been the long-term economic diversification of the region, from an economy first dominated by farming, then aerospace, and, now, by a broader diversity of employers, coupled with an increase of residents who commute into the metropolitan core of Los Angeles for work. Some of those new sources of employment include industries that cannot easily operate in the county and seek out the Antelope Valley for its lax regulatory environments and cheap industrial land, as well as jobs in prison construction and incarceration-related employment (The Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance 2016; Million Dollar Hoods 2017). Nevertheless, the low cost of housing combined with the comparatively shallow employment environment help explain why 71,000 people — fully 44.5% of the valley’s 159,615-person workforce — commute into Los Angeles proper for work (The Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance 2016).

The second major trend has been the region’s overall growth and demographic diversification. For example, between 1980 and 2015, Lancaster grew from roughly 50,000 residents to roughly 160,000 (American Fact Finder 2016). In that time, as shown in Figure 5.1, Lancaster experienced a demographic shift, from being 85% non-Hispanic white in 1985 to just 33% non-Hispanic white in 2015. Palmdale experienced a similar shift, as shown in Figure 5.2, dropping from 84% to 22% non-Hispanic white and growing from 4% to 13% Black. In both cases, the non-Hispanic white population is a significantly more conservative estimation of the white population, as whites who may also identify as Hispanic currently make up 63% of Lancaster residents and 46% of Palmdale residents. Regardless of how one measures it, these trends indicate how severely the region has changed in demographic terms over the past several

decades. These trends are likely accelerated by the foreclosure crisis, which Stoll (2014) has found is associated with an increase in residential moves, particularly in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The Antelope Valley, once nearly devoid of minorities, is now effectively a majority-minority region.

The third force that shaped this region was the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession, which hit this suburban area particularly hard. Reporting by Schlesinger (2012) indicates that about 18% of foreclosures in the County were located in the Antelope Valley (which holds roughly 3% of the county's population) and that property values halved during the Great Recession. During this period, the average foreclosure rate in Lancaster, one of the valley's main cities, was 10.2%, placing it among the top three cities hit by foreclosures in the Los Angeles/Long Beach metropolitan area (City of Lancaster, 2009). It lost nearly 10% of its workforce during the recession, and its unemployment rate has remained higher than that of the City of Los Angeles ever since. As of 2013, average weekly wages and yearly salaries in the Antelope Valley were \$211 and \$4,050 less than in Los Angeles County, respectively (The Greater Antelope Valley Economic Alliance 2015).

This is where the two stories outlined in this dissertation – the story of the Black experience in the Antelope Valley and the story of the voucher program – converge. Los Angeles County Housing Choice Voucher tenants have been bound up in the latter two trends changing the Antelope Valley, and Black voucher renters have borne the brunt of the negative social consequences of these trends. In this chapter, I step back to provide an understanding of the housing market and the broader economy's role in shaping voucher movement, and then situate the case of the Antelope Valley in that context.

Figure 5.1: The Shifting Racial Composition of the City of Lancaster, 1980-2015 (American Community Survey)

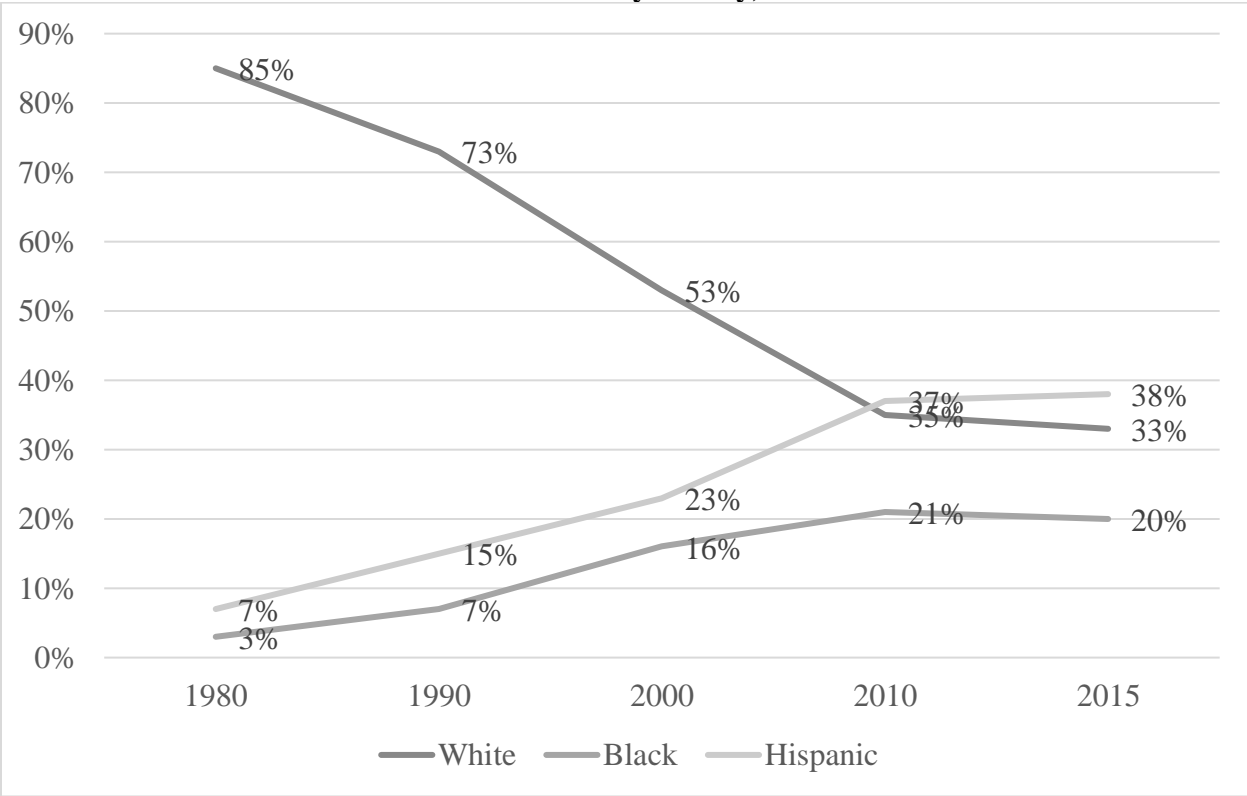


Figure 5.2: The Shifting Racial Composition of the City of Palmdale, 1980-2015 (American Community Survey)

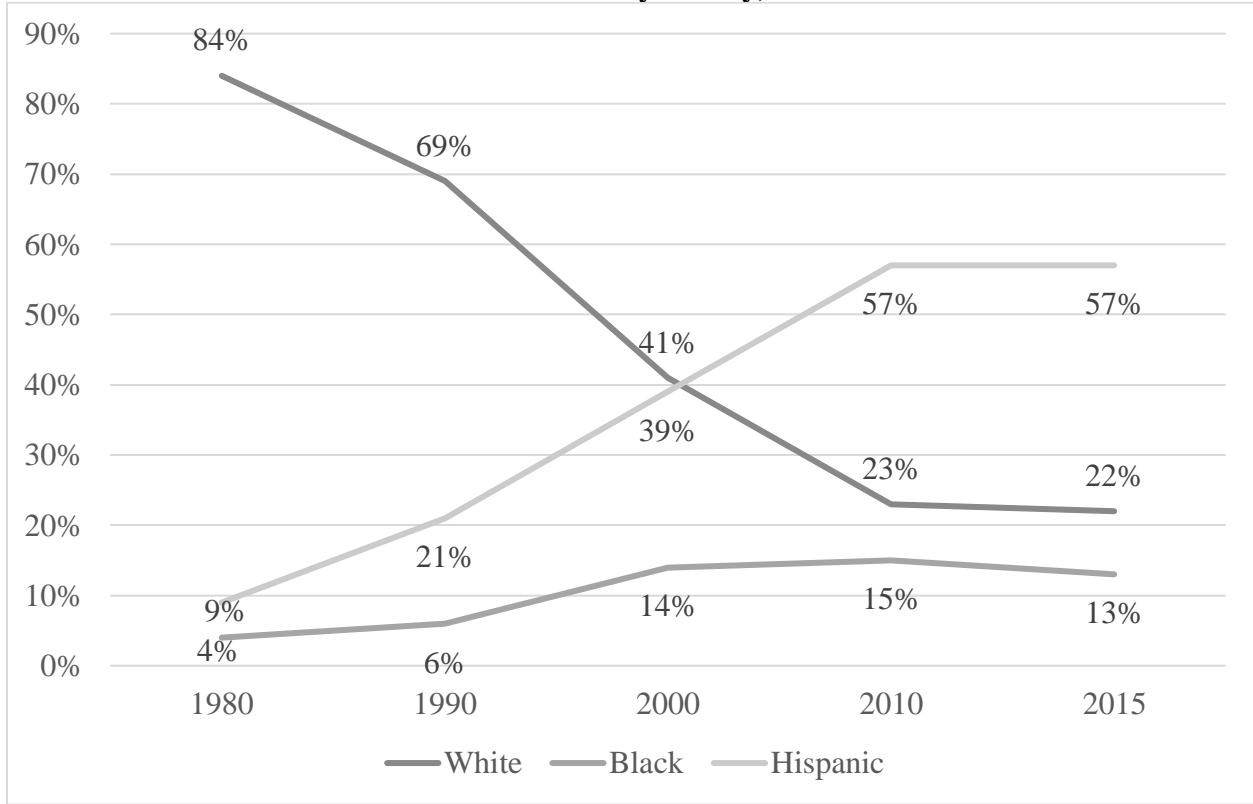
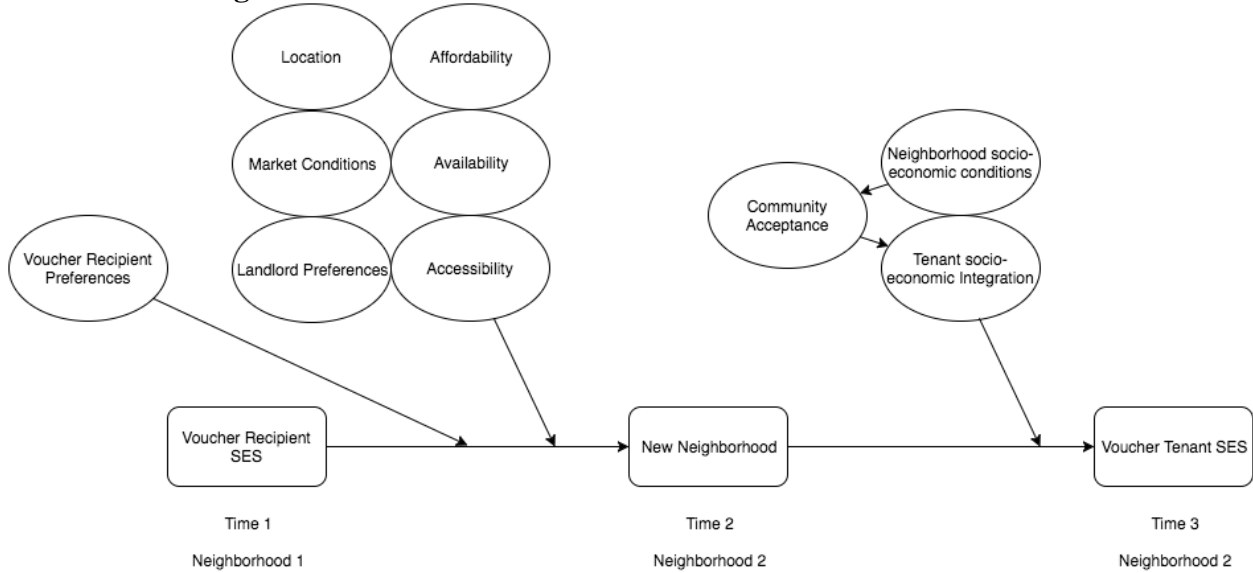


Figure 5.3: Determinants of Voucher Locations and Outcomes



Forces shaping voucher movement

The voucher system is predicated on the use of residential mobility to help low-income tenants leave disadvantaged neighborhoods and, by extension, a host of conditions (poor schools, higher crime levels, low economic opportunity, etc.) that limit their socioeconomic chances. The program allows tenants to find or enlist landlords to rent a unit to them, whereupon the landlord receives a majority of the fair market rent for the unit from the federal government, with the remaining sum paid by the tenant (amounts are determined by local Public Housing Authorities). In theory, given residential choice, low-income tenants would seek to move to neighborhoods that maximized their economic and other benefits, be able to access those neighborhoods, and enjoy the associated benefits over time.

However, the implementation of vouchers (or similar schemes) has proven much more complicated. Figure 5.3 illustrates the variety of factors that may influence the eventual socioeconomic status of voucher program participants. The left-hand side of the figure delineates the factors that influence the type of neighborhood that a tenant can move to, and the right-hand side delineates factors that influence outcomes after a voucher holder has moved to a new neighborhood. Though not depicted in the model, at every stage of the process, selection into the program and selection into continued participation in the program may play an important role in shaping outcomes.

Focusing only on the left-hand side of Figure 5.3, we can elaborate several forces that limit or shape movement for low-income minority households using vouchers. A complex miasma of forces attributable to movers, property owners, and housing markets, may be at work. Movers may simply not know anything about or anyone in certain neighborhoods (Krysan and Bader 2009), or they might find no landlords willing to rent to them there, perhaps due to their

race, source of income, or because the reimbursement rate from the local housing authority does not adequately compete with what private renters would pay (Beck 1996). Movers might find a neighborhood desirable but lack the transportation options required to make living there feasible (DeLuca et al. 2013; Ruel et al. 2013). They may find themselves steered to or selected into housing that suits the needs of landlords and property owners (Rosen 2014), or they may find that some of their options include recently foreclosed homes that new buyers are making available to Section 8 renters, possibly while they wait for property values to rebound (Pfeiffer & Lucio 2015). Finally, they could be forced to move at short notice, and with few resources provided by public housing agencies they might see few options besides already advertised Section 8 rentals in neighborhoods they may otherwise not prefer (DeLuca et al. 2013).

Considering these factors, it is of little surprise that the location outcomes of voucher holders do not match their stated neighborhood preferences (Wang 2016). Ultimately, only one in five housing choice voucher recipients live in low-poverty neighborhoods (McClure, Schwartz, and Taghavi 2014). Between 2000 and 2008, vouchers suburbanized rapidly, but areas with increases in suburban poverty experienced significant increases in voucher movement (Covington, Freeman, and Stoll 2011). Kooragayala (2013) finds that voucher participants in the Atlanta region decentralized but re-clustered in low-quality and opportunity-poor neighborhoods in Atlanta, Georgia. In the Bay Area, Rongerude and Haddad (2016) find that between 2000 and 2010, vouchers grew primarily in inner cities and peripheral areas – those that were less economically desirable than the suburbs between them. And using Chicago data from MTO, Sampson (2008) finds that most participants moved only a short distance from their severely disadvantaged origin neighborhoods, with many movers returning to their old neighborhoods shortly thereafter.

When comparing voucher movers to low-income renters on the private market, Metzger and Pelletiere (2015) find that voucher movers attain neighborhoods with higher household incomes, but those neighborhoods are no more racially or ethnically diverse than those of the comparison groups. Basolo (2013) finds that in Orange County, voucher movers reached neighborhoods that had lower poverty rates and better school quality than those they previously lived in, but that those neighborhoods were not significantly better than the neighborhoods attained by a comparison group which moved without the benefit of a voucher. Findings like these illustrate the distance yet to go in clearly understanding the effects of this program in terms of promoting access to improved neighborhoods for low-income renters, particularly renters of color.

By linking voucher distribution data from 2008 to 2016 with data on demography and foreclosures, I illustrate the tight relationship between foreclosures and voucher usage in census tracts, the racially bifurcated outcomes of the voucher program, and the ways these trends manifest within the Los Angeles area, focusing on providing an understanding of where the Antelope Valley's trends place it within a larger set of outcomes across the country during the post-recession period.

Data and methods

Sources of data

Data for this analysis comes from three datasets provided by the federal government. First, I obtain counts of the number of voucher units in census tracts from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's *Picture of Subsidized Housing* datasets from 2008 to 2016. I crosswalked the 2008 file from Census 2000 boundaries to Census 2010 boundaries using the Longitudinal Tract Database (Logan, Xu, and Stults 2014). Second, I obtain data on foreclosures

from the 2008-2009 Neighborhood Stabilization Program database, and also crosswalk these to 2010 Census boundaries. Third, I link these data at the tract level to American Community Survey 5-year estimates of tract-level demographics for 2008 (data collected between 2006 and 2010) and 2015. Combined, these data allow for the examination of both raw and population adjusted change in voucher counts at the tract level between 2008 and 2016, and the investigation of whether those changes are patterned by race, foreclosures, poverty, and rental costs.

Limitations of data

Although this data presents some important advantages over previous attempts to trace the relationship between foreclosures and vouchers, it also has critical limitations. First among these limitations is the lack of data on the racial composition of voucher users in census tracts, in the 2008 data. This data is made available by HUD only as a percentage and is therefore not able to be crosswalked to the 2010 census tract boundaries and compared to future years' data.

Second, data on the racial composition of voucher users in tracts is also erased for all census tracts with ten or fewer voucher holders, as a privacy-preserving measure taken by HUD. To work around this limitation, when making comparisons involving racial composition, I only use tracts with 11 or more voucher tenants. While this is yet another compromise from what the ideal dataset would be, it still offers unique insight into the effect of foreclosures on voucher distributions in a significant number of census tracts across the country.

Coding choices

After crosswalking and merging 2008 tract voucher counts with 2008 foreclosure and demographic data, and full 2016 voucher data with demographic indicators, I worked to make the data comparable across time periods. The main challenge here was to make logical decisions

about cases of missing data. For example, a census tract marked as missing on the “number reported” variable in 2008 could be interpreted as an area that never plausibly could have had vouchers, or an area which might have had vouchers, but did not. In cases where that tract had a non-zero voucher count in 2016, I retroactively re-coded the tract to zero under the logic that in 2008 it could have plausibly had voucher residents. I used the same logic to recode any missing data in tracts in 2016 as zeros if they had had vouchers in 2008. Another way to mitigate these problems was to restrict the analysis to urban areas with a minimum of 1 million residents.

Findings

Characteristics of census tracts by voucher presence, 2008

Table 5.1 displays the characteristics of census tracts in 2008 by the number of voucher units present in those tracts, for all census tracts in urban areas with at least a million residents. These data show that census tracts without vouchers have high rates of white residency and low rates of Black residency, along with low rates of poverty, unemployment, and foreclosures during the Great Recession. Tracts in these urban areas that have one or more voucher units look dramatically different, with strikingly lower median rents and higher poverty and foreclosure rates. These tracts also have lower rates of white residency and higher rates of Black residency.

When we look at the characteristics of these tracts over the distribution of voucher counts, we can see how adding more vouchers simply exaggerates the differences between tracts with and without vouchers. Census tracts with the lowest quartile of vouchers (4 or fewer vouchers in the tract) have characteristics relatively similar to tracts without vouchers. Among tracts with the highest quartile of voucher usage, we see the white population shrink to a minority, almost the same size as the Black population, along with high poverty, unemployment, and foreclosure rates.

Table 5.1 Characteristics of Census Tracts in Urban Areas with Over 1 Million Residents

2008 Tract Characteristics	Census Tracts without Vouchers	Census Tracts with Vouchers	Census Tracts with Bottom Quartile of Vouchers	Census Tracts in Middle 50% of Vouchers	Census Tracts with Top Quartile of Vouchers
White Population	76.35% (22.21)	55.21% (31.88)	73.11% (24.13)	56.41% (30.6)	34.53% (29.33)
Black Population	5.02% (11.27)	16.57% (25.14)	6.15% (11.84)	14.49% (22.7)	31.32% (32.04)
Poverty Rate	8.41% (12.24)	14.70% (12.34)	8.62% (9.52)	13.98% (11.44)	22.32% (12.63)
Unemployment Rate	3.01% (2.3)	4.39% (2.6)	3.39% (2.39)	4.36% (2.41)	5.46% (2.71)
Foreclosure Rate	7.99% (5.13)	11.54% (6.37)	9.24% (5.19)	11.56% (6.25)	13.88% (6.83)
Median Rent	\$1,072 (508)	\$865 (637)	\$976 (435)	\$851 (345)	\$782 (272)
Total Tracts	3,783	35,697	9,248	17,584	8,944

Standard deviations in parentheses.

In sum, the distribution of vouchers across census tracts in major urban areas is patterned on indicators of segregation and disadvantage, a finding that confirms results from earlier work on the subject. Tracts without vouchers have high rents and low foreclosures, but the more vouchers there are in a tract, the worse economic conditions appear to be present. These characteristics also seem to take place in neighborhoods with high minority residence, as whites make up only one-third of residents in high-voucher neighborhoods. What is important to recognize at this point is that this pattern of voucher distribution across census tracts in major metropolitan areas is similar to the pattern of the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession, which hit low-income neighborhoods and communities of color the hardest between 2007 and 2009. The phenomena are, to a significant degree, layered on top of each other, in a series of overlapping neighborhood-level traumas. These patterns apply strongly to the Antelope Valley. In 2008, the valley had an average of 52 voucher households per census tract, putting it in the top 25% of the distribution. Across its 66 census tracts, the average foreclosure rate was 18%, a figure that is in the 90th percentile of the distribution.

In the next section, I turn to examining the change in the voucher distribution across census tracts in these major metropolitan areas, between 2008 and 2016. Understanding where voucher usage grew and declined, and whether those patterns coincide with the distribution of foreclosures in 2008, will help to illustrate the way that the housing market shapes voucher movement.

The foreclosure crisis and changes in the distribution of vouchers

Table 5.2 illustrates three types of data. In the left-hand column, it shows the median number of voucher users in tracts by the 2008 foreclosure rate (in quintiles). In the center column, it shows the mean change in voucher count between 2008 and 2016, again by the 2008

foreclosure rate. Finally, in the right-hand column, it shows the population-adjusted change in the voucher usage rate between 2008 and 2016 by the 2008 foreclosure rate – in other words, the growth or fall of voucher usage per thousand residents of a given census tract.

Starting with the left-hand column, we see that the median number of vouchers in tracts with low foreclosure rates in 2008 was also low, but that number rises, nearly tripling, as the foreclosure rate increases. This is simply another way of looking at the relationship already suggested in Table 5.1. Second, we see in the center column that during the 8 years after the crisis, census tracts across the foreclosure distribution gained vouchers, but these gains were highest in the tracts in the top quintile of the 2008 foreclosure rate. This is echoed by the data in the right-hand column, which shows that, after adjusting for the size of the population in each tract, census tracts in the bottom quintile of the distribution gained, on average, just over 1 voucher household per thousand residents in the years after the Recession. Census tracts in the top quintile of 2008 foreclosure rates gained 2.4 voucher households per thousand residents. In all of the cases described above, we can see that there are high standard deviations, indicating a wide spread of data at each of these points of comparison. Thus, these estimates should be read with an understanding that they represent the means of distributions, which can be quite wide and often overlap significantly with each other.

Table 5.2: Changes in Voucher Counts in Tracts in Urban Areas with Over 1 Million Residents between 2008 and 2016, by 2008 Foreclosure Rate

Foreclosure Rate	Median Number of Vouchers, 2008	Mean Change in Voucher Count	Change in Voucher Rate (per 1,000 Residents)
Bottom Quintile 0%-6%	16.83 (36.77)	4.59 (29.84)	1.10 (17.27)
2 nd Quintile 6%-8.49%	21.31 (35.95)	3.90 (26.77)	0.64 (7.09)
Middle Quintile 8.5%-11.1%	28.23 (46.11)	4.09 (27.85)	0.72 (7.55)
4 th Quintile 11.2%-15.1%	35.79 (50.87)	5.44 (32.37)	0.88 (9.89)
Top Quintile 15.1%-54.76%	44.24 (54.59)	8.22 (34.85)	2.40 (19.33)

Standard deviations in parentheses.

Nevertheless, relying on these means, we can see that vouchers grew across the distribution of foreclosure rates, but that they grew more so in tracts hit harder by the foreclosure crisis. And once again, the Antelope Valley is a case on one extreme of the distribution. There, the median census tract gained 27 voucher households after the recession, putting it near the 90th percentile in terms of voucher gain across census tracts in major urban areas. Adjusted for population size, the mean rate of growth was an increase of 4.48 households per thousand residents, again placing it near the 90th percentile of tracts by rate of population-adjusted voucher growth. Given its already well-documented high foreclosure rate, we can see that the case of the

Antelope Valley represents one particular category of scenarios for the voucher program in the wake of the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession.

Although looking only at raw and adjusted data on changes in voucher rates is helpful, it lacks comprehensiveness. To help add perspective to these findings, I also look at the racial composition of voucher users in these tracts. As mentioned earlier, doing so requires using 2012-2016 data because of the limitations of the crosswalk, but it can nonetheless provide a helpful second perspective on these findings.

Voucher growth after the recession is racially bifurcated and unequal

To better understand the relationship between race, foreclosures, and changes in voucher distributions, I categorize census tracts in major urban areas as follows:

1. Tracts with low foreclosure rates (in the bottom quartile of the distribution) and which subsequently lost vouchers between 2008 and 2016
2. Tracts with low foreclosure rates that gained vouchers
3. Tracts with high foreclosure rates (in the top quartile of the distribution) that lost vouchers
4. Tracts with high foreclosure rates that gained vouchers

Low and high foreclosure rates are determined using placement in quartiles of the distribution of foreclosures. Taking foreclosures as a proxy for severity of recession effects, these categories are meaningful in terms of what they mean for the way the voucher program is operating. Category 1 corresponds to census tracts that would be good places for voucher renters to live, having not been hit hard by the foreclosure crisis, but where vouchers decreased over time. One explanation might be that voucher renters were priced out of those neighborhoods or could not easily find willing landlords due to a tight market. Category 2 represents tracts in

which the voucher program is working ideally— moving tenants into neighborhoods that are more stable and which are likely to represent better contexts for low-income movers. Category 3 represents a mixed outcome for the program. On one hand, voucher density declining in high foreclosure neighborhoods might be an indicator of the crisis disrupting their housing, but it might also suggest that post-recession, voucher density declined in neighborhoods that might be ill-suited to support them. Finally, Category 4 – tracts with high foreclosure rates that subsequently gained vouchers – represents situations in which the voucher program is working poorly, putting tenants in neighborhoods experiencing the most economic difficulty and which would be poor contexts for economic progress and social stability over time. Categories 2 and 4 are the ideal types representing the best- and worst-case scenarios of the voucher program, and I will focus the subsequent analysis on those categories of census tracts.

Table 5.3 presents descriptive data about census tracts in these four categories. It reveals important differences in neighborhood characteristics between low and high foreclosure tracts in the country, and in the composition of voucher users. Tracts in both high-foreclosure categories had much lower rates of white residency and much higher rates of Black residency, poverty, and unemployment, as well as lower median rent prices. This strongly suggests heterogeneity in the trajectories of voucher tenants using the program. Not only might voucher tenants have widely differing experiences between low-foreclosure neighborhoods that gained vouchers and high-foreclosure neighborhoods that gained vouchers, but there may be additional explanations as to which voucher tenants end up in those scenarios.

Table 5.4 offers one way of understanding that heterogeneity by revealing the racial composition of voucher residents in these categories, as measured in 2016. It should be noted again that these data are limited in that they are only available for census tracts with more than

10 voucher units (tracts with less than 10 voucher units have racial composition data censored to protect tenant privacy). Nevertheless, we can see that there is a clear racial dichotomy in the voucher composition of the “good” and “bad” scenarios. Black voucher tenants comprise a smaller share of voucher tenants in tracts with low foreclosures that subsequently gained vouchers, and a high share of voucher tenants in tracts that experienced high levels of foreclosure and subsequently gained vouchers. To the degree that the race of a voucher tenant drives his or her eventual settlement in one of these types of neighborhoods after receiving a voucher, this may be an important explanation for the eventual outcomes of the program not just in terms of neighborhood attainment but in socio-economic change post-move. Next, I focus on Los Angeles County to show how the Antelope Valley fits within the typologies described above.

Table 5.3: Characteristics of Tracts in Different Categories of Foreclosure-Voucher Outcomes (Major Urban Areas, 2008-2016)

Tract Characteristics	Low Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers
Percent White	72.49% (21.92)	76.00% (19.96)	30.88% (29.37)	35.61% (31.84)
Percent Black	5.65% (9.51)	5.77% (9.85)	29.22% (32.63)	31.51% (34.74)
Poverty Rate	9.89% (9.26)	8.51% (10.19)	21.38% (13.43)	20.88% (14.57)
Unemployment Rate	3.27% (1.77)	2.95% (1.88)	5.66% (2.88)	5.65% (3.41)
Median Rent	\$973 (377)	\$1,019 (424)	\$804 (299)	\$795 (329)
Tracts	3,914	6,612	4,775	6,414

Standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 5.4: Racial Composition of Voucher Users in 2016 in Tracts in Different Categories of Foreclosure-Voucher Outcomes (Major Urban Areas, 2008-2016)

Characteristics of Voucher Renters	Low Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers
Percent White Non-Hispanic	53.41% (28.82)	48.00% (29.17)	18.88% (21.11)	17.28% (19.67)
Percent Black Non-Hispanic	30.07% (27.41)	38.82% (29.28)	63.32% (31.13)	67.84% (29.82)
Percent Hispanic	15.02% (20.04)	12.58% (16.67)	23.07% (27.82)	18.41% (24.34)
Tracts	1,300	1,892	2,983	4,370

Standard deviations in parentheses.

The Antelope Valley’s foreclosure – voucher movement – segregation connection

After the recession, voucher renters moved to the Antelope Valley in such large numbers that the valley is now considered the main destination for voucher tenants moving within the county. Figure 5.4 shows that, alongside South Los Angeles, the Antelope Valley has become the second major site of concentrated voucher usage in Los Angeles. This is a relatively recent phenomenon given the historically low Black population in the valley and relatively high concentration of government-assisted housing in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

To get a sense of how skewed this voucher movement has been, Table 5.5 compares data on voucher usage in the Antelope Valley and Los Angeles County. It shows that, despite accounting for only 3.14% of the county’s population, as of 2015 the Antelope Valley was home to 7.8% of the county’s voucher tenants (Department of Housing and Urban Development 2016). This is the product of growth in the size of the voucher population in the Antelope Valley from 2000 to 2016, as illustrated in Figure 5.5. Table 5.6 provides data on the number of voucher households, residents, and their characteristics from 2000 to 2015, with some years omitted due

to lack of availability from HUD's *Picture of Subsidized Housing*. The table illustrates how the voucher population has grown since 2000, as well as some smaller changes to the racial and gender composition of voucher renters, and changes in the characteristics of the census tracts they are moving to. In 2000, the voucher population was only 2.17% of the total population of the Antelope Valley. That figure rose to 3.71% in 2005, dropped slightly to 3.61% in 2009, and rose again to 5.01% in 2015.

The overall trend of growth in the size of the voucher population as well as growth relative to the valley's population (interrupted slightly in the late 2000s) appears to be part of a long-term re-arrangement of voucher usage inside Los Angeles County. Figure 5.6 scales voucher usage trends to a year-2000 baseline and shows that while Los Angeles County has not seen significant voucher growth, the Antelope Valley's cities have seen dramatic growth over time. This shifting distribution has also contributed to the changing racial landscape of the region, as well as to the way its housing market stabilized and recovered post-recession.

To better understand how this came to be and where the Antelope Valley fits in the distribution of possible outcomes for the voucher program, I revisit some earlier nationwide descriptions for the 5 County Los Angeles region and Los Angeles County in specific. Table 5.7 repeats descriptive statistics presented earlier on a national level for 1) the five-county region of Greater Los Angeles, 2) Los Angeles County, and 3) the Antelope Valley. Comparing the Antelope Valley to the other two geographies, we can see that in many cases it is a strong outlier. It had a foreclosure rate 3 to 4 percentage points higher than the region and county, as well as higher poverty and unemployment rates. Most importantly, it had dramatically higher raw and population adjusted growth in voucher usage between 2008 and 2016, at almost 28 additional voucher households per census tract, or 4.49 households per thousand residents.

Focusing now on just Los Angeles County and the Antelope Valley, Table 5.8 shows the distribution of census tracts in these two geographies across the scenarios of voucher-foreclosure outcomes presented earlier. The table displays all four scenarios used in Table 5.3, but also includes cases that fall outside of those categories. What is immediately apparent is that the Antelope Valley's census tracts are almost entirely in the high-foreclosure categories: only 10 tracts (15%) were in the mid-foreclosure category, regardless of whether they gained or lost vouchers after the crisis. Given that positioning, we can see that the valley's tracts overwhelmingly fell in the high-foreclosure, voucher growth category – what I referred to earlier as the “bad” scenario, because it suggests the exposure of voucher tenants to neighborhoods recently suffering economic trauma.

Next, Table 5.9 repeats data presented in Table 5.4 just for Los Angeles geographies. We can see once again that, even with 2016 data limited to tracts with at least ten voucher households, there are stark differences in the racial composition of voucher holders in census tracts of different outcome categories. The Antelope Valley had no census tracts in the low foreclosure, gained voucher category. But voucher users in census tracts in the Antelope Valley that were in high-foreclosure neighborhoods that subsequently gained vouchers were 74% Black, 9% white, and 16% Hispanic. This is an even more extreme version of a pattern of inequality observed between high- and low-foreclosure scenarios in Los Angeles County and the 5 County Greater Los Angeles region. In the 5 County Greater Los Angeles region, low foreclosure tracts that gained vouchers after the Recession had white voucher populations of 46.83%, and Black populations under 20%, on average. Meanwhile, high foreclosure tracts that gained vouchers after the Recession had white voucher populations of just 11%, and Black populations at nearly 60%. This is strong evidence of a racial bifurcation of voucher trajectories. It appears that Black

voucher residents – whether as a product of the underlying patterns of voucher usage and race in neighborhoods or through the process of movement with a voucher – end up being the predominant racial group in census tracts hit hard by the foreclosure crisis which then gained vouchers, while white voucher residents make up a strong plurality of voucher renters in neighborhoods that largely escaped the crisis but nevertheless gained vouchers.

Figure 5.4: Distribution of Voucher Tenants in Los Angeles County, 2015

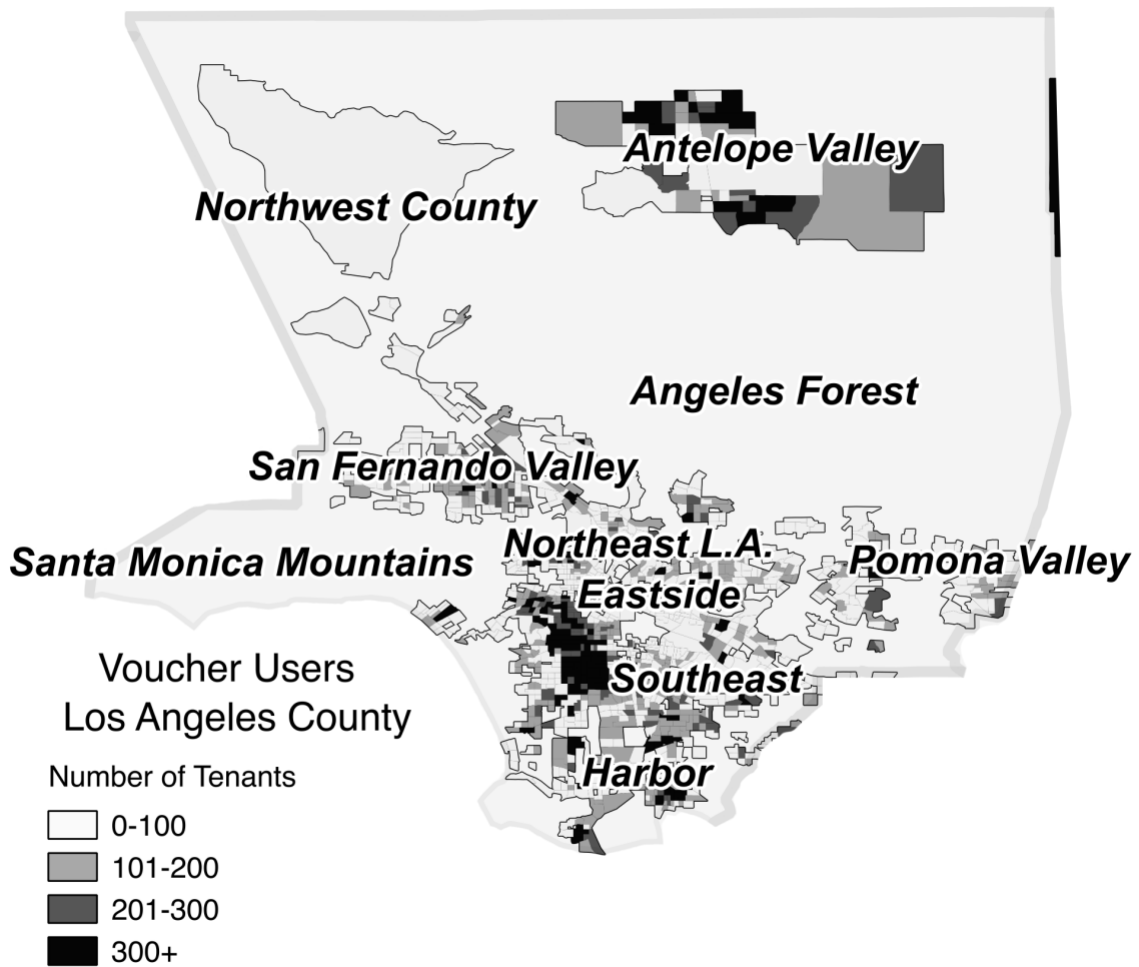


Table 5.5: Voucher and Overall Population Summary Counts, Antelope Valley and Los Angeles County, 2016

Lancaster		Palmdale	
Voucher Population	9,109	Palmdale Voucher Population	5,722
Total Population	161,103	Palmdale Total Population	158,351
Percent of Population Using a Voucher	5.65%	Percent of Palmdale Residents Using a Voucher	3.61%
Antelope Valley		Los Angeles County	
Voucher Population	14,398	Voucher Population	184,533
Total Population	319,454	Total Population	10,170,292
Percent of Residents Using a Voucher	4.51%	Percent of Residents Using a Voucher	1.81%
Percent of Los Angeles Population Living in Antelope Valley	3.14%	Percent of Los Angeles Voucher Population Living in Antelope Valley	7.80%

Source: US Census and Department of Housing and Urban Development figures. Data excludes incomplete voucher and population information from the Census-designated places Littlerock, Sun Valley, and Quartz Hill.

Figure 5.5: Growth of Voucher Usage in Antelope Valley, 2000 – 2016

Source: HUD Picture of Subsidized Housing (2001-2003 omitted due to missing data)

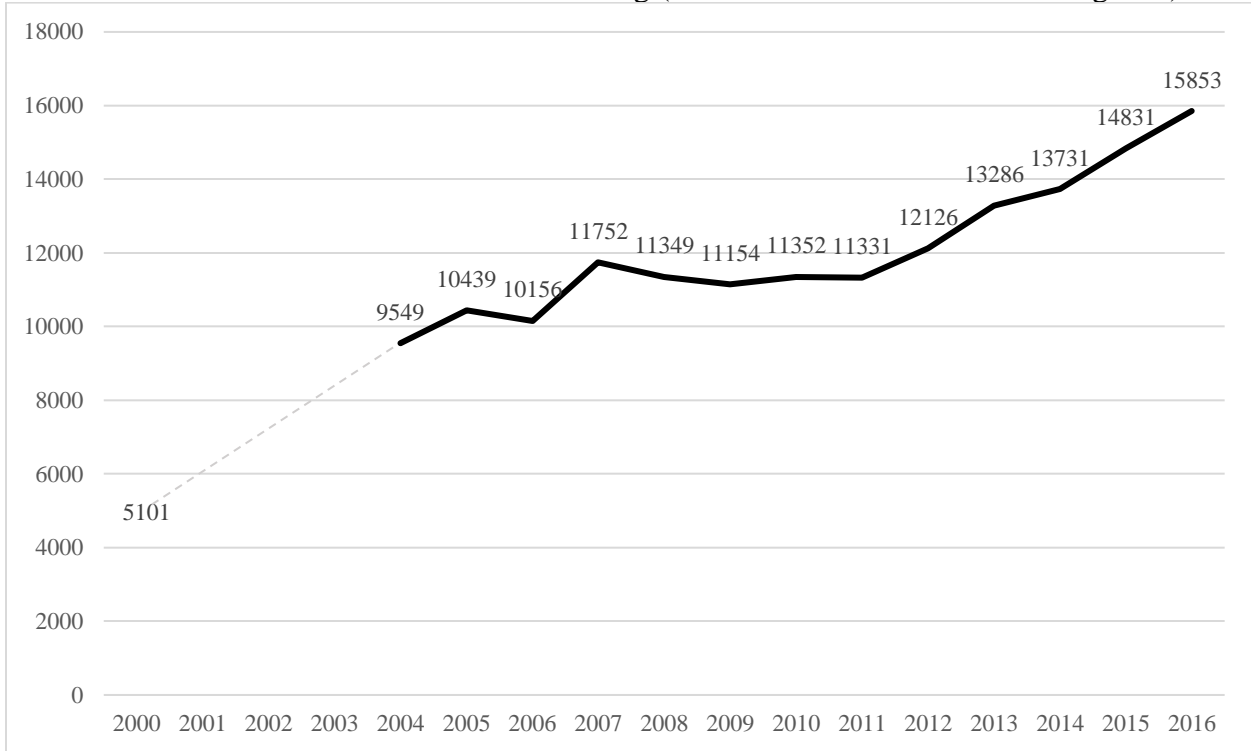


Figure 5.6: Growth of Voucher Usage in Antelope Valley Cities and Los Angeles Metro Areas Relative to Year 2000 Baseline

Source: HUD Picture of Subsidized Housing

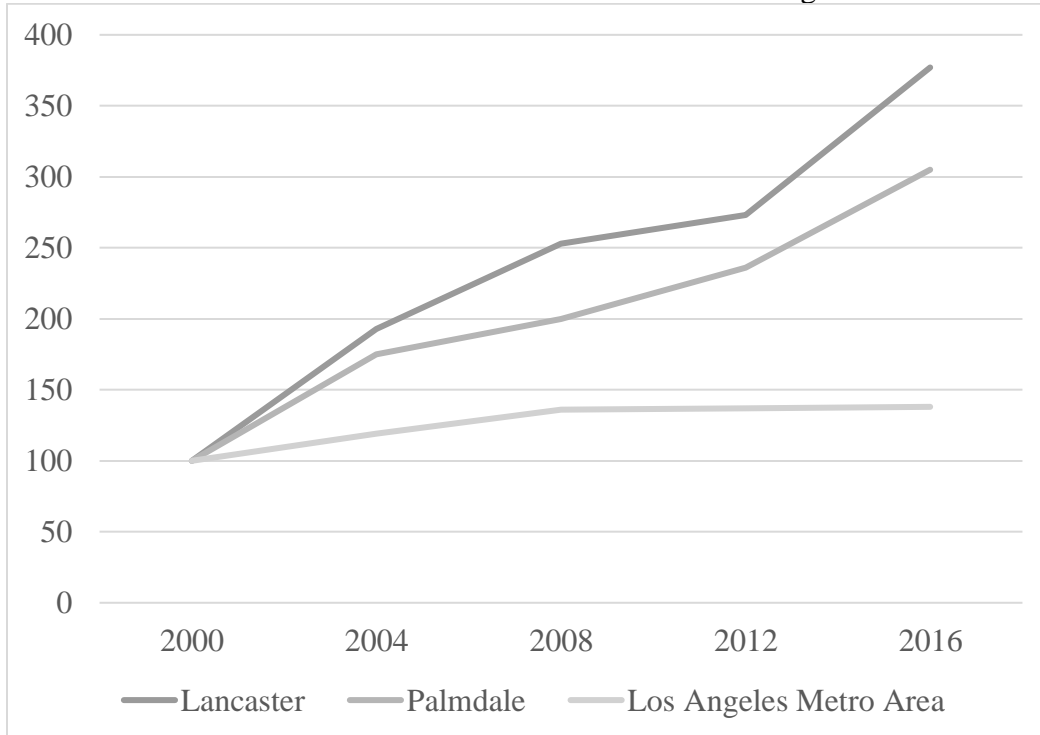


Table 5.6: Characteristics of Voucher Usage in Antelope Valley Cities, 2000-2016

		Voucher Households	Total Voucher Residents	Household Income (in 000s)	% Female Headed Households	% Minority Households	% Black Households	Tract % Minority	Tract % Poverty
2000	Lancaster	864	2764	\$12.0	90%	72%	59%	49%	19%
	Palmdale	615	2337	\$12.7	93%	87%	74%	64%	19%
2004	Lancaster	1670	5708	\$13.3	89%	81%	67%	49%	20%
	Palmdale	1074	3841	\$13.7	90%	88%	73%	66%	21%
2005	Lancaster	1735	6194	\$14.4	91%	84%	69%	49%	19%
	Palmdale	1154	4245	\$14.7	90%	88%	73%	65%	21%
2006	Lancaster	1794	6278	\$15.6	91%	84%	71%	48%	19%
	Palmdale	1084	3878	\$15.9	90%	89%	72%	65%	22%
2007	Lancaster	2228	7494	\$15.8	92%	85%	70%	48%	18%
	Palmdale	1251	4258	\$15.9	90%	86%	68%	65%	21%
2008	Lancaster	2186	7203	\$15.4	91%	85%	70%	48%	18%
	Palmdale	1231	4146	\$15.5	91%	87%	67%	65%	20%
2009	Lancaster	2140	6770	\$14.8	90%	86%	72%	48%	18%
	Palmdale	1310	4384	\$15.2	90%	87%	69%	64%	19%
2010	Lancaster	2130	6754	\$14.4	88%	82%	68%	45%	17%
	Palmdale	1327	4596	\$15.2	88%	87%	71%	61%	18%
2011	Lancaster	2205	6743	\$14.0	88%	83%	69%	45%	17%
	Palmdale	1376	4588	\$14.9	87%	86%	71%	61%	18%
2012	Lancaster	2325	7239	\$13.5	89%	88%	74%	69%	24%
	Palmdale	1450	4887	\$13.9	89%	89%	72%	81%	20%
2013	Lancaster	2447	7830	\$13.6	89%	89%	76%	69%	24%
	Palmdale	1556	5456	\$14.1	89%	90%	72%	81%	20%
2014	Lancaster	2677	8259	\$13.7	88%	90%	76%	69%	25%
	Palmdale	1643	5472	\$14.3	88%	90%	72%	80%	23%
2015	Lancaster	3006	9109	\$14.3	87%	90%	77%	69%	26%
	Palmdale	1755	5722	\$14.3	87%	90%	72%	80%	26%
2016	Lancaster	3255	9904	\$14.9	85%	90%	76%	69%	28%
	Palmdale	1875	5949	\$15.1	86%	90%	72%	80%	26%

2001-2003 omitted due to missing data

Table 5.7 Characteristics of Census Tracts in Los Angeles Geographies

2008 Tract Characteristics	Five-County Greater Los Angeles Region	Los Angeles County	Antelope Valley
Raw Change '08-'16	2.38 (23.46)	1.86 (24)	27.73 (33.44)
Pop. Adjusted Change '08-'16	0.23 (6.27)	0.24 (7.17)	4.49 (7.53)
White Population	37.61% (28.29)	29.26% (27.44)	33.61% (17.22)
Black Population	7.38% (12.67)	8.32% (13.85)	15.02% (8.48)
Poverty Rate	14.32% (11.42)	15.99% (12.16)	19.71% (12.68)
Unemployment Rate	4.45% (2.15)	4.43% (2.18)	5.02% (2.33)
Foreclosure Rate	14.89% (5.45)	13.47% (3.29)	18.27% (2.4)
Median Rent	\$1,151 (383)	\$1,124 (355)	\$1,087 (321)
Total Tracts	4,251	2,324	65

Standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 5.8: Distribution of Census Tracts across Categories of Voucher-Foreclosure Outcomes, Los Angeles County and Antelope Valley

	Los Angeles County	Antelope Valley
Low Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	211 8.99%	0 0%
Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	370 15.77%	0 0%
Middle Foreclosure, Voucher Gain or Loss	1169 49.83%	10 15.15%
High Foreclosure, Lost Vouchers	315 13.43%	7 10.61%
High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	281 11.98%	49 74.24%
Total Tracts	2346 100%	66 100%

Table 5.9: Racial Composition of Voucher Users in 2016 in Tracts in Different Categories of Foreclosure-Voucher Outcomes (Los Angeles Geographies, 2008-2016)

Characteristics of Voucher Renters	Five-County Greater Los Angeles Region		Los Angeles County		Antelope Valley	
	Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	Low Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers	High Foreclosure, Gained Vouchers
Percent White Non-Hispanic	46.83% (31.05)	11.00% (12.12)	46.83% (31.05)	11.00% (12.12)	-	9.45% (5.11)
Percent Black Non-Hispanic	19.84% (17.53)	59.50% (26.24)	19.84% (17.53)	59.50% (26.24)	-	74.04% (8.21)
Percent Hispanic	23.12% (18.92)	29.40% (24.23)	23.12% (18.93)	29.41% (24.22)	-	16.19% (5.56)

Standard deviations in parentheses. The Antelope Valley had no census tracts in the low foreclosure, gained voucher category.

A spatial presentation of these data again illustrates the divergence between these two pathways. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 illustrate the foreclosure-voucher categories described in tables above. Recoded for Los Angeles County foreclosure rates, Figure 5.7 highlights the census tracts which had low foreclosure rates (in the lowest quartile) in grey, and the census tracts within that category which subsequently gained vouchers (in dark grey). This way of displaying the data includes tracts with very low numbers of voucher residents, but nevertheless shows the suburban nature of the low-foreclosure and voucher gain condition. Figure 5.8 highlights the census tracts that had relatively high foreclosure rates for Los Angeles County (in the highest quartile) in grey, and which subsequently gained vouchers through 2016 (in dark grey). Taken together, the two maps show how spatially bifurcated these categories are and illustrate how important the Antelope Valley is to the story of shifting voucher distribution patterns over the past decade.

Figure 5.9 highlights census tracts with voucher growth (in grey) where Black voucher holders made up at least 50% of the voucher renting population (dark grey). This map again illustrates the race-space inequality of the voucher program, in that a relatively wide range of census tracts with voucher growth exists, but most of those tracts are made up of non-Black voucher renters, while census tracts comprised of at least 50% Black voucher renters are contained within high-foreclosure areas like South Central Los Angeles and the Antelope Valley.

Figure 5.7: Census Tracts in Los Angeles County with Low 2008-2009 Foreclosure Rates (grey) and Voucher Growth by 2016 (dark grey)

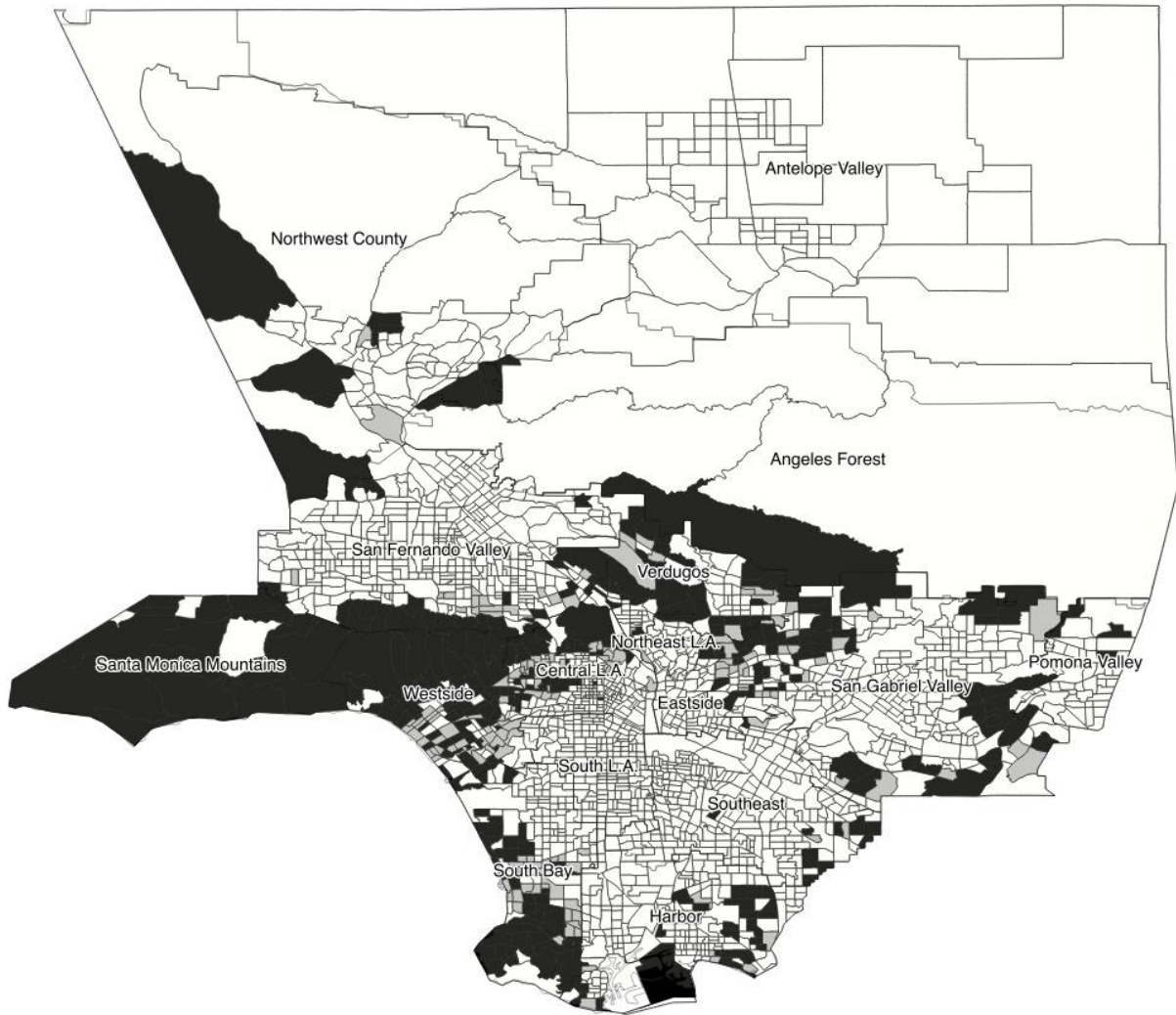


Figure 5.8: Census Tracts in Los Angeles County with High 2008-2009 Foreclosure Rates (grey) and Voucher Growth by 2016 (dark grey)

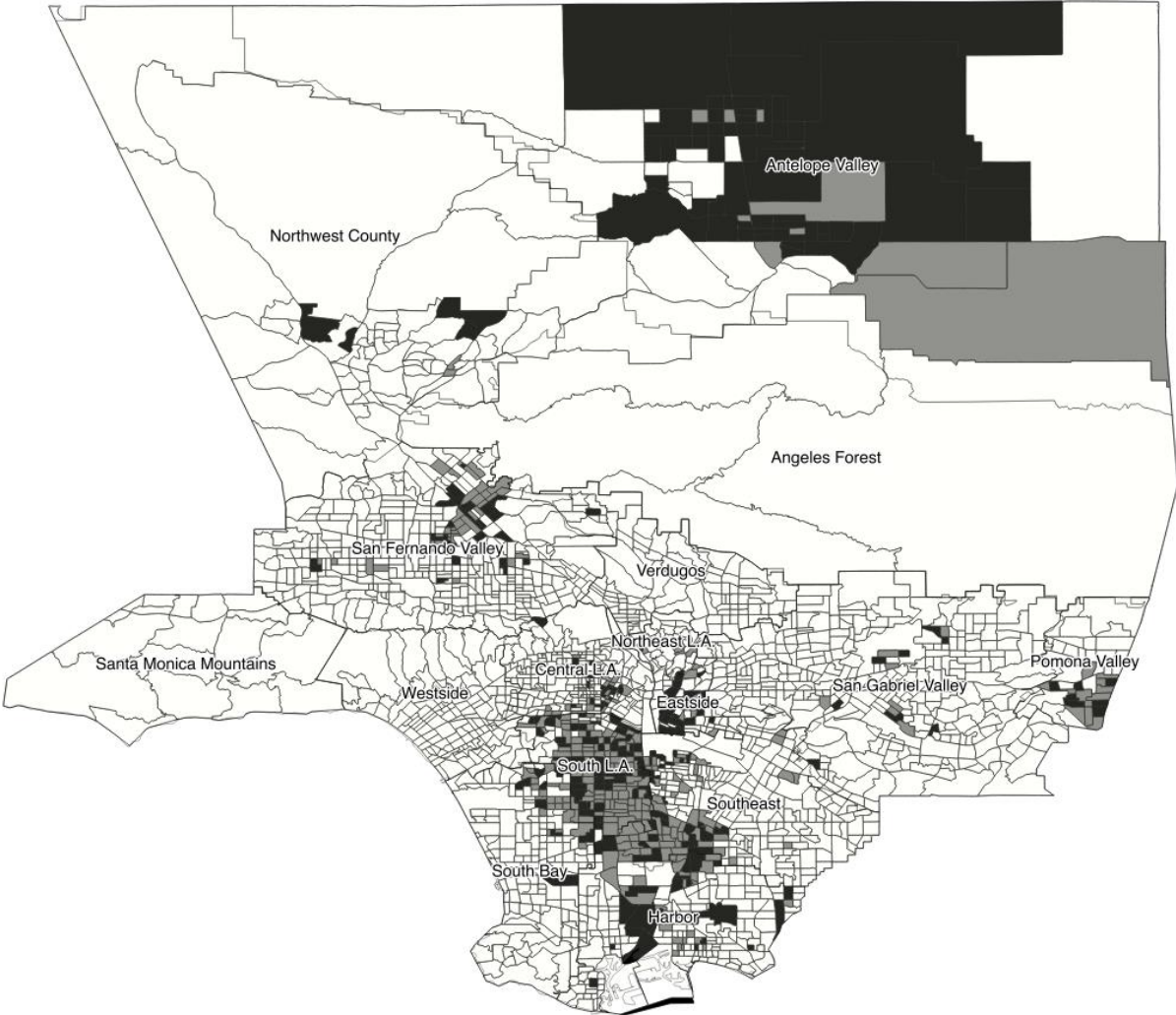
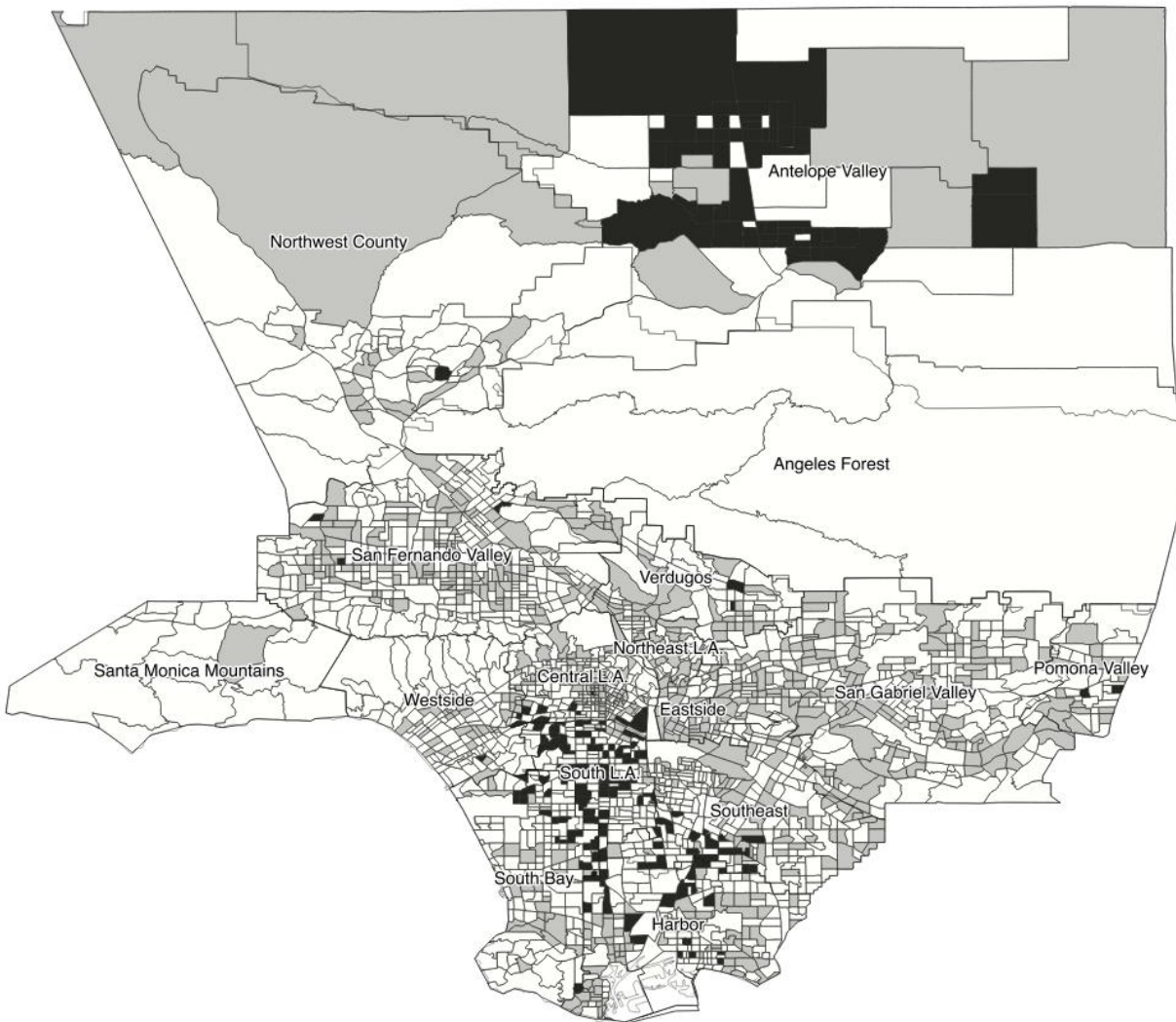


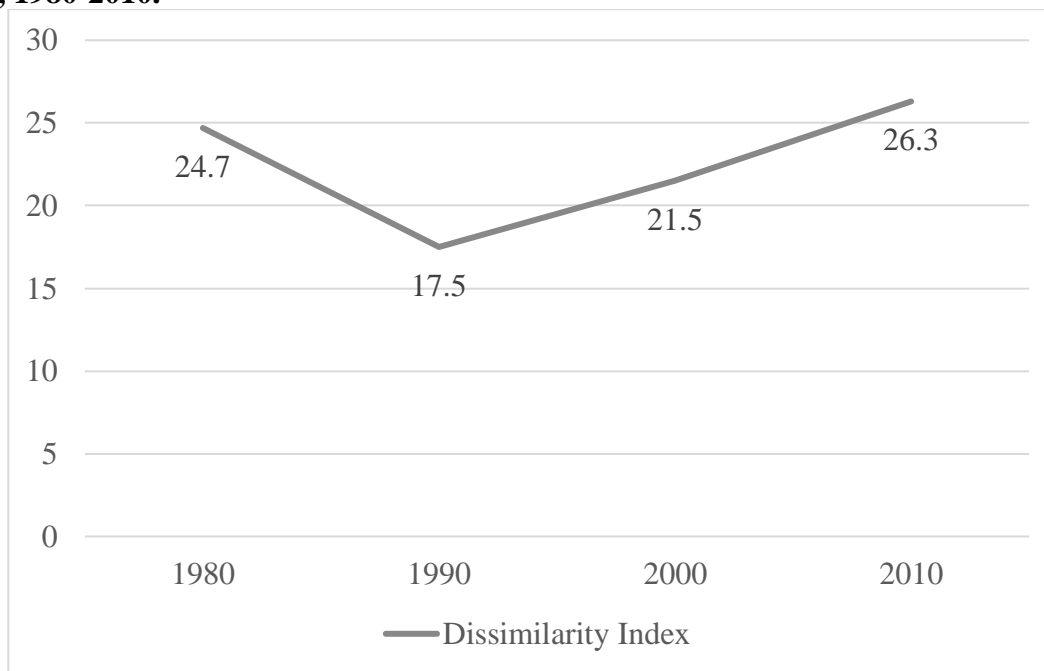
Figure 5.9: Areas of voucher growth (in grey), where the majority of those voucher holders are Black (in dark grey)



With a sense now of how strong voucher movement to the Antelope Valley has been, and much it overlaps with patterns of the foreclosure crisis and Great Recession, one last social indicator worth considering is the shifting nature of racial segregation of the Antelope Valley in the time period when this movement has occurred. Figure 5.10 uses the dissimilarity index to illustrate the degree of Black-white segregation in the Antelope Valley between 1980 and 2010. What the data show is that segregation declined between 1980 and 1990 but has steadily increased in the years since. As voucher renters continue to find housing in the valley, they

therefore are also moving to an area that is increasingly segregating, a stark contrast from the early de-segregatory aims of mobility programs replacing public housing. Moreover, during this time period, Black-white segregation has declined in Los Angeles County, from a dissimilarity index of 81 in 1980, down to 65.2 in 2010 (Logan and Stults 2010). Voucher movement in the Antelope Valley thus fits broader trends of voucher suburbanization and clustering, including in economically and racially segregated neighborhoods and neighborhoods affected by economic difficulty (Covington, Freeman, and Stoll 2011; Wang and Varady 2005; Pendall 2000; Metzger 2014). Explanations include the way the voucher reimbursement is calculated (over larger geographic areas) and the way that the reimbursement rate interacts with market rental prices. They also include the finding by Rosen (2014) that landlords and property owners are known to sort voucher tenants, and those with high vacancies and low demand might see tenants with guaranteed rental support and few options as a solution to their problems. This suggests one possible way that the foreclosure crisis has changed the landscape of the voucher program, both nationally and in Los Angeles County (Pfeiffer and Lucio 2015).

Figure 5.10: Black-White Segregation (measured by dissimilarity index) in the Antelope Valley, 1980-2010.



Conclusions

Housing Choice Vouchers are a significant part of the landscape of federal housing support, having grown dramatically as programs like federally funded housing projects have faded. Where tenants live after joining this program sheds light on the program's ability to achieve goals of integration and social upliftment, and on the role of social structures in shaping possibilities for low-income renters.

In earlier chapters I reviewed evidence that vouchers have been historically unable to escape the broader racial and economic boundaries of American society. In this chapter I have presented evidence to suggest that in the years after the Great Recession, voucher usage may have grown in neighborhoods hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis, and that trajectories of voucher growth by depth of recession harm might be patterned on the race of voucher tenants

themselves. Summary statistics spanning 2008-2016 suggest this in stark terms and indicate that Black voucher tenants have worse locational outcomes than their white counterparts.

Future research that is able to statistically test these patterns to determine if the foreclosure crisis might have been predictive of future voucher usage rates at the census tract level would be of dramatic help. For now, however, the data are at least suggestive of a negative selection effect in which voucher holders are finding themselves in precisely the wrong neighborhoods for future economic growth. Ensuring the voucher program serves to place participants in neighborhoods that offer them a strong chance at economic advancement, rather than neighborhoods where their presence is used to bolster a weak rental market or fill previously foreclosed or vacant housing.

Chapter 6: Qualitative Research Methods and Data

I used qualitative methods to assess the social consequences of voucher movement to the valley. Between 2011 and 2016, I interviewed 39 voucher movers and 43 local residents (those living in the Antelope Valley without a voucher) to gauge the attitudes, interactions, and relationships between these two populations. This approach makes a novel contribution to social science on vouchers because much of the existing literature (as reviewed in Chapter 3) relies on either 1) an analysis of administrative data collected by agencies administering programs or 2) surveys of voucher users. While these methods have provided broadly applicable measures of the effects of participation in the program on a wide range of life outcomes, a qualitative approach can help explain the causes of the effect sizes found in those studies. Moreover, this dissertation's central contention is that the social context of reception must be understood as a mediating factor between movement and socio-economic change. Using qualitative methods is an important way to assess that context of reception and may serve as a justification for broader survey or deeper ethnographic research. In the following section, I provide more detail as to how I located and recruited voucher and local resident respondents, describe the interview populations, and discuss shortcomings of both set of interviews.

The voucher population

Research methods

Between 2011 and 2016, I conducted 39 interviews with tenants who had used Section 8 to move to the Antelope Valley, greeting tenants and arranging interviews after they had finished appointments at the housing authority. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. All tenants were adults over the age of 18 and had moved to the Antelope Valley using vouchers at least six months prior to the interview, to establish a baseline of experiences. Initially, I

contacted participants in person and then conducted the interviews by phone but eventually switched to conducting the interviews in person as well, as it was more convenient for respondents. All interviews were conducted anonymously, with identifying information such as name and address never collected.

In-person interviews provided a chance to speak to tenants at length and allowed for an exploration of their experiences that has not been covered in prior research on vouchers. Questions ranged from demographic and program-related questions to open-ended discussions regarding the respondent's housing, social, and employment experiences after moving. Tenants who had children could answer additional questions about their schooling and social experiences, though many declined for reasons of privacy. Interviews ended with an open-ended period for tenants to discuss issues they felt were most important to properly understanding their situation. Often, these periods would lead to adaptations of questions in future interviews. These features made the in-person approach preferable to methods such as a mail survey, which could not adapt to or anticipate unknown issues. In addition to these interviews, I also observed the condition, quality, and size of housing in voucher-heavy neighborhoods, which I located through talking to voucher tenants and through publicly available maps of voucher usage in Lancaster (Figure 6.1).

Voucher population demographic data

Table 6.1, derived from data made available by the Department of Housing and Urban Development through its *Picture of Subsidized Housing Dataset*, shows that the population of Section 8 voucher tenants across Lancaster and Palmdale is over 70% Black, that nearly 90% of households are female-headed, and that a majority of all households are female-headed households with children. The average number of years since moving in is about 8 in the 2012

data and over 9 in the 2016 data. This is roughly consistent with the data specific to the tenants I interviewed in the Antelope Valley, whose characteristics are described in Table 6.2.

Table 6.1: Descriptive Data for the Voucher Population in the Antelope Valley, 2012 and 2016 (*Picture of Subsidized Households*)

	2012		2016	
	Lancaster	Palmdale	Lancaster	Palmdale
Units Reported	2325	1450	3331	1919
People per Unit	3.1	3.1	3	3.2
Rent per Month	401	405	398	398
Income per Year	13568	13966	14909	15063
1 Adult with Children	56%	60%	53%	52%
Female-Headed	89%	89%	85%	86%
Female-Headed with Children	58%	64%	54%	54%
Minority	88%	89%	90%	90%
Black	74%	72%	76%	72%
Hispanic	14%	16%	13%	18%
Years Lived In	8.1	7.8	9.5	9.75
People Total	7329	4887	9904	5949

Table 6.2: Descriptive Data for Voucher Renter Respondents

Voucher Tenants in Antelope Valley		
Gender		
Female	30	77%
Male	9	23%
Race/Ethnicity*		
Black	32	82%
White	4	10%
Latino	2	5%
Unknown	1	3%
Location		
Lancaster	12	31%
Palmdale	17	44%
Lived in both, or other part of A.V.	10	26%
Time in Antelope Valley		
Less than 1 year	4	10%
1-3 years	12	31%
4-10 years	8	21%
More than 10 years	9	23%
Unknown	6	15%
Origin Neighborhood		
Los Angeles City	18	46%
Los Angeles County	12	31%
Outside LA County	6	15%
Unknown	3	8%
Reason for Move		
Economic	9	23%
Dissatisfied with City (Space/Safety)	11	28%
Emergency	4	10%
Family	3	8%
Other	8	21%
Unknown	4	10%
Children		
Has children	21	54%
Total	39	100%

**Rough estimates based on incomplete reports by respondents and author's observation. Should be treated as suggestive, but not definitive.*

As Table 6.2 shows, 30 of the 39 voucher renter respondents were women (77%) and 32 were Black (82%). Race and ethnicity numbers here are estimates based on responses and personal coding of the data, so they should be treated as suggestive rather than definitive. Nevertheless, these figures track with or slightly exaggerate the data from the total population of voucher users from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, detailed in Table 2. Most voucher renter respondents live in either Lancaster or Palmdale, with some reporting having lived in both or living in other small cities in the Antelope Valley. Sixteen respondents, or 41%, lived in the Antelope Valley for fewer than 3 years, and 9 (23%) lived in the Antelope Valley for more than 10. All respondents started out living somewhere outside of the Antelope Valley and moved there because of or through the voucher program. Thirty respondents (77%) moved to the valley from either the City of Los Angeles or somewhere else in Los Angeles County, with a smaller number moving from another part of California or outside the state. A number of factors might help determine their movement, including the supply of easily accessible voucher units, tenant preferences, economic circumstances, and the information available through their networks. For example, many individuals reported finding out about this program through family members and friends, or through administrators of their prior housing assistance programs (such as county public housing), and many reported knowing others in the Antelope Valley prior to moving. It is often these friends, family, and supportive administrators who help tenants get onto the waiting list and navigate the application.

When asked why they chose to move, voucher tenants referenced a wide variety of primary motivations. Nine (23%) cited economic circumstances, such as the inability to find a landlord that would rent to them in other parts of the county. Eleven (28%) cited dissatisfaction with the city in areas like safety and adequate living space, issues particularly important to

voucher renters with children. Several residents, especially older ones, stated that they wanted to provide a stable environment for the children or grandchildren under their care, mentioning such desires as providing their child with their own bedroom or gaining access to a better school system in the Antelope Valley. Finally, 7 respondents (29%) referenced family reasons or emergency circumstances to explain their movement decisions. Family members who already lived in the Antelope Valley were often extremely helpful in terms of making the region palatable and making the move practical, especially under the emergency circumstances that individuals often found themselves when receiving their voucher. Overall, respondents appear to have concluded that moving to the Antelope Valley was a practical way to find better housing, escape a neighborhood, or provide better conditions for their children through the voucher program.

Limitations and positionality

Locating respondents by visiting the local Housing Authority has shortcomings that may plausibly affect results. For example, although voucher holders are compelled to visit the Housing Authority regularly for various administrative requirements, voucher tenants with administrative problems are likely to visit more often than those with more positive experiences. If those administrative problems were distributed non-randomly amongst voucher tenants, it may bias my sample and findings. Other factors that might shape the sample include accessibility barriers (such as transportation access), transitions out of the voucher program based on economic success, or evictions or other departures from the program for tenants with poor experiences. It must finally be noted that a series of measured (such as access to transportation) and unmeasured (such as motivation and networks) factors may influence who uses a voucher to move to the Antelope Valley. However, I saw no other viable way of locating voucher tenants, as

they comprise too small a part of the population to be easily discoverable through neighborhood visitations, and a snowball sample approach would also omit the most vulnerable and socially isolated voucher tenants.

In addition, as mentioned in the introduction, my relationship to the voucher-renting population in the valley is also worth considering. As a graduate student at UCLA who is of South Asian descent, I do not share many of the life experiences of many of the respondents I interviewed. These differences span race, class, and gender, and likely affected the questions I asked, and the answers I received. Undoubtedly, I was unaware of some of the difficulties experienced by my respondents and failed to ask questions that would have brought those issues to light. In other cases, respondents may have felt uncomfortable disclosing some of their experiences to me because of the gulf between myself and them. If they were not entirely sure they could trust me, they may have understandably held back some information or curtailed their answers.

Local residents

Research methods

This project assesses the reaction to voucher movement by the local community through semi-structured interviews with 43 local residents in a deliberately chosen field site with high voucher usage in Lancaster, California. Like many cities, Lancaster is informally split into an east and west side: west of the 14 highway the city is more affluent with fewer voucher holders, and east of the 14 highway it is more diverse, less affluent, and home to more voucher tenants. The average sale price of a home in East Lancaster is 20% lower than in West Lancaster. I chose to focus not just on the views and experiences of residents in East Lancaster, but specifically on the views of residents in one neighborhood in a voucher-dense area of East Lancaster. This

approach favors a more thorough and holistic picture of one neighborhood's reception and reaction to the voucher program at the expense of a broader conception of Lancaster's response or the views of local residents with less exposure to the program or to voucher tenants.

Thus, using the City of Lancaster's 2008 Housing Needs Assessment (reproduced in Figure 6.1), I selected a neighborhood reported to be high in voucher usage as a study area (City of Lancaster, 2008). The population in the larger zip code area that contains this neighborhood in East Lancaster grew by roughly 15,491 people between 2000 and 2014. Of that growth, 42% (just over 6,500 people) was attributable to growth of the Black population. Between 2009 and 2015, the voucher population has grown from roughly 2000 tenants to roughly 2600 tenants, with a majority of these tenants also being Black. In that zip code, the median household income in 2015 was \$42,835, substantially less than the city's median income of \$49,057. Roughly 26.7% of individuals lived below the poverty level, and the Black poverty rate was even higher, at 34.5%. The same racial dichotomy exists in employment — in 2014, the white unemployment rate was 9.8%, while the Black unemployment rate was 18.9%. Additional demographic data about the field site's zip code is presented in Table 6.3. 77% of voucher tenants in Lancaster identify as Black (non-Hispanic) and 87% of voucher households there are headed by a woman. The median income in Lancaster's Section 8 households is \$14,317, far short of the citywide median household income of \$49,057.

Figure 6.1: Concentration of Section 8 Housing in Lancaster (Antelope Valley), 2008



Table 6.3: Demographic Data for Zip Code 93535 in the City of Lancaster (2011-2015 American Community Survey Estimates)

Population		Education	
Census 2000 Total	57,791	Percent high school graduate or higher	77.50%
2015 ACS Five-Year Population Estimate	73,979	Percent bachelor's degree or higher	9.60%
Race and Hispanic Origin		Housing and Income	
White alone	64.35%	Total housing units	23,247
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	46.54%	Median Household Income	\$40,588
Black or African American alone	22.38%	Individuals below poverty level	28.60%

Source: American Community Survey, 2015 Estimates

After selecting a neighborhood with a relatively high rate of voucher usage, I used a straightforward method to contact potential interviewees: I went door to door in the neighborhood, one street at a time, soliciting interviews with adults in the household who were not currently using the voucher program. I conducted these interviews on weekends in order to maximize the likelihood that tenants were home. However, this method may be biased against types of tenants who systematically may be more absent on weekends than weekdays. I received positive responses from roughly one in five households that I contacted. The remaining cases included non-responsiveness either due to the home being vacant, the tenant not being present, or a rejection for various reasons ranging from hostility to lack of familiarity with the program, to a lack of time to answer my questions.

Interviews consisted of both open-ended and closed response questions. Interviews were recorded with consent, and in the three cases in which multiple residents of a household spoke on record, each individual was counted as a separate interview. In some cases, unfamiliarity with the voucher program limited responsiveness, and in other cases, the specific interests, knowledge, or concerns of the interviewee dramatically changed the direction and content of the interview.

Local resident demographic data

Table 6.4 displays demographic data for the 43 local resident respondents in this study. The sample contained a roughly even number of men and women, but I coded the majority of respondents as white (28, or 65%). Although the race and ethnicity data are products of both comments by respondents and my own coding, and therefore should be taken as suggestive rather than definitive, I estimated that roughly 6 (14%) local resident respondents were Black, and 9 (21%) were Latino. Although 8 (19%) respondents reported living in the Antelope Valley

their entire lives, others took a variety of pathways to living in Lancaster, with 17 respondents (40% of the total sample) having moved to the Antelope Valley from other parts of Los Angeles County, and 10 (23%) having moved from other parts of California or from out of state. Aside from those born in the Antelope Valley, the average number of years lived in the Antelope Valley (including moves within the valley) was just over 20 years. Although many respondents declined to answer this question, the most common occupations provided were in the broadly construed areas of construction, manufacturing or mechanical work; health; education; and aerospace (the once-dominant industry of the valley). Of those not working, the most common reasons included attending school, being a stay-at-home parent, or retirement. Although knowing enough about the voucher program to have an opinion was a prerequisite for participating in an interview, I found that 20 respondents (47%) knew someone with a voucher and 9 (21%) knew a family member or friend with a voucher.

Limitations and positionality

Choosing to conduct interviews in one neighborhood, which involved knocking on doors across a small set of blocks, creates important limitations to this study. For example, I found that my sample was more heavily skewed towards white residents (or residents I coded as white) than the larger city and zip code in which my interview site is embedded. This could be an outcome of differential distributions of residents by race and ethnicity in Lancaster – in other words, had I conducted more scattered interviews throughout a larger area, I may have returned a more representative sample. But I chose to focus interviews in one voucher-heavy neighborhood in the hopes of being able to obtain a better understanding of the community-level response, and I felt that this benefit outweighed the downsides of an inaccurate representation of the city.

As with my interviews with voucher movers to the Antelope Valley, my positionality relative to local residents undoubtedly played an important role in shaping the interviews and data I collected. First, many local residents were loath to speak to me, lowering my response rate. In many cases, interviewees were reluctant to provide baseline demographic information, preferring instead to provide their views on the voucher program without revealing their race, age, or employment status. This dynamic is similar to traditional understandings of social desirability bias, in which respondents are less forthcoming to interviewers due to the sense that there are prevailing norms against certain opinions they hold (Krumpal, 2013). In this case, however, respondents may have been more willing to participate, or more forthcoming in participation, based on the feeling that information about their personal characteristics had not been collected. Although allowing local residents to shape the direction of interviews reduced the amount of demographic data that I could collect, as well as my ability to achieve consistent response rates for every question, it preserved the trust and participation of respondents and opened additional lines of inquiry that may not have been available otherwise.

Table 6.4: Descriptive Data for Local Resident Respondents

	Local Residents in Lancaster	
Gender		
Female	22	51%
Male	21	49%
Race/Ethnicity*		
White	28	65%
Black	6	14%
Latino	9	21%
Moved from		
Born in Antelope Valley	8	19%
Los Angeles County	17	40%
Other California City	6	14%
Out of State	4	9%
Unknown/Decline to State	8	19%
Time in Antelope Valley		
Born in Antelope Valley	8	19%
Average among others	20 years	
Occupation		
Construction/Maintenance	9	21%
Health	4	9%
Education	4	9%
Aerospace	3	7%
Unemployed/Retired	6	14%
Other	4	9%
Unknown	10	23%
Familiarity		
Knows anyone w/voucher	20	47%
Family/friend w/voucher	9	21%
Doesn't know anyone/DTS	14	33%
Total	43	100%

**Rough estimates based on incomplete reports by respondents and author's observation. Should be treated as suggestive, but not definitive.*

Chapter 7: A Tangle of Prejudices: Voucher Movement and Local Reception

Having described the scale of voucher movement and the possible macro-economic and policy reasons for this movement, I now turn to reasons voucher tenants provide for moving, the way local residents understand this movement, and the broader themes emergent from interviews with local residents that describe the racial and political environment of the Antelope Valley. This chapter helps foreground the next two, which describe the efforts to remove Black voucher residents and the effects of this environment and threat on Black voucher renters.

Voucher tenants move for practical reasons, not neighborhood preference

As demonstrated in Table 6.2 most Section 8 movers to the Antelope Valley came from within the county, particularly the City of Los Angeles. But the explanations for moving to the valley are complex and operate at multiple levels. These include the supply of easily accessible voucher units, tenant preferences, economic and social circumstances, and the information available through their networks.

When asked why they chose to move, voucher tenants more often reference dissatisfaction with their current living conditions or family-related and sometimes emergency reasons, than they did cite positive aspects of the Antelope Valley that might have drawn them to it. Respondents explain that violence, gangs, and poor school quality are the factors that drive their dissatisfaction with their previous neighborhoods. Tenants with children report moving to the Antelope Valley seeking to provide their children with more stability and safety. Several residents, especially older ones, state that they wanted to provide a stable environment for the children or grandchildren under their care, expressing such desires as providing their child with their own bedroom or gaining access to a better school system in the Antelope Valley. They did not mention public transportation as a factor in their movement decisions, but this is more likely

attributable to the fact that their decisions were largely based on availability, space, and affordability. Overall, respondents appear to have concluded that moving to the Antelope Valley was a practical way to find better housing, escape a neighborhood, or provide better conditions for their children through the voucher program. In many cases, these forces overlap in the lives of individual voucher respondents who I interviewed. One example came from my conversation with Cheryl, a mother who had moved to the Antelope Valley 18 months prior to my meeting her. She explained her process:

Cheryl: I got kids and it was too much shootings, gang bang, just robberies, it was just too much. My son – somebody tried to rob my son in front of the apartment that we lived in and I'm like – and they're the same age as him. I don't raise my kids like that.

RK: So up here because of safety.

Cheryl: Yeah, and also because it was easier for me to get a house up this way with the amount that they was giving me for my voucher versus being down in LA. They want \$1100.00 for a single. Where \$1100.00 can get me at least a two bedroom over this way, you know. So it's like I could – I have a house out here. I would live in an apartment only out there.

RK: So you looked around to use the voucher out there?

Cheryl: Yeah, it wasn't worth staying.

RK: Okay, I see.

Cheryl: Not the areas, none of that.

Here we can see that Cheryl's concern for her child's safety was a primary motivating force, but that it had to coincide with her desire for adequate housing space and the dynamics of the housing market across the county in order to compel her move to the Antelope Valley.

Tenants with vouchers can find housing one of three ways: by encouraging a private landlord to opt into the program, independently finding a landlord who already accepts vouchers, or relying on websites and lists of landlords and property owners who consciously opt-into the

program and advertise to voucher renters. Tenants in difficult circumstances often choose the third option because it is a fast and reliable method of securing housing on a short deadline. In addition, the relatively low cost of units in the Antelope Valley allows voucher holders to maximize other factors that may be important to them, such as housing quality or housing size. For example, voucher tenants with children may be willing to live in a sub-optimal location in exchange for a larger apartment that can better accommodate children. Rosenblatt and DeLuca (2012) provide extensive evidence demonstrating how voucher tenants consider trade-offs when making movement decisions.

In addition, seemingly unrelated aspects of the voucher program — such as the unpredictability of when individuals on a voucher waiting list will receive a voucher or the limited windows of time that tenants can search before making a move — can also influence what types of units new voucher tenants may find or settle for (DeLuca, Garboden, and Rosenblatt, 2013). Finally, tenants who are already in the voucher program may also serve as informal agents channeling new tenants into a familiar destination. Thus, despite the many obvious disadvantages of moving to an area that is far from Los Angeles’ employment opportunities and social ties, and which may include other negative factors such as poor public transportation or social services, there are still many factors that may persuade tenants to move to the Antelope Valley.⁹ As Pendall et al (2015) suggest, voucher holders with access to transportation may be better equipped to choose housing in more distant suburbs than voucher holders without access to a car. The varied forces shaping voucher movement reflect Krysan and Crowder’s (2017) social structural sorting theory.

⁹ Data from the American Community Survey and the National Transit Database, compiled by Reuben Fischer-Baum, indicate that the Lancaster-Palmdale area ranks as the 143rd of 290 cities in an index of trips per resident. See: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-your-citys-public-transit-stacks-up/>

Local residents see voucher users as a growing threat

Group threat

Voucher holders account for just 5% of Lancaster’s population. When asked to give an estimate of the voucher population, 6 respondents (14%) estimated the voucher population as 25% or less of the total Lancaster population. This is a large overestimation of the true size of the voucher population, but not as large as most other respondents’ errors. An additional 9 respondents (21%) estimated the voucher population to be between 25% and 50% of the city’s population, and 19 (44%) respondents believed the number was over 50%. These responses are consistent with literature on majority groups’ innumeracy when perceiving the size of minority groups. They may also reflect an assumption that other Black residents in Lancaster are voucher tenants, but the Black population itself is only 20% of the city’s total population.

These overestimates of the voucher population correspond with other evidence that local residents see voucher tenants as a growing threat – 18 (42%) used language during the interview that referenced invasion, threat, or demographic concern. The widespread perception of voucher “invasion” suggests confrontation and competition between these groups. In some cases, older tenants traced the present conditions back to Lancaster’s relationship to Los Angeles in the 1960s, before the Los Angeles Riots and before the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Linda, one of the oldest Lancaster residents interviewed, conveyed this history as follows:

“There was a community east of Palmdale called Sun Village. In those days, most of them lived there. Now the people who were here then, the black people, they were high-class people. I mean they didn't go around selling drugs and getting in jail for the most part, at least the ones I knew. And the children, not many, were here in school but the ones that were, were very nice. Then came – I think the riots in LA in 1966. That was the first indication I had of how horrible it really was...”

Here Linda is recalling the status quo prior to the passage of Fair Housing laws in California and across the country in the 1960s. As detailed in Chapter 4, Black residents were

only allowed to rent or buy in Sun Village and white residents like Linda liked it that way. In her view, things have gone downhill ever since.

“Well, I can just tell you that for the first time a black family moved into this neighborhood, there went the neighborhood. And that was about 1988, I think. I know there was not the first family. We had a lovely family. They owned a religious bookstore that were here when there was – I think it was a law passed that there had to be a black family in every block. They were gonna put a black family in every block in Lancaster. That started during the '60s. This was the NAACP. And they did it.”

These explanations of the history of race relations in the Antelope Valley are consonant with the documented history of the valley and voucher tenants' own sense of the valley's history. When describing the environment of racial hostility present today, one voucher tenant, Nate, explained,

“Nothing starts right away, so it must be something that's been lingering along going out here, and people that's been out here since the late 70's, 80's when it was unincorporated that's pretty much ran the town. So, you probably have generations of people who have those type of racist views that instill it in their kids and their grandkids and their grandkids.”

In other cases, respondents offered more elaborate theories of voucher “invasion,” suggesting that moving voucher tenants into the Antelope Valley was part of a deliberate government strategy that included efforts to redevelop parts of inner city Los Angeles, or that voucher movement to their neighborhoods was otherwise being orchestrated in a deliberate but opaque and undemocratic fashion. Craig, a middle-aged man who worked intermittently in roofing and tile, offered such an explanation:

“Oh they cleaned up L.A. Not the whole – I mean you go to South Central it's still South Central, but...there was sections that they moved up here...they tore down their projects and they moved them up here into Section 8 housing and then they tore down the projects and they build condos.”

These stories are important background for present attitudes and understandings of diversity and voucher movement. Voucher tenants were not moving into a blank slate of a

neighborhood; rather, they were moving into a city that was home to long-term residents with a clear awareness that their neighborhoods were changing rapidly, in ways that were out of their control, and in ways that were not to their benefit. In these ways, local residents may have been predisposed to suspicion and hostility towards voucher tenants moving into their neighborhoods – making it that much harder for those tenants to successfully integrate.

The sense of threat was intensified by a common application of the voucher label or identity onto neighbors that fit assumptions local residents harbored about program participants. The most common examples came from race and behavioral cues, but they carry with them moral and character judgements about individuals assumed to be voucher tenants. A summary of local resident attitudes is presented in Table 7.1.

Race as voucher

While most local residents did not volunteer that they were actively engaged in identifying voucher tenants or that they were gaining information from the neighborhood watch, almost half revealed other ways they assessed who might be a voucher tenant – either by inferring from race or by inferring from behavior. A sampling of comments made by 9 respondents (21%) that fit the racial identification code include:

Chris, a younger interviewee employed in laying tile, said, “I don't want to sound racist, but there's more black people.” Russell, an older former aerospace employee added, “I never see anybody but African Americans getting Section 8.”

Anne, a middle-aged interviewee in the restaurant business: “It sounds very discrimination [sic] to me. I don't want to go against nobody, but I think most of the people having Section 8 is African Americans. I think. I don't know.”

Finally, Dennis, a student, explained: “I would say a racist comment on that, just saying what I’ve noticed it looks like there’s more African-American getting it more than anything else, but I think, like I said, it just comes into the being lazy part at the same time.” Dennis’ comment exemplifies the slippage between racial identification and a deeper judgement of the morality or decency of those neighbors he believes are using a voucher.

These comments suggest that many local residents assume that their Black neighbors are voucher tenants. No respondents whose comments fit these categories made a subsequent attempt during the interview to distinguish between race and voucher status. Given the fact that voucher tenants are far from the only Black residents of Lancaster, this may contribute to the overestimation of voucher population by respondents, as well as the feelings of invasion and threat. Based on evidence from studies of racial attitude and perceived threat, respondents who indicate elevated perceptions of threat may be more likely to respond negatively to voucher tenants and other members of the Black community on their blocks. These findings echo Brown Hayat’s (2016) argument that “Section 8 is the new N-word.”

Behavior as voucher

Comments that either directly or indirectly applied the voucher label to a neighbor based on their behavior or violation of an expected norm took many forms, and often invoked racial stereotypes. Nine (21%) respondents made comments that corresponded with this coding and that employed a variety of logics (sometimes even contradictory ones).

Shirley, a middle-aged interviewee employed by the local school district said, “A lot of them I see just – every morning we leave and I see people just hanging out, sitting on their front porch not going to work. Just hanging out.” David, a Mexican-American interviewee employed in the aerospace industry explained his reasoning: “Because you see people on Section 8, they've

got Mercedes, BMWs...Nice ones. I paid mine off, but I work.” And Helen, a former Caltrans employee who moved to Lancaster for cheaper rent after a workplace injury said, “You can just tell. They usually don't have a car. Their lawn really looks bad. Not just because of the drought. It's really dirty. It's a lot of trash.”

There are several themes that could be discerned in these comments: first, that a perceived lack of labor is associated with voucher tenancy; second, that cleanliness or dirtiness was associated with voucher tenancy; and third, the repeated refrain of “you can just tell.” In some cases, respondents discussed contradictory indicators of voucher tenancy: some associate it with the inability to own a vehicle and others associate it with too many cars or cars deemed to be too nice. David’s logic of identification reflects the limits of using superficial characteristics to draw conclusions about voucher holding – he owns a nice car but identifies voucher holders as other people with the same cars who he assumes haven’t paid off their loans. What it is that indicates to him that they have not paid their loans is left unspoken.

Moral judgement

In the examples cited above, a neighbor is presumed to be on a voucher if they are unable to keep their properties up to an expected minimum standard in the neighborhood, or if they are deemed to have exceeded the living standard of the neighborhood by taking advantage of public services to purchase a car beyond their presumed means. These assumptions carry with them moral weight. Those in the neighborhood, especially those who are Black, who rise too high or sink too low must be explained somehow. Someone presumed to be on a voucher (again, often a racial presumption), cannot simply be affected by the economic trauma affecting everyone in the valley, nor can they suggest the possibility of economic success beyond the observer’s own status. Thus, they must be deemed to be voucher holders, despite a total lack of evidence as to

whether the judged person is indeed using a voucher or not. And if voucher holders are bad (insofar as they are unable to keep property clean or so devious as to cheat the government), then the gulf between them and true local residents only grows, elevating the observer to a higher moral plain.

Further, although these cues for voucher tenancy do not explicitly rely on race, they do rely on stereotypes that operate along racial and gendered lines. The fact that most voucher tenants in Lancaster are Black women suggests that assumptions about voucher status based on vehicle ownership may be of a piece with longstanding tropes about Cadillac-driving welfare queens (Hancock, 2004). Marissa, a Black local resident, was aware of this reasoning and turned it on its head:

“I’m a house mom... I see what goes on in the area. I don’t see young black kids and gang bangers walking up and down the street in the middle of the day. I see white people. So, I guess they’re all Section 8 because they’re not at work. I’m paying their rent. So that racist stuff – that annoys me. That white lady, she don’t work. That means she’s on Section 8. She’s home all day. She’s seeing everything. She must be on Section 8.”

Finally, what binds these cases together is the consistent role of observation in reaching conclusions about who might be a voucher tenant. In total, 18 respondents (42%) made comments directly suggesting some sort of visual observation to categorize their neighbors as voucher users. The practice of surveillance to determine voucher usage, and the role of race and racial stereotypes in forming these inferences feed into both an oversized perception of the voucher population and negative attitudes towards voucher tenants.

Table 7.1: Local Resident Attitudes towards Vouchers (N=43)

Characteristic		Number and Percent		Characteristic		Number and Percent	
Sense of Group Threat	Used words or phrases suggesting a sense of threat	18	42%	Social Disorder Complaints	Cited noise	10	23%
	Used racial shorthand to identify	9	21%		Cited cleanliness	9	21%
Identifying Presumed Voucher Holders	Used indicators of disorder to identify	9	21%	Cited cars	8	19%	
	Generally welcoming	6	14%	"Voucher Tenants are Lazy"	18	58%	
Attitudes towards Voucher Holders	Generally neutral	8	19%	"Voucher Tenants Commit More Crime"	14	45%	
	Generally hostile	29	67%	"Voucher Tenants Don't Fit In"	11	35%	
Attitudes towards Voucher Holders	Voiced negative racial stereotypes	14	33%	Responses to Opinion Statements (N=31)	"Voucher Tenants Abuse the System"	16	52%
	Voiced negative gender stereotypes	7	16%	"Voucher Tenants Bring Problems"	12	39%	
	Voiced economic resentment	16	37%	"Stop Sending Voucher Tenants Here"	9	29%	

A tangle of prejudices

A widespread culture of hostility from local residents

Out of a total of 43 interviews, 29 (67%) included a significant expression of hostility towards the voucher program or voucher tenants. An additional 8 (19%) interviews included what could be characterized as negative sentiments but overall maintained a neutral stance. Only 6 (14%) interviews could be characterized as uniformly favorable towards vouchers. If social integration is a necessary intermediary step between movement and economic success, these findings demonstrate that it is not a guarantee. As the elaboration of these overall attitudes will demonstrate below, the suspicion and hostility of a local population can become something of a community veto to the presence of voucher movers. The handful of local residents who viewed voucher tenants favorably likely comprised too small a population to provide meaningful social support to those tenants, and the fact that this group also included the 3 self-identified Black respondents suggests that those who did support vouchers were also worst positioned to spread those views.

To the degree that mobility programs rely on communities to welcome low-income minority movers and integrate them into the social and economic fabric of the community, these findings illustrate what it looks like when a neighborhood says no. Among those who expressed hostility towards vouchers, greater perceptions of threat mapped on to greater hostility to voucher tenants. Of those who made only a small overestimation of the size of the voucher population, 33% had a negative view of the program and 25% had a negative view of tenants. Of those who made the largest overestimations of the voucher population, 52% had a negative view of the program and 45% had a negative view of voucher tenants.

Respondents were also offered a battery of statements to which they could assert agreement, neutrality, or disagreement. 31 of 43 respondents participated in this portion of the interview, with the remaining 12 cases deviating from the formal interview plan due to the respondent's subject interests or time. As illustrated in Table 7.1, of the respondents that answered these questions, majorities agreed that voucher tenants abused the program and were lazy, and pluralities agreed that they brought problems to the neighborhood, committed crime at higher rates than others, and did not fit in. And while a plurality wanted the government to stop the voucher program, most tenants were neutral on the question of whether the government should take additional steps to monitor voucher tenants.

Hostility on the basis of race and gender

Local residents expressed a complex mix of racial and economic resentments towards voucher holders. Although the examples below are reported in distinct categories, many interviews contained multiple types of stereotypes or featured comments that engaged in multiple stereotypes at once.

A common assumption among respondents was that voucher tenants were Black - 14 respondents (33%) made comments about voucher tenants that employed negative racial stereotypes. The subjects of these comments included sexual behavior, laziness, intentional attempts to gain government benefits, crime, and drug use. The extended comments by Michael, a middle-aged man in the real estate business, illustrate the ways that ideas about vouchers were intertwined with ideas about race, gender, sexuality, and culture:

“Michael: “...it's not the Section 8 woman that lives there. That's fine and all that. But it's all the fucking riff-raff they bring with them. All the 98's that come up here from LA and hang out in the yard and fucking barbecue, couches, all that shit in the front yard.

RK: - What's a 98?

Michael: Ninety-eight is security code for blacks...it's not like saying black. You know what I mean?...It's a neutral term.

RK: So you're saying that the tenants can be good but there's other people that come in with them –

Michael: Tenants can be okay, like it's just the momma and the little couple of kids or whatever, that's fine. But that's not what you get. You get all the cousins staying overnight, you get the drug dealing, all the bullshit. I've seen them. Go down to the Section fucking 8 office and watch them...Watch it. Watch what happens. You can see them all. They're all the same size. They all eat the same. Go ahead.

RK: And this is based on your personal experience –

Michael: It is the fucking reality! My experience is reality.”

I interviewed Michael under unusual circumstances. Having just left his front yard after interviewing his partner, I was walking down the street to the next home I would try to visit when Michael pulled up beside me in his car. Upon hearing from his partner that I was asking about Section 8 he so strongly wished to tell me his views that he drove down the road to catch up with me. I was startled and somewhat concerned for my own safety by this, but it turned out that Michael's excited state was related to having a chance to tell someone how much he hated voucher renters.

I conducted the interview in the street through the window of his car. Michael's increasing agitation while speaking about voucher tenants was not unique - other respondents similarly became agitated when speaking about these topics. The common practice of referring to voucher tenants as Black worked to racialize a group defined by economic status while also “voucherizing” Black residents of the Antelope Valley who did not use the program. Ultimately, although Michael proved to be an outlier in terms of the sheer number of racial stereotypes verbalized, roughly one in three interviewees made comments about the voucher program or tenants that included one or more racial stereotype.

Michael's response also unveils the role of gender in these attitudes. Black women are the face of vouchers in Lancaster - 77% of voucher holders are non-Hispanic Black and 87% of voucher households are headed by women. For this reason, all of the comments made about voucher tenants have gendered implications. But in some cases, respondents verbalized specific ideas about voucher-holding women. In Michael's case, his opinion of the voucher program is bound up with his views of Black women. His comments exemplify the racial stereotypes and obsessive monitoring of Black women in the Antelope Valley. In order, he cites Black women's living arrangements, Black visibility and joy (the front lawn and barbecue comments), and stereotypes about drugs and criminality.

Later in this interview, Michael issues similar comments about Black cooking and dietary practices, asserts that Black voucher tenants are "professional" welfare recipients, and claims that voucher holders (who he assumes are Black women) simply "wait about four years and then squeak out another one, so they can always stay on the program." These comments are echoed by other respondents who comment on voucher tenants' sexual practices, number of partners, manipulation of pregnancy or disability to qualify for welfare or housing support, and parenting practices. One explained the program by saying, "'If a woman gets pregnant and has a child she has everything paid for. Her boyfriend lives in the house. They get free house. Free rent. If she goes to college they get more money, and they have another child, more money and they get this, that and the other.'" In another interview, a respondent echoed the welfare queen myth, stating that they opposed the voucher program because "my friend goes and gets her welfare check and she sees people pulling up in their Escalades to go collect bills."

Hostility on the basis of economics

Economic resentments motivated hostility towards vouchers among 14 respondents (33%). These concerns centered on the idea that the tenants themselves did not economically need the benefit of the voucher program. Susan, a factory worker's widow, exemplified the common suspicion that the voucher tenant population did not truly need government assistance, explaining, "Oh, there some that need it in the worst way and that's ones that I would like to see get it...But we have it just taken advantage of. They live on it." Although comments about deservingness were common and were echoed by assertions of program abuse (see Table 3), many respondents made their economic complaints based on comparisons between voucher tenants and themselves. Dorothy, an elderly widow who had moved to Lancaster in 1958, compared what she felt voucher tenants paid to what she believed they should be paying:

"I'm here fifty-ish years, tried to make it at home and how do you think I feel when I see some of these people that their Humvee's sitting in their yard and not in their garage at the Section 8 houses over there, and \$300.00 - \$400.00 for a \$2,500.00 a month house. To me, that is a problem."

The resentment felt by Dorothy was based on a perception that voucher holders were getting too much support, an unfair benefit that itself was a problem. She sees the quality of their vehicles as an indicator that they are receiving too much government support, and that this surplus is facilitating the purchase of cars that are nicer than they should be. She believed that instead, vouchers "should be given to handicap[ped] people, people that really deserve [them]." These comments echo a longer documented history of the concept of deservingness in attitudes towards welfare and other social programs (Gilens, 2009). But another set of comments drew even more specific comparisons between voucher and local residents. In these cases, respondents tended to see their own economic positions as equal to those of voucher tenants. This perception gave rise to comments that saw the unfairness as stemming from only some people in a homogenous group getting government assistance. Dorothy observed, "they're living in better

houses than we are.” Ashley, a young mother, explained that she opposed vouchers “Because when you see someone who's able to buy a lobster because they don't have to pay rent...I don't get lobster.”

Lancaster’s economic struggles during and after the Great Recession may have contributed to this perception of economic similarity between local resident and voucher tenant, but these comments are of a piece with a larger body of research illustrating how comparisons among people in difficult economic positions who are nonetheless differentiated by race or another status can drive feelings of resentment (Hochschild, 2016). A variation on these comments featured respondents arguing that voucher tenants had an easier time on the rental market, as property owners saw them as a source of guaranteed long-term revenue at or above market value, while private renters, especially after the recession, could not provide such guarantees.

Craig, the long-time resident of the valley who lost full time employment and now worked part time in roofing, explained his resentment of vouchers by tracing his own economic history. He explained,

Back in the early 2000’s I was delivering roof tile when the housing market was sky high and in 2001 or 2000...I can’t remember exact what year we bought this house, but this house, it was like \$190,000 and the prices were going up. Like every week the prices were going up. If we wouldn’t have qualified for this house I think our – the most I qualified [for] was like \$195,000 and this house was \$190,000 something. If we wouldn’t have qualified for this one houses this size would have been \$200,000 after. I was busting off my ass off, man, I was working 60-70 hours a week.

In other words, Craig purchased his home in the valley at what was near the maximum of his credit range and as the market was coming close to its peak. This made him especially vulnerable to the recession, and when the housing market eventually crashed, Craig’s own fortunes took a downturn, as he no longer had much work delivering roof tile. His family lost

ownership of their home in 2009, but, as he put it, “we’ve just been here, they haven’t foreclosed yet.” He continued to explain,

Say they foreclose on me and I gotta move out. I got no – I went bankrupt, I got no credit, I got really nothing. I work and my wife works, but someone that has a house that’s gonna rent it out to me; would they rather rent it out to me when they don’t know me from Adam, or they’ll give it to some guy that has Section 8 because they know they’re gonna get the money from the government?

Although Craig also holds racial stereotypes about voucher holders and objects to the program as socialist, he also sees himself as being disadvantaged by the program itself. If he needed to leave his home and rent a new one, (Gilens, 2009) he feels he would be looked upon less favorably than voucher tenants, a view particularly striking in the context of a larger body of research documenting landlord manipulation of voucher (Rosen, 2014; Desmond & Perkins, 2016). Indeed, settings where the voucher program is financially advantageous for property owners to participate in areas with high foreclosures or vacancies, where HUD’s fair market rent is higher than private market rent, or where there is high job turnover - may also be settings that are particularly economically stagnant - where neighbors may themselves be struggling in similar ways as voucher tenants themselves.

In many cases, respondents appended to these comparisons a divination of the attitudes of voucher tenants. One of several examples included a tenant adding, “They’re just kinda – I don’t know. They feel entitled, I think.” Divinations of the attitudes, morals, or values of voucher tenants were common - among the subsample of respondents who were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “voucher tenants are lazy,” 58% agreed.

Vouchers and social disorder

Watching the actions of those who they believed to be on vouchers drove the formation of negative attitudes among 15 (35%) of respondents. That voucher tenants were not conforming

on their own to expectations and norms of local residents was a significant source of agitation for respondents. Aggravations included noise, dirtiness, and a myriad of indicators of social activity and leisure.

Noise from voucher tenants (or their children) was cited as a frustration by 10 respondents (23%). Respondents complained of neighbors arguing, playing music too loudly, making too much noise when returning home at night, or their children playing too loudly in the yard or street. Similarly, 9 (21%) of respondents, expressed hostility to the voucher program or its tenants based on their lack of cleanliness. This was primarily assessed from the exterior of the house, but also included inferences about the interiors as well (despite no respondent indicating having been inside of a voucher tenant's home).

In a similar fashion, many respondents made comments that indicated their displeasure at what they saw as indicators of tenant excesses. Eight interviewees (19%) were aggrieved by the presence of additional cars, or the parking of additional cars in front of other homes. One respondent explained, "Yes, it's affecting me...I like all the people on the neighbor's side fine – but I think that that's a [voucher] family right there. That car is not supposed to be there. That bothers me." The presence of additional cars was read as a sign that voucher tenants were socializing when, as beneficiaries of government support, they should have a more ascetic lifestyle. Similarly, complaints about lights being on at night, or other indicators of being awake and active at late hours, were issues of agitation for several respondents. One explained, "...you have a lot of noise at night, people not letting you sleep because, again, some of them don't work and they're up all night, sleeping all day, when you want to be sleeping 'cause you work." Here, violating the norms around noise and timing was tied directly to status and worthiness through work.

The examples demonstrate the circular logic of first identifying voucher tenants as whoever is noisy or dirty and then criticizing the program because the people presumed to be on it were noisy or dirty. But they also demonstrate how everyday issues between neighbors can be read as an indicator of the character of voucher tenants. Living an ascetic lifestyle demonstrated that tenants truly deserved and appreciated their support, but having too much fun, being lazy, not working, staying up late, or having too nice a car meant abuse of the program, and by extension, abuse of themselves as taxpayers. In many interviews, respondents provided answers that conveyed frustration about their inability to exert control over the neighborhood, to stop changes, or to make voucher tenants behave appropriately. These frustrations are the basis for a policing regime carried out by a minority of residents in the neighborhood.

Experience of hostility by voucher tenants

Tenants' social experiences

While the effects of moving to the Antelope Valley include greater perceived safety, tenants consistently express a low level of comfort and integration in their new surroundings. Individuals who move to the Antelope Valley often do not feel comfortable there. From Table 7.2 19 of 32 (59%) of tenants feel safe in their neighborhood, but 14 (44%) feel comfortable and 9 (28%) feel welcomed by their neighbors. This speaks to the tradeoff being made by voucher movers to the Antelope Valley where, in return for safe, stable, and affordable housing, they give up feelings of social integration and welcoming that leave them feeling isolated and, as documented in subsequent chapter, vulnerable to harassment.

Most respondents report negative feelings about their neighbors or the city as a whole. When asked about the environment in the area, Patricia, a middle-aged black tenant explains, "It's just a different environment. When I came up here, people don't speak to you...they're

really disrespectful. When you do speak to them, they try to figure out why you're speaking to them...they treat people however they want to treat them, they talk to them however they want to talk to them." Regardless of their overall satisfaction with their circumstances, nearly every tenant interviewed expressed similar concerns throughout the course of their interviews.

Sometimes, these attitudes were conveyed through social interaction. Andrea describes her relationship to her neighbors as one that is not overtly hostile, but which conveys hostility and superiority nonetheless: "My neighbors haven't been aggressive towards me or my family, but they're not very friendly...Just – they're very cold if you speak to them. Many of my neighbors turn their head. I'm like, oh my God. What was that about? Did I do something wrong?"

At other times, tenants illustrate the less subtle ways local residents make their resentments known. In the following passage, John describes a moment in which a local resident made his resentment of voucher tenants for their receipt of government support overt:

And I've actually been in a conversation – well, in the midst of a conversation where somebody told me, like – well, not told me, told someone else, like, well, you've got this big house. I know you're paying maybe \$400.00 for rent. You know what I'm saying, I could pay your rent. Versus at my house, I got to pay \$1600.

Here the local resident not only expressed his resentment towards voucher tenants over the housing subsidy but also asserted his superiority or greater legitimacy over voucher tenants by emphasizing the financial imbalance between the two.

Other voucher tenants described their new communities as "racist" or "prejudiced," and referred to the people they met as overly "attentive" to them. They described the constant "suspicion" as having created a climate that "made you want to leave." One tenant summarized the experience by saying, "they don't want you next door for some reason. No matter how gracious you are." This comment highlights the trap of respectability politics in the Antelope

Valley, whereby voucher tenants are constantly separated into worthy and unworthy, but the distinction erodes when put to practical test.

Table 7.2: Voucher Tenants' Social Experiences (N=32)

	Reported feeling safe	Reported feeling comfortable	Reported feeling welcomed
No	8 25%	14 44%	21 66%
Yes	19 59%	14 44%	9 28%
Unknown/Unclear	5 16%	4 13%	2 6%
Total	32	32	32

7 respondents were not asked these questions.

Tenants' housing experiences

In addition to feeling social isolation and rebuke, voucher tenants felt constrained to particular neighborhoods on Palmdale and Lancaster's east sides. Both cities are split into eastern and western sides by the 14 highway, which runs north-south through the Antelope Valley and connects the region to Interstate 5 and the rest of Los Angeles. In both cities, the west sides have become more expensive, and well-developed, while the east sides have older housing stock, are generally less developed, and have larger shares of minority residents.

Voucher tenants recounting their experiences trying to rent in the Antelope Valley explained being racially steered to the east side of both Palmdale and Lancaster. Maxine explained how a realtor's beneficence allowed her friend to live on the west side (the wealthier part of both Lancaster and Palmdale). Speaking about her friend, she stated,

She's still on the west side. She's over there up in Quartz Hill. However, this is through a realtor who became very fond of her and I. And so she didn't – she stated to us, "I don't want you guys – I don't want you two on the east side. I want you guys on the west side. That's where you need to be." ...So, she felt like we shouldn't be on the east side; we should be on the west side.

Despite being in the realtor's good graces, Maxine ended up living in East Palmdale, rather than the wealthier westside. In other cases, voucher tenants explained how difficult it was to rent outside of the online listings specifically dedicated to Section 8. When asked if she had tried to rent from a landlord who would consider accepting a voucher renter, one respondent replied, "I have and a lot of them [say] no section eight. We don't participate in the housing choice voucher program." Another explained, "Housing is hard, too, because the minute – if they don't have section eight labeled on their housing and if you inquire about it, you ask [about] section eight, they're like, you know, they hang up. So, I'm like wow." The experience of making these calls to inquire about housing and being quickly turned down because of one's voucher status is degrading. It affects how tenants understand the neighborhood they are moving into before they are even able to find housing and settle in. One tenant explains it as such:

It's a listing I just called. Wade Point Homes. And I talked to them and I was like, "You guys got a lot of beautiful homes do you accept Section 8?" "No, we don't accept Section 8." ...When she told me that I felt that was some type of discrimination with Wade Point. Maybe they think everybody on Section 8 is ghetto or something or a bad person or bad people. That's how I felt when I called them. They're like, "No we don't accept Section 8." I'm like, gosh why not. Okay. I'm coming from the [San Fernando] Valley. Does that make a difference? I'm a Valley girl moving up. Yeah Wade Point they turned it down really quickly, "We don't accept Section 8."

The degrading nature of the exchange is unmistakable. In this and so many other cases, voucher and race are overlapping categories and being denied because of a voucher when one is Black may feel akin to being denied based on race alone. Echoing the history detailed in Chapter 4, another tenant with a longer memory of the region explained that racial discrimination in housing searches was not a solely contemporary or voucher related phenomenon,

Oh, I mean this happened way back in the early 90's though. There was an apartment complex where an agency when you put an application if you were Black they would put like a smiley face on an application when they send it down to corporate office, and the lady who worked in the office, she was white, but she told us about it. She told us what they were doing and they stopped it though after that 'cause they got caught.

These experiences suggest that voucher renters are being re-segregated in neighborhoods they moved to through a program designed to combat the economic harms of racial segregation using mobility. They resonate with findings in Chapter 5 of increasing patterns of Black-white segregation in the Antelope Valley (Figure 5.10) and suggest the ways that the voucher program is unable to overcome the broader social structures that continue to produce segregation.

Tenants' employment experiences

The process of moving to the Antelope Valley forced tenants to find new employment. While many residents of the valley do commute to the city for work, this is a costly option that low-income residents cannot afford.¹⁰ Only one tenant I spoke to referenced commuting to commute to work in Los Angeles.

Respondents work in a variety of occupations ranging from computer repair to transportation, service industry occupations without consistent healthcare and retirement benefits. Twenty-six respondents (65%) reported difficulty in finding a job, attributing this problem to a mix of factors, including a difficult economy, a lack of government job services, and a lack of quality public transportation. Eighteen respondents (46%) specifically reported experiencing employment discrimination.

One tenant attributed the economic problems in the area to a lack of sustained development that could support the population; another suggested that it was easier to find

¹⁰ A sixty-mile drive each way would cost someone \$12 dollars a day or \$60 a week, given \$3 a gallon gasoline.

housing than work because of the ongoing recession. One explanation for these findings is that the same macro-economic circumstances that created such a glut of voucher availability also contributed to the difficult employment environment that voucher mover faced upon arrival. To the degree that the voucher program creates incentives for landlords in depressed areas to house voucher tenants, it sets those voucher tenants up for difficulty finding employment.

Many tenants are dissatisfied with or unaware of government services such as job training and placement and report extreme dissatisfaction with the area's public transportation (so much so that one tenant speculated that public transportation was being purposefully underfunded by the city as a means of making life difficult for its low-income users). Life in the Antelope Valley makes it necessary to have access to a vehicle in order to get to potential work locations (imposing a new cost on tenants), as public transportation is insufficient inside and between these cities. This finding reinforces other research suggesting the importance of transportation in shaping the experiences and quality of life of voucher users (Blumenberg and Pierce, 2014; Pendall et al, 2015; Rosenblatt and DeLuca, 2012). The distance between the Antelope Valley and the City of Los Angeles also means that voucher tenants must have access to a vehicle in order to maintain social and economic connections to the city.

Voucher renters in the Antelope Valley also claim that the city's business owners prefer to hire longtime residents who, as they put it, belong in the city. This finding recalls Farley et al.'s (1978) discovery that real estate agents mimic the biases they expect their clients to have. New residents from Los Angeles, or who are of minority status, are looked upon less favorably and have a more difficult time learning about and getting new jobs. One of the respondents, Martin, a middle-aged black voucher holder, explains,

If you're coming out here for work, keep stepping. There are not that many businesses. You're not going to find a job out here. You can find places to rent

easier than you can find a job. But jobs are scarce, it's obvious. In LA there are jobs all the time, there's more businesses and people are steady expanding...here it's expanding but you'd be lucky. For instance there was that Superior Warehouse that opened. There were a few jobs there, but that thing is gone, now you have to wait for another store to be opened.

As outsiders, Martin and others are often last in line for employment opportunities or are left waiting for new ones to open. In addition to the difficulty of learning about jobs in an unfamiliar setting and of being less preferred by employers because of their newcomer status, Antelope Valley tenants report experiencing high levels of employment discrimination, most often on the basis of race. The 18 respondents who specifically referenced discrimination in employment and hiring, often substantiated their claims with stories describing their experiences of being turned down or steered away from jobs in ways that suggested to them bias against minority applicants or newcomers to the area. One explained, "Yeah, it's hard. Nobody wants to hire nobody. Everybody, we're not hiring, but you have hiring signs up. But you're not hiring?" Kim, an older tenant with boys including a teenager said:

Kim: With my kids, you know it was just hard to understand why everywhere they went out here in Palmdale was really, they never had any openings. But then they could call back to see if they was – you know, have they hired anybody, the position is filled, but they will tell her okay, you're the type of person we're looking for or whatever, you know with her personality or her experience or the way she speak out and stuff, but she never got hired. You know, it would always be some other reason why she didn't get hired because they had to go through different people.

RK: Do you mean that on the phone when someone can't tell what race you are?

Kim: Right, you know and then when they have the interview is it's like a different story. When they see you it's you know.

Tenants generalize from their experiences of employment discrimination to the city as a whole, reasoning that if an employer treats them differently because of their identity, this is indicative of the city's overall attitude towards them. Despite reporting having experienced discrimination, tenants remain employed at rates roughly similar to their pre-move status.

While discrimination may not ultimately prevent tenants from finding employment, it may push voucher holders to settle for jobs for which they are overqualified. For example, Janice is a tenant with professional work experience who moved to the Antelope Valley after losing a job, but felt she had the skills and capacity to return to work in a managerial role. The loss of her job in Los Angeles forced her to rely on housing assistance to support her children. Although she had no particular preference for the Antelope Valley, her immediate need for housing combined with the availability of voucher units there led her to move. However, this move has limited her access to quality employment. As a result of the poor economy and constrained labor market in the Antelope Valley at the time, she has been forced to find employment at a cellular retailer in a sales capacity that she describes as significantly below her skill level. While this diminution of status is painful to accept, she hopes her superiors see her skills and eventually promote her to a managerial position of similar pay and status as she previously had. In the meanwhile, she is thankful that the voucher system has allowed her to maintain a good living situation for herself and her child. Narratives like Janice's suggest that tenants reconcile themselves to tradeoffs between factors such as quality of employment and quality of housing.

These findings agree with prior research that shows a small degree of change in the economic circumstances of voucher users, but they may also unveil some of the specific methods by which economic growth might be curtailed. Voucher users continue to experience clustering and segregation, showing that movement that might appear desegregatory at the city level might not always be so at the local level. Voucher users also face significant economic hurdles such as discrimination, barriers to access, and a poor employment environment. These dynamics might contribute to the poor economic outcomes seen in larger MTO and voucher studies.

Children's experiences

21 respondents (53%) indicated that they had children, including those who did and did not live with them in the Antelope Valley. Despite so many tenants having children, many were reluctant to answer questions about their children's experiences. Tenants with children often considered their needs (such as school quality and having more space in a suburban voucher unit than one in the central city) when making movement decisions, and the experiences of children factored heavily into the overall level of satisfaction of tenants. Of those who answered questions about their children's schooling many were dissatisfied with school quality and experiences or felt that anti-Black and anti-voucher sentiments bled over from the context of housing to schooling. They cite their children's experience of both racially based harassment and class-based derogatory labels such as "Section 8 moocher." Other experiences included a child being told that "if it wasn't for Martin Luther King, Jr, they wouldn't be here" (in the Antelope Valley), and one parent reporting that a group of children chose to dress as Ku Klux Klan members as a prank on career day.

One tenant recounted that she was pleased her son could now walk to school, but worried that his repeated experiences of police harassment put him in danger when walking back and forth unaccompanied by her. Kim recounted her teenage son being pulled over in a vehicle driven by a friend. The officer waited roughly 15 minutes until the city's curfew ordinance went into effect (at 10pm) and then ticketed her son for violating the curfew. Another tenant referred to her children as having to figuratively "fight their way through school." In contrast to parents in Massey et al.'s (2013) study who felt less worried about their children after moving to better neighborhoods, these parents expressed high levels of worry over their children's experiences. But in the historical context of racial hostility in the Antelope Valley's schools described in Chapter 4, these experiences make sense. 15 of 21 respondents who reported having children

said that they did not feel welcomed in the Antelope Valley. This rate, 71% is higher than the overall rate of respondents reporting feeling unwelcome, 53% and suggests that the experience of raising children and the experiences of children of voucher holders in the Antelope Valley was significantly negative. These feelings of discomfort are associated with dissatisfaction with the move to the Antelope Valley, and stand in contrast to the positive economic findings from Chetty, Hendren, and Katz (2015) and positive social and educational effects documented by Massey et al. (2013).

One exchange which links the history of the Antelope Valley, its social conditions for adult movers, and the experiences of children comes from Andrea, one of the longest tenured voucher renters I interviewed in the Antelope Valley. She recounts her experiences discovering the political culture of the Antelope Valley early on in her residency as follows:

Andrea: I'm glad my boys are alive, because the area that we lived in, I might have lost one or more of them. If I had known beforehand I never would have moved here. It's very racist. The first house I got out here, there was confederate flags up. And I kind of didn't even know what they were. I had to do a little research. Like what's that about?

RK: Yeah.

Andrea: Are these patriots? What's that about? And then I moved closer into the city of Lancaster and there was a skinhead meeting at the local Walmart, which I didn't know about, but my boys knew. I said hey, can you run across the street to Walmart? They said mom, we can't go today. It's Wednesday, and it's dark. What does that mean? It's right across the street. Mom, the skinheads is out. Like that's them. Oh my God. For real? At that time, I heard about stuff in the paper about crosses being burned, and people that's running for election who was part of the skinhead movement. I said oh my God, it's racist out here. By being a fair-skinned African-American I didn't really see that or feel that except when my brown kids were there.

Here Andrea is referring to the damned if you do, damned if you don't experience of moving out of a dangerous neighborhood to avoid violence that she believes might have harmed her children but encountering a new kind of violence in the Antelope Valley. The shock of

encountering open symbols and practices of white supremacy is palpable. In the last paragraph, Andrea is likely referring to an incident in 2004 when the son of a mayoral candidate was charged with two counts of attempted murder after he shouted racial epithets and stabbed two Black men (Thermos 2004). As detailed in Chapter 4, in 1993 there was also a cross burning incident in Lancaster. Andrea summarizes her social experiences as the product of a universal system of meaning-making in the Antelope Valley, one which is equally present in personal interactions as it is in the media and broader public discourse:

But [its] the whole culture of the Antelope Valley. You can go to the AV Press any day of the week and you might see something, if you feel like somebody on your street is on Section 8, call this number and you think they're not complying. So that starts with them. Then you hear the city officials talk like that. Then you hear – when I say hear, you see them on T.V. You hear them in the newspaper. So that's what kind of culture we live in.

This chapter demonstrates the context of reception that exists for Black voucher renters moving to the Antelope Valley. While the mobility model largely assumes that movement to a wealthier neighborhood will translate into socio-economic advancement for movers from poor neighborhoods, the possibility that that neighborhood might intervene in the mobility process and prevent that transition is largely omitted from prior work. Here, however, we can see that it is possible for communities to know that voucher renters are arriving, to collectively hold extremely hostile attitudes towards these renters, and to communicate those attitudes to voucher renters - a perverse case of collective efficacy (Morenoff et al. 2001). How the context of reception operates in other voucher contexts and what role it might have in explaining outcome of voucher and other mobility programs is an important question to be answered in the future.

Chapter 8: The Evolution of a Participatory Policing Regime

In this chapter, I turn to the way that racism and opposition to voucher renters manifested in public policy and private actions designed to evict and police Black voucher renters in the valley. This regime both furthers the policing of Black voucher renters and the re-segregation of the Antelope Valley, as evictions as a result of policing remove a disproportionately Black population.

This regime, I argue, is comprised of two parts, the first being actions taken by the City of Lancaster, City of Palmdale, and Los Angeles Sherriff's Department, and the second being actions taken by local residents. In the first, I show how government entities attempted a series of mechanisms to police and evict voucher renters, eventually settling on a legally resilient mechanism of devolving discriminatory complaints targeting Black voucher renters down to the individual level. In the second, I show how local residents making such complaints thus wielded enormous power over the housing and lives of their voucher holding neighbors and used that power to assert control over the neighborhoods and to evict tenants from the neighborhood.

In what follows, I use lawsuits, court documents, and press articles to trace the actions taken by the city and police agencies and illustrate how the code enforcement regime came to be. Then, using interviews with local residents, I show how individuals participated in policing in the manner set up by the city as a way to evict Black voucher renters and reassert segregation.

Lancaster goes to war against its residents

Beginning in earnest after the Great Recession, the city of Lancaster started to look for ways to remove voucher renters. These efforts were spearheaded by Mayor R. Rex Parris, whose opinion of voucher tenants resembled the views of local residents described in Chapter 7. In an interview with the Antelope Valley News, Parris said,

The problem with Section 8 is that it's unbalanced. African-Americans comprise 78 percent (sic) of the recipients but are only 20 percent of the population. That's unfair. So now when you do anything about Section 8 you're called a racist but it's not me that's the racist, the racist is the person who administers the system and thinks that 20 percent of the population should get the majority of the vouchers. (Tighe, 2011).

Parris, in other comments to the public and at city council meetings, made it abundantly clear that his issue was not with elderly and disabled Section 8 renters, but with the remainder of that population, which he believed was unfairly over-represented by Black renters (Blasi 2011). This focus on one segment of the voucher population comes up repeatedly as evidence of racial discrimination in government policy. And it resembles the statements made by local residents to such a degree that it is hard to assess whether the city's subsequent actions are driven by public opinion or simply reflect the attitudes of elected officials themselves.

Yet, it is no surprise, then, that Parris and the City Council sought to act on these views. In 2008, Parris asserted during a City Council meeting, "Make no mistake, this City wants to limit the number of Section 8 units that are placed in this community" (City of Lancaster, 2008). During the same meeting, he emphasized that it was "time to go to war" against Section 8. Parris believed this approach was of a piece with what his city wanted. In a conversation with Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) administrator Margarita Lares, Parris asked for data on the impact of voucher renters on the Lancaster community. When such data did not exist, Parris said to Lares, "I'm more interested on what the neighbors think. I mean, we're assuming that these homes are having a detrimental impact on the morale of the neighborhood, for lack of better word, for the character of the neighborhood (Blasi 2011)." The terms used here, morale and character, are arguably racially coded. The character of a neighborhood that was, entirely white within the lifetimes of its residents may certainly be threatened by the movement of Black voucher renters.

In a March 24, 2009 city council meeting, Parris is quoted as saying to City Manager Mark Bozigian,

Parris: I am tired of working with these people. I want to see those numbers drop. I want us to be proactive in dropping those numbers. I want us to set the goal in this City of how many thousands of Section 8 we are going to get rid of, and then we can at least start being be accountable to ourselves as to whether or not we are moving in that direction. What I unwilling to do is talk about this anymore. We know as much as we need to know. Let's figure what the number, this is the number we will reach, and then we will be able to evaluate if we are doing things in a direction that is moving us into a successful conclusion. And I think we should be absolutely honest and transparent, or whatever word you want to use, to the entire world: we are going to get rid of this many, this number, Section 8, from our community, and that is what we will devote all of our efforts to until it happens. When can I have that number? When can you present something to the Council that this will be the goal of the City?

Bozigian: We could do that right now. Our goal, initial goal, is to get down to the County average, which is half of what we're at right now.

Parris: So now we know that the goal of this City is to get rid of half of the Section 8, right?

Bozigian: Yes. (Blasi 2011)

Creating a partnership to police voucher renters

The first approach Parris and the City Council took to further this war against Section 8 voucher renters was to resurrect a partnership established in 2004 between the City of Lancaster and HACoLA. According to the Memorandum of Understanding written at the time, Lancaster would pay HACoLA \$50,000 in exchange for 2,080 hours of administrative time over a one-year period, targeted towards the voucher program. In 2009-2010, Parris expanded the MoU such that Lancaster paid \$121,266 for expanded investigations of voucher renters. This was matched with \$284,000 from county supervisor Mark Antonovich. It funded the salaries of inspectors and analysts whose sole job was to visit the homes of voucher renters to perform spot inspections of units for violations of HACoLA rules and city laws. This enforcement staff was given office space in the Los Angeles Sherriff's Department stations in the Antelope Valley (there is no local

police force in the Antelope Valley, rather these services are contracted out from LASD), and those officers accompanied the inspectors on their visits.

In a 2007 article about city policing efforts, the Los Angeles Times reported that “more than 350 families have lost their subsidies in the last two years, which is more than 10% of the rolls in the Antelope Valley.” Putting this in broader regional perspective, the Antelope Valley is home to only about 15% of Section 8 recipients managed by the housing authority, but 60% of the agency's subsidy terminations occur there” (Garrison and Rorhlich 2007). From data cited in United States District Court,

“Overall, between 2006 and 2010, the odds than an investigation would result in a recommendation that the participant’s voucher be terminated were over 4 times higher in Lancaster than in the rest of the County and almost 6 times higher in Palmdale than in the rest of the County. Indeed, between July 1, 2006 and November 6, 2010, of the 1173 “proposed field terminations” of Section 8 participants in the entire HACoLA area, a quarter (26%) were generated in Lancaster and a third (33%) in Palmdale, for a total of 59% of all terminations in Los Angeles County – even though Palmdale and Lancaster residents comprise only 17% of the County’s Section 8 households” (The Community Action League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale 2011).

These policing practices were the subject of a lawsuit by local community organization The Community Action League (TCAL) and Neighborhood Legal Services. The suit was joined by the NAACP and Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division and resulted in a settlement dismantling the regional policing partnership that allocated additional staff to targeting voucher renters. The legal struggle over these practices will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 9.

Attempting to create a new Housing Authority

Alongside the more direct policing efforts, the City of Lancaster devised other strategies that would limit the ability of renters to move into the city through the Section 8 program. One idea was to create a new local housing authority that would cover just the Antelope Valley and therefore remove the influence of the county housing authority (HACoLA). This could provide

greater local control over the administration of the voucher program and thereby allow for more restrictions on the program to be passed. In 2008, the city established a Section 8 Commission to look into the feasibility of taking over the program. Ultimately, the strategy was dropped. It seems likely that such a move was overly burdensome, not financially viable, and increasingly unnecessary as other strategies showed promise.

Restricting business licenses so as to restrict renting to voucher tenants

The city also turned to the supply side of the equation to try to stifle voucher renting. If it could not find practical ways to prevent voucher renters from choosing to move to the valley, it could restrict the ability of property owners to rent to them. With this logic, the city looked into the viability of capping the number of business licenses issued for rental properties. A one-year moratorium on business licenses for single family homes was proposed in 2009, but not enacted. Since business licenses for single family homes would be used almost exclusively for renting homes either on the private market or to voucher renters, this strategy would have meant an effective one-year moratorium on any new Section 8 rentals in Lancaster. The city would later return to this strategy of supply side enforcement through the municipal code structure. This reveals a novel mechanism for local governments to restrict voucher renters from moving in. Rather than pass discriminatory policies that could be read as such and be struck down by a court, this strategy simply shrinks the possible supply of rental property by making business licenses a necessity and then capping them to restrict growth.

Racial steering and school-based strategies

According to evidence gathered by the UCLA School of Law, the City of Lancaster also floated or attempted a series of other ideas for restricting voucher rentals. The first was a plan to steer voucher renters away from Lancaster and towards other locations in Los Angeles County.

First, the Section 8 Commission asked HACoLA for permission to make presentations to voucher renters, the content of which was revealed to be a stream of negative information designed to persuade renters not to rent in the area. One example included emphasizing high costs of home heating and cooling that voucher renters might not consider when looking at the cost of renting in the valley. HACoLA declined the request. A final strategy floated by the city in its efforts to restrict voucher renting was to direct enforcement through schools. In 2010 the mayor proposed to HACoLA that the City could begin a program whereby voucher renters with children would have their vouchers revoked if their children missed school. The plan was brought up multiple times, but never adopted, yet it shows the city's deep embrace of culture of poverty logics and its willingness to criminalize children and cast voucher recipients as bad parents.

The nuisance ordinance and a shift in strategy

The strategies described earlier worked to varying degrees. Some were never attempted due to impracticality or illegality, others were challenged in courts after operating successfully for some time. They all put the onus on the city itself and were perhaps more liable to legal challenge for that reason. Though these ideas were not all successful, they indicate the government level animus towards voucher tenants and the determined nature of the city leadership in forcing them out.

Finally, however, the city settled on a strategy that was much more practical. It operated by moving the locus of discrimination down from the city itself to the individuals enforcing city rules. The system, according to TCAL's complaint, originated "[a]fter Lancaster's mayor specifically asked the City Council to —[l]ook into a means for making it very easy for neighbors to file nuisance lawsuits with the assistance of the City against...Section 8 housing."

The city's nuisance ordinance provided "enhanced penalties where there are multiple calls to the police or public safety entities for service – even where there is no actual criminal activity" (The Community Action League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale 2011). The ordinance defined nuisance as:

[a]nything which is injurious to health, or is indecent, or offensive to the senses, or is an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property by an entire community or neighborhood, or by any considerable number of persons.

This broad definition is not unique to Lancaster, but clearly can be used maliciously by anyone seeking to punish a neighbor based on a subjective interpretation of the code. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the municipal code was also amended to state that if a rental unit was the subject of five nuisance complaints in one year, both the tenant and the landlord would be subject to fines and other penalties, which the landlord could avoid by evicting the tenant (The Community Action League et al. v. City of Lancaster and City of Palmdale 2011).

The logic of the ordinance is captured in the minutes of a 2008 Code Enforcement Commission meeting. The minutes recount comments made by City Councilmember Sherry Marquez,

It is time to take the neighborhoods back and make them a safe and quiet environment once again. If people are defrauding the system, they need to leave now because Lancaster will not stand for this anymore. She stated that the City Council approved the introduction of a Nuisance Ordinance at their last Council meeting and that this ordinance will be a great tool to help the City move forward and she provided some statistics regarding Section 8. The Commission should look at trying to accomplish several steps such as how Section 8 works; encourage neighborhood watch programs; the Commission will be the face of the community (Blasi 2011).

Here the city essentially states its intention to partner with local residents to police voucher renters, both through setting up a system whereby individuals can make complaints that result in severe enforcement and by encouraging the creation and use of neighborhood watch

programs under the broader context of this policing. To really bring it all home, the city created a “Good Neighbor Guide” which informed residents of the municipal codes, gave them examples of complaints they could make, and walked them through the process of making a complaint.

The guide told residents,

When a problem landlord, tenant or homeowner becomes responsible for five or more nuisance calls within a 12-month period, each additional call will entail a stiff penalty of \$1,000. When a neighborhood has a persistent problem, residents now have the ability to hit the property owner where it hurts, in the pocketbook (City of Lancaster 2009).

This helped to ensure that the changes were not just made in the law, but that local residents opposed to Section 8 knew about them and knew to take advantage of the new codes.

Although a full record of calls for code enforcement actions, the locations of those calls, and the bases of those calls is not available, some evidence exists to at least suggest how widely the code enforcement system was used. During the last five years, code enforcement has become a more significant public function in Lancaster. The city’s code enforcement revenue jumped from \$10,000 to \$130,000 between 2004 and 2014 (City of Lancaster n.d.). And although it ceased making this information available in subsequent years, in 2008-2009 the city boasted of opening 22,000 code enforcement investigations (13 investigations per 100 city residents) which led to 12,000 violation notices and 3,600 citations. In 2015 the city passed new regulations expanding fineable offenses, granting law enforcement the power to issue code violation fines, and increasing the financial penalties for violations (City of Lancaster 2015). Individual level resistance to integration is a hallmark of this century, and especially the post-1965 period (Delmont 2016). Here it is again being relied on and channeled in a new direction.

Local residents engage in participatory policing

Having documented the widespread hostility of local residents towards voucher holders, it is worth examining the range of actions residents took to adapt to or fight back against these tenants. According to several respondents, many local residents had engaged in white flight, opting to leave the neighborhood once it started changing. Those I spoke to identified with, rather than resented, neighbors who engaged in white flight, even though their departure only increased the supply of voucher eligible homes. Instead, 16 respondents (37%) resigned themselves to unwanted change or took steps to isolate or protect themselves by leaving the house less often or building fences and security systems. One widow I spoke to, had what appeared to be a recently installed gate protecting access to her door from the sidewalk. As I interviewed her in her front yard she pointed to her neighbor's concrete wall built between the sidewalk and his entrance and said, "He's done a real marvelous job, he's built a fortress too, you can see."

Though some clearly drew a sense of safety and control from these measures, many others turned to personal and communal efforts to fight back. These actions drew legitimacy from the larger climate of hostility towards voucher holders and included surveillance, diffusion of information, reporting of tenant infractions to local agencies, and direct confrontations. What is most notable about this participatory policing regime is the prominent and necessary role played by local residents – who play the surveillance and dispatch functions of police. By participating in policing in this manner, local residents further the outcome of removing their Black neighbors through intimidation, impoverishment, or eviction. Data on these responses is illustrated in Table 8.1.

Some local residents were clearly empowered by the city government's hostility towards vouchers acted in an emboldened manner when policing their neighbors. Jim is a retiree who had

moved to Lancaster after leaving the Navy in the mid 1970s. In my conversation with Jim he revealed a “change” in neighborhood relations directly tied to Mayor Parris’ election:

When we got R. Rex Parris in office that was the change up time because he stood up to the mongrels. He stands up for what he believes – he's against Section 8 himself and bottom line is he's got the Sheriff’s department working with him where – I got a Deputy Sheriff on speed dial on my phone. I call him every time I've got a problem on the block. I don't put up with no crap.

The city and its racially hostile local residents fueled each other, with city officials engaged in racist and anti-voucher speech and implementing vicious tactics to evict tenants, and local residents supporting the city ever more while feeling empowered to take the law into their own hands. They did so by surveilling neighbors they believed were using vouchers, dispatching police and city agencies to visit their homes for possible infractions, and directly confronting voucher tenants to assert their preferences and control over the neighborhood.

Table 8.1: Policing Actions Taken by Local Residents

	Number	Percent
Expressed powerlessness	16	37%
Negative opinion tied to observation	15	35%
Supportive of or engaged in monitoring	22	51%
Shared information about voucher tenants with neighbors	4	9%
Volunteered that they had called police or city agencies	5	12%
Had a confrontation with a voucher tenant	9	21%
Total	43	100%

Surveillance and diffusion

A small number of local residents actively investigated which of their neighbors might be using a voucher, but by sharing this information with neighbors either informally or through the

neighborhood watch, they effectively expanded the effects of surveillance much farther. These activities helped some residents reassert a feeling of control over their surroundings and laid the groundwork for further policing.

In multiple cases, respondents being interviewed at their front doors would point out the homes on their block which they knew were rented to Section 8 tenants and describe something about the tenants who lived there – whether they were noisy, how recently they had moved in, why a rental unit might be vacant, and so on. Jim explained in detail the various strategies he employed to identify voucher tenants:

RK: And how do you know when a house is Section 8?

Jim: How do I know? First place, I know every owner of every house in this block and I've got their number. And when someone rents a house and moves in, I ask them.

RK: Okay. You ask the renter or the –

Jim: I ask the owner. Is this Section 8 or are you just renting it out?

RK: Oh, okay.

Jim: And you can always go to the courthouse and find out if it's a Section 8 rental or not.

Jim later explained that he not only worked hard to know when and where voucher tenants were living in his neighborhood, but that he actively worked to organize his community to be aware of and assist in monitoring these tenants. This type of information sharing was not uncommon. Russell, a retired-by-layoff former aerospace employee who had been transferred to Lancaster by his former employer in the 1990s, explained how he benefitted from these surveillance networks:

Russell: ...We have a neighborhood watch here, one guy, and he always knows what's going on all hours of the night.

RK: Oh, okay. So he kind of keeps an eye on things?

Russell: Yeah. Makes the complaints.

Russell did not need to go to the same lengths as Jim to discover voucher renters because he actively benefitted from one of his neighbor's efforts to collect that information and share it amongst local residents. In this way, residents like Jim had an outsized effect on the neighborhood, as their information diffused through networks such as pre-existing friendships between long-time residents or organizations like the neighborhood watch. These networks provided Russell with enough information to allow him to stand at his doorway and point out the homes within eyesight he claimed to know were rented by voucher tenants – adding the tidbits of information he knew about the renters as well.

In some cases, this surveillance and coordination operated through the local neighborhood watch. Four respondents (9%) openly spoke of this program, which served as both an information exchange and a tool of intimidation. Jim explained that that symbolic function, by saying "I'll do anything I can to keep the signs up because that's a good preventative." Although he was frustrated by the scope of territory that required surveillance and disappointed that public participation was inconsistent, he remained adamant about doing his part, saying "I walk my block once a day or twice a day," and added that he would always watch the houses of those who made a good effort to participate in the neighborhood watch. In an interview conducted down the street, another respondent referenced him as a source of information about voucher tenants, an active monitor of the block, and a person who could be relied upon to call the Sheriff's department or city's code enforcement office. Another older resident on a different block expressed thanks for the good people on her street that monitored the "comings and goings,"

again suggesting that while only some residents engaged in very active surveillance efforts, their work had wide effects and was appreciated by others.

Deploying police and city agencies

Local residents did not engage in surveillance simply to know who was using a voucher. Rather, this surveillance was a necessary component of efforts to assert control over and police their surroundings. By watching supposed voucher homes, local residents could then call the local office of the Los Angeles County Housing Authority (which could investigate or evict voucher holders for violation of program rules), the city's code enforcement hotline (which could investigate or fine the property owners renting to voucher holders for violating city rules), and the police (who could make arrests and issue citations). Even if no formal punishment occurred, the inspection or police visit itself was a form of punishment for the tenant and could also function to intimidate them. Deploying these agencies constituted an important part of fighting back against vouchers and provided a sense of agency to local residents. According to Russell, the motivation to make these calls was the promise of evicting unwanted neighbors: "Yeah, well I heard someone tell me that if you rent to someone and there's five complaints about them then they're evicted, and you can't rent no more." Russell's version was near the truth, it closely resembled the terms of the nuisance ordinance adopted by the city and described earlier in this chapter. One striking aspect of Russell's comments is how well he understands the city's new municipal codes, despite relying on a neighbor to make complaints. Whether his knowledge was a product of his social network informing him of these rules, online forums and message boards where opposition to Section 8 is discussed, or the Good Neighbor Guide that the city distributed widely across Lancaster, he knew exactly how many calls were required to evict a voucher tenant and place maximum pressure on his or her landlord.

Just 5 respondents (10%) offered that they made these calls, but they indicated that they made the calls in high volume and often on behalf of others on their block. Jim spoke with pride about the power afforded to him by this dynamic, “I got the Section 8 people thrown out because I was calling Code Enforcement every day. Every day Code Enforcement was over at that Section 8 house.” Later in his interview he detailed one incident in which he called the code enforcement hotline to inform the city that a neighbor had violated housing code when fixing part of her home. The tenant begged him not to file a complaint, but he said he did so anyways, in order to send a message to others that violations would not be tolerated. When confronted by neighbors about his harshness, he recounted saying, “Take your neighborhood watch and shove it. Next time you see somebody messing with your mailbox, call a sheriff. Don't call me to call the sheriff.” Here, Jim revealed his role as a local resident who made complaints on behalf of many of his neighbors and illustrated that these calls were made to both code enforcement and police. When other respondents stated that they were glad someone was making complaints or that they knew someone was keeping an eye on things, they were likely referring to a small number of individuals like Jim, who played this communal role.

Individual level harassment and policing

Finally, not all policing occurred through government channels. 9 respondents (20%) indicated that they had confronted a voucher tenant. These confrontations ranged from milder incidents in which a local resident told a voucher tenant to change their behavior to verbal arguments or threats of violence. One respondent recounted an instance in which he threatened children of a voucher user violence. Jim boasted of carrying a weapon and once using it. Notably, he said that the police had asked him to stop, but he simply switched to walking with a cane, which he called a legal way to carry a weapon. Once, after completing an interview I

witnessed a man come out of his house across the street to chase and berate a Black boy riding a bicycle down the sidewalk in front of his home. These episodes suggest the everyday ways that local residents policed their neighbors and illuminate the difficult conditions voucher tenants live under in this neighborhood.

What a participatory policing regime looks like

Stepping back from these findings, we can see that what now exists is 1) a base of residents who are deeply hostile to the voucher program, as detailed in Chapter 7, 2) a legal scaffolding created by a city leadership that shared that hostility and which incentivizes surveillance and reporting, and 3) a response from local residents that includes participation in policing as a way to evict and remove predominantly Black voucher renters from the neighborhood.

This participatory policing regime is devolved to local residents with certain clear advantages. First, local residents can engage in surveillance of neighbors to a much greater degree than the city itself or even police patrol cars. Moreover, when complaints are made, it is not the city choosing who is the target, it is the local resident choosing who to report on. If local residents report in a discriminatory manner, that is different than the city doing so, and perhaps provides the city more legal cover. In carrying out this surveillance and reporting, individuals are enfolded into policing themselves, perhaps lessening their ire towards the city for not solving the problem itself. Either way, this participatory policing regime illustrates a new and effective mechanism of exerting control over Black residents and pushing them out of this suburban neighborhood.

Chapter 9: The Effects of a Participatory Policing Regime

In Chapter 7, I reported on the attitudes of local residents to voucher tenants, and in Chapter 8 I illustrated how those attitudes are turned into public actions at the city and individual level. Now, I return to the experiences of voucher tenants and focus on how the surveillance and policing behaviors detailed in Chapter 8 affect their lives. After describing these experiences, I show how tenants react in self-protective ways, rationalizing that maintaining stable and affordable housing for themselves and their children is more important than other aspects of their well-being. Finally, I show how the environment of policing extends beyond the home and across social space in the Antelope Valley.

Tenants know they are being watched

Tenants knew that they were being watched by their neighbors, and that minor slip ups could present those neighbors with opportunities to make complaints that could lead to inspections. Those inspections were demeaning and invasive experiences and often jeopardized tenants voucher status. Alicia explained her experience as a voucher tenant whose identity was not known,

They stare. They call the police for anything. Not on me but my neighbors across the street...they call the police on them like if they park their car in front of the mailbox, they call the police. That's ridiculous. They have too many cars in their driveway, they call the police. That ain't your business.

Alicia's incentives are not to let others find out that she is using a voucher, as it could lead to her being treated with the same level of suspicion as the other voucher tenant on the block is currently experiencing. Notably, the application of community norms around where cars should be parked is focused on the tenant that is known to be on a voucher, but apparently not on Alicia as her voucher status is not known. Another voucher tenant explained that they experienced surveillance by neighborhood watch, rather than just individuals acting alone:

There's something like – what is it? Not the policemen, the watchers. So for any little thing, they want to make a complaint, you know. They must want to get rid of us. They pretty much disagree with a lot of us that are on section eight. You know, like I said, that's because they think that we're minimal or less of a person, which is not.

Neighborhood watch is commonly understood to be a community organization that maintains safety from outsiders entering neighborhoods to commit crimes. Here, however, we see how the program is used to monitor internal threats from among neighbors who ostensibly should be benefitting from the protection of the watch program rather than susceptible to its power. In other words, the watch is turned inwards to be used against Black residents of the neighborhood.

This surveillance and the danger it presents disrupts the lives of voucher tenants, forcing them to live in a condition of precarity at all times. Maxine explains:

How could you rest, how could you sleep at night, how could you relax? Even if you did what you are supposed to do, it's a very uncomfortable feeling that somebody could be down the street watching you, watching who goes in and out. You're scared to have company because you don't want somebody pulling up saying, 'Do they live here?' You might not even want your company to know you're on a housing program. You might not want anybody to know. I know I don't. So it's like, I can't have company, because every time you turn around, somebody's saying something. . . It's like, why would you offer a program for people to live in if you make it uncomfortable for them to live?

Finally, it is worth noting that the surveillance and gaze of white residents extends beyond just the context of neighborhood housing interactions. Crossing over to Lancaster's west side – the wealthier, whiter half of the city across the 14 highway – brings with it a visual policing of sorts whereby Black residents are informed that they do not belong using non-verbal cues. Keisha, a mother of one who has lived in the valley for roughly 18 months, explains what it feels like to cross over to the west side:

Just driving down there is like you get that look like why are you down here? You look like you don't belong or, you know, you can drive. People be in they cars and you'll roll up next to them at a light and they'll look at you and you got your music

going. You know, everybody enjoying themselves laughing and then next thing you know, when the music, like, is not loud like that, you can hear them lock their doors. Like dude, for real, I'm just going to, like, jump out and kids in the car and everything? Like no, man, no.

The non-verbal and non-physical intimidation of Black voucher renters can be interpreted here as a form of violence and intimidation. The violence of surveillance, and the violence of being made to feel like a threat is palpable here and across many interviews I conducted with voucher tenants in the valley. But surveillance can also lead to much worse outcomes, namely inspections. In the following section I describe inspection encounters, their motivations and results, and the role they play in neighborhood relations.

Inspections have two purposes – eviction and intimidation

When I asked Jay whether he had had an inspection happen to him, he responded as if I was asking the most basic of questions. Responding in a way that signaled just how common the experience was, Jay explained:

Jay: Oh yeah man. I had them run up in my house, dude, on some BS. For real, just we're all in bed asleep, and I have like six officers in my house while we're in bed.

RK: Was there a reason?

Jay: It was a couple, few years ago, but it was a bunch of bull for nothing; a bunch of false allegations. They lied about a lot of stuff, and the way they were handling their business was all crooked.

RK: Do you think other people are going through the same thing?

Jay: Oh yeah. I know they are. I know they are, because I know a lot of people that's been. Before it happened to us, my mother was telling me another friend of hers was tell[ing] her a lot of that stuff was going on, and then not long afterwards we experienced the exact same thing.

There are two important issues to unpack in Jay's comments. First, a housing inspection can occur without warning and with malicious timing – designed to wake you up from sleeping

and overwhelm you with the power and authority of armed officers accompanying inspectors. As it turns out, Jay survived the encounter because the grounds for the inspection turned out to be specious. I use survive with reason as any encounter between armed officers and a Black voucher tenant carries with it the possibility of police violence. Second, despite how atomized the voucher population is, these inspections reverberate across the valley. Jay had heard about one recently and it seemed only a matter of time before he experienced one himself.

Andrea's recounting of one inspection (among many) she experienced was more detailed and included the experiences of her children. She recalls being surprised by housing inspectors and armed officers appearing at her door one day:

They came into my house like we were – I have no record. I've never been in trouble. You know, nothing major with my then-teenager, high school kids...But they came in with shotguns. They came in in vests. They came in in riot gear, and they held guns on us like we were wanted criminals. They surrounded my house.

This comment contains both the surprise of a voucher inspection and the offense of being treated as guilty when one has a clean record. The outrage at this treatment is palpable, and it appears that this treatment is designed to be part of the utility of inspections. She continues, "As if things weren't bad enough. So I got all my neighbors on the line, mostly white, and they're looking at us. All I know is after that day they never spoke to me again. They never said good morning – ever. Ever again." In other words, an inspection can be a highly visible and public humiliation, one that both "outs" the voucher tenant to his or her neighbors and that signals to those neighbors that this tenant is less than, is suspicious, or is to be avoided. When I asked Andrea, why the inspectors had even come to her home that day, she recounted,

Well, this is what they told me. They said I had been randomly selected for a compliance check it's called...So when the man knocked at the door I could see his badge, and I'm like why are you here? I have a re-inspection tomorrow. I was expecting him, but the next day. He goes oh, you've been selected for re-inspection – I mean for a compliance check. And I said, why are all these police here? My heart was beating so fast it was about to bust out of my chest. He said, they're with

me. And I said, well you can come in. I don't have nothing to hide, but they can't come in. They don't have a warrant and they're not coming in here. He told me if they don't come in, then you're going to lose your Section 8. They go where I go. And I said, well why do you need all these people just for me? It's nothing but me and the kids here. Well, that's up to us to figure out.

Here the inspectors essentially admit that they have no strong prior reason for visiting her home. They have come with suspicious timing that one might interpret as designed to terrorize her. And they have come not so much to verify her continued compliance but to find a reason to evict her. Andrea cannot even meaningfully push back against police accompaniment as she is threatened with losing her voucher. These experiences are of a piece with a longer body of research documenting the lack of privacy rights for low-income women and women of color benefitting from government aid. Finally, she describes the search, or the process of looking for a reason to evict her:

They're looking. And when I say they looked, they did a massive search on my house. They went in my drawers. They held guns on my kids. They went in my kitchen drawers. In my son's drawer. They pulled out an I.D. and some money and said bam – threw it across the table at me and said hah, who is this? That's what the officer said. Yeah. We got her. Who is this? I said that's my son. He's on my contract, and that's a little change from his Walmart job. What? And he said oh yeah, yeah. She's right.

The inspectors landed on the most common grounds for eviction, having an unauthorized tenant. The identification card and money suggested another tenant might be living in the home without permission from the Housing Authority. Luckily for Andrea, she had enrolled her son on her rental contract and he was authorized to reside there. The inspectors were clearly disappointed to find that this was true and that they could not evict her that day.

Although Andrea was safe that day, the reality is that the inspectors could come back anytime, and that just the inspection itself was a harm. In addition to the experience itself, the inspection regime ensures that voucher tenants have no sense of permanence, safety, or legitimacy in the valley. I read these descriptions of inspections not just as empowered local

administrators trying to evict voucher tenants as the city council had essentially demanded, but also as assertions of power and authority. The act of ransacking someone's home, of peering into every personal space, of asserting to them that they do not belong here and will be removed just as soon as some violation is discovered, this itself is a form of violence, a harm that exists regardless of the inspections outcome, and a way for the entire non-Black society of the Antelope Valley to make its power felt, just to the tenant but also to itself. Towards the end of my conversation with Andrea, she explained the lasting effect of the inspections on her well-being:

I think differently about the knock on the door now. I'm terrified. Like are they going to take my children? I don't have children now. So why am I still so scared that it's bam, bam, bam on the door?...Is this the police? They've got to have a search warrant, but for me they don't. Do they have to have one for you? Do they got to have one for you?...They can say anything they want to come in my house, and that is the scariest. It's scary, but like again what I'm trying to tell you is this is nothing new. You're just hearing about it. It's been going on forever. Forever. I think it's a joke when they spotlight it on T.V., which I'm glad to see. But look what happened. That happens every day somewhere. Several times a day. It's nothing new.

As Jasmine, a voucher renter for six years who had moved from the San Fernando Valley put it,

Yeah it's too much bullshit; it's too much going on out here. They act like they can control you when you're not even doing anything wrong. You get harassed for anything. You're getting harassed for everything pretty much, and if you're on Section 8 they look at you like you're low class, and that's not it at all. You just need help because you have kids, and it's hard.

These themes of control and harassment reinforce the dual role or value of inspections. If the inspections turn up a violation, then they make it possible to levy fines, assess rule violations, or further the eviction process for voucher renters. But even if they do not, they send a message and assert a hierarchical relationship between the white society and Black voucher renters. We can come back anytime, you cannot stop us, you do not have substantive privacy rights.

Policing the personal lives and identities of voucher tenants

Another recurring theme in voucher tenants' interviews is the toll this environment has taken on their personal lives. These cases reveal the gendered aspect of the participatory policing regime. In many cases, partners are made into a liability for voucher tenants. Keisha is a middle-aged mother who had been using a voucher since 2007 but had only moved to the valley two years ago. She recalls her sister's experience having her partner stay over on various nights, despite having his own property in Lancaster. She recalled the housing authority or city becoming convinced that he lived in her home in violation of her rental contract and began to surveil the house to prove it. She said:

So they had a car sitting in front of her house for two weeks watching her house and it got to the point where my sister and her boyfriend were like hey I don't live here, this is my lease right here, you want you could follow me to my house, this is my girl, like I spend the night here, I stay here, this is my girlfriend's house you know? And yeah so my sister did go through that and that was maybe like three, four years ago.

In another instance, coordination between police and the housing authority led to a tenant losing her voucher because her partner received mail at her address. She explained,

Keisha: I had a friend who, her boyfriend had her address [and] just like used her address. He didn't live there. He got like pulled over, I think he had drugs in his car. And they like went like, to take her to court to take her section eight and all type of things because of something he did outside of the home.

RK: And he just happened to have her address like –

Keisha: Right but you're not supposed to have other people staying with you so I mean, she said he didn't live with her but she let [him use her address]. But they never said you can't, that's just like if I have a uncle that's homeless and he says, "Hey can I use your address for a mailing address?" That doesn't mean he necessarily lives with me because he used my address as a mailing address you know?

In a final example, housing authorities attempted to evict one tenant, Barbara, because her gender identity and presentation did not match their expectations. Searching her home during

an inspection, they came across men's clothing, which is often interpreted by inspectors to mean that a woman with a voucher was illegally allowing a man to live in the home outside of the Housing Authority's permission.

And to top things off, when I first moved up here, they came to my house and brought the housing authority with them to my house, and because they were saying that a man lived in my house. Well, a man don't live in my house. I'm actually a lesbian. So yes...that's my stuff. And so my owner had to tell them, "Yeah. She's a lesbian. I knew when I rented to her. This is how she came to me. This is her appearance when she came to me. So I know..."

Not only is Barbara's personal identity used as a weapon against her, but she has to have a second source, in this case the owner of the property she is renting, validate her claim to the Housing Authority. Barbara relayed this incident to me in a tone of exasperation and as a way to prove how dangerous housing inspections are. Though she did not verbally describe how the experience made her feel, her tone and manner when describing the experience conveyed its significance. One can easily imagine that having one's gender identity and sexual orientation adjudicated by the state as a possible reason for eviction could be a dangerous and degrading experience.

Finally, the housing authority's stringent rules on co-residency not only make it difficult to safely have partners visit, they also work to split up families. As Barbara explains,

And it's one more other issue that I have with also housing authority, and also the society up here. For instance, if I have a son that went to prison, and my son got out of prison, and I'm his only family, do you know, my son could not come to my house because he's on parole?... It's those things that irritates me. It's like you can't have your family members, you can't add them to your voucher. You just ... they don't even want them up here...

Contemporary welfare policy has been reorganized to de-prioritize single individuals and direct support towards families and children. Despite changes in generosity, Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Temporary Aid to Needy Families have been the historic and contemporary staples of welfare, respectively. In the case of the voucher program, however, we

can see how its rules actually work to break up families and separate members because of prior incarceration status. This is a difficulty for voucher holders and likely also a hamper on their long-term success in the program.

Table 9.1: Voucher Tenants' Experiences of Discrimination and Policing

	Yes	No or Unknown
Experienced hostility or discrimination in housing	30 (77%)	9 (23%)
Experienced difficulty finding employment	27 (69%)	12 (31%)
Experienced hostility from a neighbor	16 (41%)	23 (59%)
Experienced one or more incident of aggressive policing	23 (59%)	16 (41%)
Total		39

How tenants experience and adapt to a hostile climate

Under the conditions described above, of constant surveillance and seemingly random, but highly intrusive inspections, voucher renters are faced with a choice to either stay or leave. If they are not evicted, voucher renters can choose to move out of their own accord. Moving out makes it very likely that tenants will lose their vouchers, because there are relatively few openings in the rest of the county and convincing a new landlord to participate in the program is a gamble. Staying in the Antelope Valley, however, meant navigating the surveillance and

hostility of neighbors, and minimizing the risks of inspections. The strategies tenants use are part of a long lineage of Black fugitivity as a form of resistance to racial oppression (Sojoyner 2017).

Because I did not interview tenants who chose to leave or were evicted from the Antelope Valley, I can only share findings about tenants who chose to stay and were successful in doing so. Nevertheless, their choices, thought processes, and strategies are important parts of understanding the way the voucher program is operating in the Antelope Valley and should shed light on our understanding of the program as a whole. Should a future study be able to reach evicted voucher tenants, it would undoubtedly add much more to our understanding of the experience of life in the Antelope Valley, the policing of voucher renters, and the success and failure of adaptations to that policing environment.

I find that many voucher tenants experience hostility in housing, employment, or in their neighborhood, often tied to a form of policing (by the public or by authorities). Tenants who have not experienced it have often heard about it. The looming and ever-present threat of eviction leads voucher tenants to consciously restrict their social activities, private and public behavior, and overall visibility in an attempt to avoid triggering a housing investigation, protect their Section 8 status, and focus on priorities such as the education and wellbeing of children. These practices illustrate how whiteness is reified as property in the valley, as the ability to stay in one's home is predicated on the ability to stay out of sight and out of mind in one's own neighborhood, thereby preserving its whiteness (Harris 1993). Two longer narratives illustrate this phenomenon and represent experiences shared by many respondents.

Barbara

Barbara is a tenant in her fifties who has lived in eastern Lancaster for eleven years, having moved from South Central Los Angeles. She cites congestion, gangs, and a poor

environment for raising her children as her main reasons for enrolling in the voucher program and moving to a suburb. When asked about her satisfaction with her neighborhood, she mentions many of the problems tenants have described earlier, such as poor social services, a lack of jobs, perceived discrimination, and unsatisfactory schools. But she also focuses on the scrutiny she feels from her neighbors and the Housing Authority. To illustrate, she describes an incident when the police visited her for a noise complaint while she was moving into her current rental. She asked the officer, “How am I supposed to have loud music playing when I don’t even have any furniture or anything?” When she asked the officer where the complaint originated from, he responded that a neighbor had called it in. This type of police visit has happened three times since her most recent move.

Barbara believes that her white neighbors call the police as a way to pressure Section 8 tenants and possibly have them kicked out. She claims that the police inform the Housing Authority of their visits to Section 8 tenants’ units and fears that the Housing Authority may follow up with her for having had too many police visits, regardless of their merit. The unwarranted visits make her feel that she cannot call the police if she needs assistance in a real emergency.

Barbara also fears the Housing Authority’s frequent and intrusive inspections of Section 8 tenants. Her sister recently lost her Section 8 voucher because a non-cohabitating partner had used her apartment as a mailing address. The Housing Authority evicted her based on the conclusion that she had been housing a tenant who was not on the lease. With this in mind, Barbara describes her fears of eviction:

I just moved here. I still get mail from the previous tenant. So that previous tenant, I have no control over them not changing their address. So therefore, when the tenant’s stuff comes in my mailbox, I just put it return to sender. Because if they catch anybody else’s address and they’re not on your voucher, they will terminate

you. The police [Housing Authority inspectors] when they come, will look in your mailbox, in your car. They look in your drawers, and in all your paperwork. They look through everything, your computers, everything...

I'm afraid, you know, if I have family visiting and they [inspectors] decide they want to come over, they might see a family member's toothbrush, or they might see a family member's car. And you know, their whole assumption will go into 'oh you have an unauthorized tenant.' Do you understand what I'm saying? They just pick at that. So you know, I follow the rules. I don't want them kinda problems.

While Barbara states that she is just following the rules, it is clear that she is curbing some legal behaviors in order to avoid scrutiny from her neighbors and the community. The rules here are not the rules of the a federal, state, or city government, or rules imposed by the local housing authority, rather the rules she is referring to are the rules imposed by her neighbors. From the comments of local residents and the experiences of other voucher tenants, these rules appear to include things like not having lights on too late at night, not leaving the garage door open, taking in the trash quickly after it is picked up, not parking in front of the mailbox, keeping the exterior of the home clean, not having too nice a car, not lacking a car, and not having too many cars parked outside. Transgressions of these unspoken rules signal to local residents that voucher tenants do not appreciate their voucher (by not behaving piously), do not need their voucher (by showing off a nice a car), or are taking advantage of the voucher (by not working). These violations justify calls to police and the housing authority to crack down on these voucher tenants. The dynamic in some ways reflects a demand for a performance of deservingness.

Barbara has adapted to this environment by consciously keeping a low profile, "Now I just don't play any music, I try to keep the peace. No music, no company. Not that I had a lot of traffic anyways. I just try to stay to myself. It's been a few months since the cops have been out here." Even amongst visiting family, Barbara is careful, recalling having said to them "You can't be here more than that many [a few] days...they could terminate me!" Barbara sees no other option than to adopt these practices of invisibility. She explains, "For instance, if they terminate

me, how can I pay \$1,650 for rent? If they kick me out, where will me and my kids go? How will we live?" This choice is one vocalized by several voucher renters.

Barbara's case describes her fear of the day-to-day scrutiny by her neighbors. Her precarity – the fact that her living conditions are in a constant state of jeopardy – has led her to change her behavior so as to be noticed as little as possible. Her experience of employment discrimination, and her children's negative experiences at school suggest that in many ways, mainstream the Antelope Valley society is shutting out tenants like Barbara. In addition to being dissatisfied with the school's academic quality, Barbara reported incidents in which her children were taunted with language that included references (known or assumed) to her family's Section 8 status. Thus while she can live in the neighborhood, she cannot feel as though she is a part of it. While she can apply for jobs, she is less likely to receive one. And while she can enroll her children in schools she considers better than those she left in South Los Angeles, her children must endure poor treatment. Though living in Lancaster may have had salutary effects on her socio-economic outcomes, her social status is one of constant tension and her health and happiness is uncertain.

Maxine

While Barbara fears the scrutiny of those in her immediate surroundings, other tenants feel this scrutiny on a larger scale. Maxine, a mother of two living in East Palmdale, reports experiencing a hostile public environment and fearing increased scrutiny from the County Housing Authority, which inspects and enforces housing policies for Section 8 tenants. She too fears an eviction on minor grounds.

Maxine came to Palmdale from the City of Los Angeles almost five years ago. She describes the city as being in a contradictory situation. She says that although her landlord

wanted to rent to her, “the housing program itself seems like they don’t want you on housing. It’s kinda weird, it’s like a catch twenty-two. So out here they make it a practice to try to get people out of here (that are on housing). They look for things.” Here Maxine echoes Barbara’s experiences by noting how the program’s inspectors appear to be actively looking for evidence that they can use as grounds for eviction. Maxine goes on to cite the collusion of local media in feeding sentiments of animosity toward Section 8 tenants:

It’s been splattered all in the newspaper. If you read the newspaper you’re always hearing, okay, this is going on with housing, and they’re trying to hire more investigators to go in to find out who else lives there.

Earlier in this chapter Maxine describes the psychological effect of constant surveillance. There she is quoted as saying “You’re scared to have company because you don’t want somebody pulling up saying, ‘Do they live here?’ You might not even want your company to know you’re on a housing program. You might not want anybody to know. I know I don’t.” It is entirely rational to hide one’s voucher status in this manner because even the accidental mention of it by a friend or family member to the wrong person could lead to problems.

When asked about the reasons she would leave the Antelope Valley, she insists that her main concern is the feeling of “not being wanted.” She explains,

The atmosphere makes me feel like I don’t want to be there. Because if you took a survey, if you went up and down the street and nobody knew I was on housing and you asked them how am I, they would say, oh she’s a good neighbor. But at the same time, because I know I am on housing, when I read about housing, well, you know, it’s like they don’t want me here. . .

In addition to fearing the scrutiny by neighbors, Maxine feels targeted by local police. During one incident, she and her son were pulled over for a speeding ticket. Minutes after being issued the ticket they were pulled over again by the same police officer down the street, this time for a broken light. She was frustrated by what she perceived as a malicious second stop. She explained, “They do harass you a lot. You really have to be careful about what you do around

here.” She continued, “I have a gut feelin’ that these people in Lancaster are very racist. The harassment alone would drive a person away from the community. I never had problems like this when I was in LA.” Both of her sons, one an adult and the other a teenager, have been harassed by the police. These experiences of police harassment, shared by many respondents as well as other minorities, speak to systemic issues in Lancaster and Palmdale.

Maxine clearly limits her social activity at home in order to avoid scrutiny and investigations that can lead to evictions. “I just live my life. I live in my house, I enjoy my home, I enjoy my children, and I don’t bother my neighbors. I’m very reserved.” When asked about her children’s experiences in school, she explained, “you have to keep it quiet. That’s what I was trying to tell you: you can’t even let people know or else you’ll be labeled. It’s terrible...I don’t discuss the program with my kids. I even try to shield it from them too. ‘Cause they don’t need to know how we pay our bills. They need to be children.” Her strategy is echoed by Lakisha, who says:

Lakisha: I heard a lot of people say they got their Section 8 taken for various reasons. And they didn’t think it was fair that they came in and took their Section 8. I don’t know. I’m like a -

RK: You just sort of got lucky because it hasn’t happened to you yet.

Lakisha: No. And I hope they never do.

RK: Right.

Lakisha: Because I don’t give them a reason to put me out.

How does one survive in a neighborhood where one must stay so socially isolated to protect access to housing? For Maxine, this strategy has meant she cannot build social connections in her neighborhood and has instead opted to live her social life outside the Antelope Valley:

Everybody I know and associate with don't live out here. So I have to travel for my associations, have to travel to go to different events, and I come back home and this is where I sleep. And when I'm involved with different activities, it's never here, it's always away. I have to pack up and leave.

These conditions make it clear that social integration has not occurred for the community of voucher tenants in the Antelope Valley. Maxine's avoidance of scrutiny leads her to stay at home and be reserved, to restrict and change her behavior, and to conduct her social life outside of the Antelope Valley. Indeed, the experiences described by the tenants I interviewed reflect broader developments in the area. A number of other respondents in the Antelope Valley echo the experiences of Barbara and Maxine. Most respondents feel that their neighbors and community are suspicious of them and that they have received an icy and distant reception. One says she constantly feels under watch in her daily life, "but I'm not going to break." Another keeps to herself because she does not want to give anyone a reason to evict her, and another says she feels safe only because she keeps to herself. Many described adapting their presentations of self to avoid risking public scrutiny. These adaptations included watching one's speech patterns when talking to others in public and choosing not to wear clothing or drive a car that would attract attention. One tenant described choosing to park inside her garage instead of on the driveway, another spoke of keeping the garage, windows, and blinds closed to avoid being seen. These practices help explain why tenants expressed the feeling of leading "a double life" and "keeping a secret" in order to protect their voucher status. What is happening here is the spatial application of Harris' (1993) observation that "whiteness and property share a common premise - a conceptual nucleus - of a right to exclude." Being racially visible and crossing any of the neighborhood's racialized social lines is sure to trigger the possibility of exclusion through eviction.

Despite the voucher system's private configuration, tenants are rendered socially visible because of associations made between race and economic status. This is the voucher program's equivalent of how criminal records make citizens translatable into carceral citizens (Miller and Stuart 2017). Voucher tenants respond to this racially contingent nature of their residence by restricting their public lives in order to be less visible and noticeable. The fact that this racial association opens up the ability to monitor, intimidate, and harass voucher tenants points to the importance of race in the experiences of tenants the outcomes of the voucher program and echoes findings in mixed-income settings (McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin 2012). Multiple tenants say they have no one to reach out to and no one to rely on, responses that echo the findings of McAdoo (1982) and Tatum (2000) about the benefits of family social support. The cumulative effect of these practices of avoidance and social protection was the widespread sense among tenants I spoke to that the voucher community in the Antelope Valley was atomized. These experiences also echo the findings of Richie (2001) about the particular challenges that Black women face in and outside carceral circumstances. Several tenants commented on the paradox that while the voucher population was growing, a community of voucher tenants was not.

The self-protective behaviors of tenants who kept to themselves rather than risk additional scrutiny may have contributed to the inability to organically grow a community of Black voucher holders in the Antelope Valley. Although the strategy of being socially unseen as a way to avoid eviction is a logical and pragmatic way to avoid possible investigations or evictions, it may also inhibit the types of social capital, namely leverage that can be used to find new jobs or other opportunities, that Briggs (1998) theorizes is needed for economic mobility. In this sense, the role of race as a proxy for housing status and a basis for hostility might not just

have social effects on tenants but might also ultimately prevent them from realizing economic opportunities in new neighborhoods. It is important to note here that a Moynihan-style or culture-of-poverty-based interpretation of these circumstances would read these strategies as Black voucher renters' personal, cultural failure to integrate, rather than as a legitimate tactic to avoid inspections, fines, eviction, and other forms of policing and violence.

Another factor that might contribute to the feeling of being disconnected from community was that tenants reported that Los Angeles' main Black newspaper, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, did not deliver to the Antelope Valley, forcing them to read papers such as the Antelope Valley Press which did not provide the same level of coverage of issues relevant to them. Ultimately, the main sources of support for voucher tenants were their communities and families back in the city of Los Angeles and the churches they found in the Antelope Valley, which proved to be an important social sanctuary for religiously active Christian voucher holders. The fact that tenants continued to rely on communities and families over an hour away in Los Angeles proper may be an indication of the degree to which tenants have not been able to gain social support that can be used to help get through everyday life situations, or the degree to which residents engaged in strategic forms of assimilation in order to make life livable in the Antelope Valley (Briggs 1998; Lacy 2004).

Eviction data

Tenants' perceptions that they were at risk of eviction were also well founded. Despite the fact that the Antelope Valley holds less than 25% of the Section 8 users in the County, the Los Angeles Times reported that fully 51% of Section 8 evictions in Los Angeles County in 2009 occurred in the Antelope Valley. The rate of Section 8 terminations in Lancaster was five times higher than the county average. Between 2006 and 2009, one in every twenty-five Section

8 tenants in Lancaster was evicted (on grounds such as noise violations or suspicion of extra tenants living in the unit). Returning to the graph of voucher usage in the Antelope Valley over this period, these evictions might explain the 400-person decline in the voucher population between 2007 and 2010. In the years before and after the period in which the policing partnership was in force, voucher usage only ever increased. Although more data would be helpful, what is available suggests the effectiveness of these policing tactics.

Fighting back through legal activism

In 2011, lawyers and activists around the region began to become aware of the heightened rates of eviction for Black voucher renters and came together to investigate the causes of these eviction rates and whether they were the product of a legal system of action on the part of the city government or public housing authority. Eventually, Public Counsel and Neighborhood Legal Services filed a lawsuit in United States District Court on behalf of a Palmdale based community group, The Community Action League (TCAL), and several individual plaintiffs, alleging systematic racial discrimination in the organization and execution of a policing program targeted specifically at voucher renters. This program, operated through a partnership between the cities, housing authority, and sheriff, was alleged to violate the Civil Rights Act because targeting non-disabled and non-elderly voucher renters could be interpreted as a form of de-facto racial bias against the remaining voucher population, which was disproportionately black.

Eventually, the complaint was joined by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. After the filing, the Sheriff's department ceased participating in the policing partnership, and the cities entered a settlement agreement wherein they pledged to cease actions and programs alleged to be

unconstitutional in exchange for avoiding a costly and lengthy trial that they could very well lose. The central victory in this settlement was the ending of the policing and information sharing partnership that allowed sheriff's deputies to accompany housing inspectors on visits to voucher tenants' homes. As described earlier, what remained was a code enforcement system that continued to negatively affect voucher tenants.

Shifting policing from the home to the street

Despite the worst of the policing practices being halted, the code enforcement system remained in place, so that local residents could continue making calls to city authorities to report infractions of their neighbors and trigger large fines or eviction pressure against them. But some residents I spoke to also suggested that the decline of some policing tactics was offset by an increase in others. One suggested that despite the compliance checks being reduced, things had fundamentally not changed in the valley:

Interviewee: Yeah, since that whole, it was like a big lawsuit and like since that whole thing they kind of like...you don't hear much, it's kind of like it's quiet now, like since that whole lawsuit.

RK: Have things gotten better or is it the same attitude but just different ways?

Interviewee: I think things have gotten better only because they're waiting to see what they're gonna do, they're kind of like not doing anything 'cause they're waiting to see what they're gonna do.

RK: But the underlying attitude is the same?

Interviewee: It's the same yeah, it's the same.

Andrea suggested that the city had shifted from police officers accompanying housing officers on compliance checks to street level police harassment, "Well, as far as Section 8 I know they stopped the compliance checks. And as far as the sheriffs, they're a little more low key. Just a little bit more low key I think, but this is still going on. Still doing what they want to do." She

recounted her sons' experiences being policed in public space as evidence that ceasing the home inspections would make life normal in the valley:

As my boys got older they started coming in contact with the police. When I say in contact, I mean my son bought an old beat up Camaro. He may be paid \$1,500 with his little Walmart job. And in one week he was stopped twelve times. And I'm not talking about stopped like you see on T.V. Sir, can I see your license and registration? I mean, they pulled shotguns on him. They laid him on the concrete. They put guns to his head. He had his kids in the car. What are you doing this for, sir? Oh, you've got a missing taillight. Or your registration is not renewed or whatever.

This story suggests that street stops replicate the same methods and experiences of the in-home compliance check. More evidence of how these two types of policing can substitute each other comes from a tenant who described police harassment targeting of her family:

So, Mother's Day, my nephew came over. "Happy Mother's Day." We having dinner here, and the police pulls him over, gives him a ticket, and driving on suspended license. He was already at the door, and the police called him from the door to his car. And then so maybe a hour or two later, he asked me, he said, "Well, since I don't have a license, can you take me down the street. I take him down ... I get in his car, take him down the street. The officer pulls me over ... the same officer ... pulls me over after I'm taking him down the street and gives me a ticket for broken windshield. It's just...harassment.

Here we see the re-organization of carcerality, as officers perch outside of a home in order to stop and search a resident rather than entering it to do so via a compliance check. These street stops appear to be both an attempt to find reasons for punishing Black residents and an assertion of superiority and control over Black residents, themes which are just as present in the stories of voucher inspections.

Choosing to stay or leave

Despite all of these difficulties, the tenants I spoke to rarely say they planned to move or considered moving a realistic option. Some tenants focused on the benefits of their circumstances for their children or families, who enjoyed more spacious housing, safer neighborhoods, and

better schools. Parents were willing to exchange their personal comfort and social lives for these benefits. One tenant whose sentiments were shared by several other parents stated that she would consider moving after her children finished school but preferred not to disrupt their education in the meanwhile. Another said, "...My children are the most important thing to me. And it's important to have a home for your kids so they can be stable. That way they do good in school. And as long as you've got a stable place for your kids that they can call home and they're comfortable you don't have no problems." This self-sacrifice meant enduring social isolation, and local hostility and policing in order to provide children with a stable and secure education. For voucher tenants with children, this concern appears to have won out over other negative experiences.

Yet other tenants voiced program related or economic worries about moving. As earlier quotes from Barbara indicated, tenants often cannot visualize being able to find housing of similar quality in other areas that would accept the voucher. The risks (perceived or real) associated with attempting to "port" the voucher to another part of the county were significant.

Several renters reflected on the frustrating trade-off of affordable housing for social and economic security. One explained how his family was stuck:

I don't know, right now. It's like paycheck to paycheck pretty much. Every time my paycheck comes in it's straight to rent. My wife is doing her thing, but her money goes straight to bills. So after all that is dead and done we're broke again. So now we're have to find out how to keep gas in the car just so we can get around like we want to.

The poorer economy in comparison to Los Angeles proper, and the necessity of owning a car to reach work in the Antelope Valley or commute to Los Angeles are examples of how the benefit of affordable housing is cancelled out by the lower incomes or higher costs of transportation associated with access to cheaper housing.

Some divulged that they thought of leaving. At the end of our conversation Lakisha confided that she often thought of leaving:

Lakisha: I'm gonna be honest and tell you the truth. I'm thinking about moving back to the city about – maybe next year – a year or two.

RK: How come?

Lakisha: I'm thinking about it. First of all, I miss my family and it get lonely up here.

RK: Yeah.

Lakisha: Like I don't even know nobody. I stay to myself.

RK: Yeah. Yeah, that's hard.

Lakisha: And that's the best way to be.

This chapter has documented the spatial dimensions of carcerality in the Antelope Valley. The evolving nature of policing regimes, finally settling on code enforcement hotline, illustrates the fluid nature of policing as a way to assert racial hierarchy and re-assert racial segregation. Surveillance plays a central role in this policing regime and affects voucher tenants even before acts that follow from that surveillance. To avoid the inspections, fines, and possibility of eviction that comes with these inspections, tenants withdraw from public space and the sight of their neighbors, relinquishing the right to engage in perfectly legal behaviors so as to avoid triggering a nuisance call. Doing so is an effective strategy for retaining housing under difficult economic circumstances, but even after a lawsuit reduced some of the policing activities aimed at voucher renters, voucher tenants still report policing as an overwhelmingly negative force in their lives. Many consider leaving as a result of these pressures.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Suburban communities can only be temporary havens for whites who desire racial homogeneity...It would indeed be a pathetic repetition of social, economic, and political folly if whites respond by techniques of exclusion that “worked” in the past, by developing suburban ghettos. But such a routine, unimaginative, and fearful response is all too likely – people tend to follow familiar patterns of behavior unless interrupted (Clark 1965).

I don't know if things changed or if I've changed after being out here so long. When I first came out I saw things. At first, I saw the beautiful landscape and grass. The more I lived here I saw – started seeing the dirt. Like it was invisible. -Andrea

Fifty years ago, the Kerner Commission released the findings of its report on civil disorder in major cities in the United States (Kerner 1968). Its recommendations with respect to housing read today as a prescription for programs like housing vouchers, designed primarily to deconcentrate poverty by moving public housing residents out of ghettos and into suburbs. Later that same year, the Fair Housing Act was passed into law, providing hope that a ban on the most pernicious forms of housing discrimination coupled with integrationist public policy could really begin to ameliorate the segregation at the root of so many aspects of racial inequality. But warnings like the one above, made by Kenneth Clark (1965) about the limitations of residential mobility as a cure-all for racial impoverishment continue to ring true. In his critique of integration focused housing policy, Clark points out that white flight is only a temporary solution for whites seeking to preserve segregated living in the face of Black movement to northern cities. He warns that the techniques of exclusion that white society successfully used to create the ghetto in the first half of the century could be used again in suburban settings to replicate the same relationship after desegregation. What is unfolding in areas like the Antelope Valley reads in many ways as a fulfilment of Clark's warning. Fifty years later, resistance to racial integration is alive and well in this Los Angeles suburb.

Quoted above, Andrea's reflection on her neighborhood encapsulates the complex reality for voucher residents in the Antelope Valley, a present-day validation of Clark's warning. There is a lot to like the valley: it is quiet, flat, and closer to nature – you do not have to drive far to reach the end of any developed area. In these ways it is a remarkable contrast to noisy, congested, highly developed Los Angeles. But the sense of possibility in the valley is erased by the overwhelming reality of a racial power structure that once asserted itself through Jim Crow and now operates by surveillance, municipal codes, and word of mouth.

What Black voucher renters who moved to the valley have encountered is, at its most basic level, a widely-held communal hostility towards the voucher program and Black voucher tenants. It is a tangle of prejudices based on race, gender, economics, and perceived social disorder. These ideas fuel the categorization of Black voucher tenants as morally suspect and affirm the virtue of those who do not use the program. The fact that most voucher tenants in Lancaster are Black and most voucher households are headed by women means that even when these views are not explicitly gendered in content, the effect is necessarily one that falls more heavily on Black women than others.

While hostility to voucher renters might be a somewhat recent phenomenon, it is part of a long history of racial inequality for Black residents of the Antelope Valley. The production and reproduction of racial inequality in the Antelope Valley is a constant and ongoing event. It has changed from the early days of segregated Sun Village and the more recent days of cross burnings and other hate crimes, but it is happening nonetheless. Today, Black renters and homeowners cannot be legally segregated to Sun Village, restrictive covenants are barred, and racial discrimination in the sale or rental of real estate is struck down when discovered. To achieve the old ends requires new means, and in the valley the new means has become what I

think of as participatory policing. This trajectory represents the historical variations in what Gilmore (2002) calls “the fatally dynamic coupling of power and difference signified by racism.”

An influential fraction of local residents act on these racist attitudes by participating in the policing of Black voucher tenants, an act made more possible and effective by the city’s re-writing of its municipal codes to incentivize policing. The actions suggest features of a suburban policing regime in which private citizens play an important role, surveilling their neighbors and deploying police and city agencies in order to intimidate, fine, or evict them. Here, fines based on violations of municipal codes shift from being an extractive tool of city government (as in Ferguson) to a tool of punishment and eviction, and eviction shifts from an outcome determined by landlords and used to further rental profits to one driven by neighbors to further racial segregation, what Ocen (2012) calls a new form of racially restrictive covenants or Roy (2017) calls racial banishment.

Using policing as a mechanism of reasserting segregation is of a piece with white responses to busing and other forms of integration (Delmont 2016). Functionally, it is an exchange in which local residents perform surveillance and dispatch functions for the government in return for its eviction of their unwanted neighbors. But the incorporation of local residents into the policing process serves an additional purpose as well. As Jim so dangerously illustrates, the power to deploy forces that can fine or evict a voucher tenant elevates those who can use that power to a state of authority over those they police. That unequal relationship is exacerbated by the reality that voucher tenants have fewer privacy rights than private renters. Tenants adapt by curtailing their public visibility and social lives in order to minimize the chances of drawing scrutiny and possible fines and evictions. They also likely minimize the social capital and network formation that local voucher tenants can enjoy - a crucial link between

movement to a new neighborhood and integration into its economy and community and one that undergirds mobility programs aimed at combatting poverty. Despite voucher renters not having criminal backgrounds, their experience in the valley is nonetheless a carceral form of citizenship (Miller and Stuart 2017).

While there is evidence of similar neighborhood dynamics occurring in cities like Antioch, California, the applicability of these findings to areas experiencing only modest voucher growth or areas where Black movement to predominantly white neighborhoods is not driven by vouchers is unknown. Moreover, a number of data limitations affect the scope of conclusions that can be drawn. Additional information about the age and racial makeup of respondents and a fuller sense of the place of Hispanic and Latino populations in the neighborhood would be helpful. Even with these limitations in mind, there are some reasons to expect that the dynamics uncovered here may apply to cases beyond those of voucher driven racial integration.

First, with the exception of resentment towards federal policy and perceived abuse, much of the resentment voiced by local residents is based on race, gender, and perceived disorder, all grounds that could be present in a case without vouchers. Second, while the voucher program drove increased awareness about Black movement and tied it to federal policy, much of the response of local residents is not necessarily unique to vouchers. For example, though there is evidence that calls to the Housing Authority are an important avenue of policing, local residents focused much more heavily on their calls to the city's code enforcement hotline or to the police, two entities not tied to voucher program.

For these reasons, I suggest that the tactics and tools used here can also be used by local residents to combat unwanted racial integration in non-voucher settings and furthermore indicate

unique features of policing in the suburbs that may not be seen in studies of policing based in urban settings. Indeed, these tactics may be present in suburban settings without vouchers, where one portion of the neighborhood is motivated to use participatory policing tactics to punish or remove another. These findings point to the need for additional research on backlash to Black suburban movement, especially the role of city governments in shaping municipal codes that local residents might use in the furtherance of racial segregation.

Implications for understanding racial residential inequality

In addition to revealing the role of policing in segregation, this case can also help social scientists rethink the mainstream understanding of segregation and racial inequality. Steven Gregory (1998) illustrates how contemporary scholarship on the “black ghetto” elides history, culture, and politics and in so doing obscures an understanding of urban poverty and the forces that create and perpetuate racial spatial inequality. Critiquing the terms “black ghetto” and “inner-city” community, Gregory writes,

Whatever service these categories might have once rendered towards heightening recognition of the ferocity of racial segregation and urban poverty, they today obscure far more than they reveal. These concepts have become (and perhaps always were) powerful tropes conflating race, class, and place in a society that remains organized around inequalities in economic resources and political power that stretch beyond the imagined frontiers of the inner city. And it is precisely these relations of power and privilege that the trope of the black ghetto has served so well to conceal.

My reading of the case of Black movement to the Antelope Valley is that it affirms Gregory’s claim by showing the centrality of inequalities in economic resources and political power in recreating conditions of racial oppression 70 miles away from the inner city. As Gregory concludes, “All social groups are diverse, all poverty is political, and the concepts “black ghetto” and “inner city” are at best empty and useless tropes. Period.” What else can one conclude when looking at the reasons that racial inequality has been recreated in the Antelope

Valley without the presence of the ghetto or inner city? I take Gregory to mean that the ghetto does not exist as a physical or measurable phenomenon. Rather the ghetto is a manifestation of a relationship between those inside and outside of it. To attack the manifestation, the symptom, the form, rather than the underlying cause and relationship means simply shuffling the deck and recreating manifestations of the ghetto in different forms and modes. If this reading is correct it also serves as a summation of the error of relying on residential mobility to cure the ills of racial residential inequality, and the limits of using vouchers to fix the failures of public housing. Simply put, it was never about public housing. Just as that program was doomed from the start by the broader structure of racism in American society, so too can vouchers be undermined by the same underlying dynamics.

Implications for housing research and policy

The characteristics of the Antelope Valley suggest questions for practitioners and scholars. Although the Antelope Valley is generally more prosperous than the typical sites of public housing in Los Angeles County, voucher holders live in a relatively confined set of neighborhoods within the Antelope Valley, where there are stark differences between the household incomes of Black and white residents. These complications raise the question of what is the proper reference group for incoming voucher holders – the city as a whole, or the specific communities and neighborhoods that they move into through the program? The choice of reference group determines how to understand this case – one where voucher renters are prevented from integrating into a well-off city, or one where they are effectively moving to circumstances that are no better than the ones they left.

Although the voucher program's privacy was thought to be an advantage over public housing, interviews of voucher holders reveal that, despite the privacy afforded by renting a

house or apartment through the private market, voucher holders moving to the Antelope Valley are easily identified by their neighbors through an association of their race with participation in the Section 8 program. Neither program is guaranteed, then, to be an escape from the stigma and judgement of potentially resentful and hostile neighbors. In the Antelope Valley, the widespread hostility to voucher renters means that they are essentially being asked to integrate into a neighborhood already opposed to their presence. This runs counter to the expectation of the program at start – the privacy of renting private housing was expected to give tenants a chance to integrate seamlessly to new settings. Once that privacy is breached, and then once voucher tenants are placed in danger through the policing apparatus documented in this dissertation, tenants protect themselves by retreating from public space as a way to avoid scrutiny. This is the safest way to preserve access to affordable housing and avoid even the possibility of eviction.

These findings are similar in many ways to the findings documented in McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin's (2012) study of the dynamics in a mixed-income development – suggesting that race plays a similar role in eroding tenant privacy across both programs. These findings also suggest factors that may hinder voucher tenants' successful economic integration in new neighborhoods. For example, employment discrimination on the basis of race or newcomer status might be an obstacle preventing dispersal programs from achieving larger economic gains in other settings. And when tenants withdraw from public space to avoid public scrutiny and possible eviction, they may also be curtailing their ability to develop strong local social networks that can help provide both everyday social support and avenues for economic advancement. To the extent that social problems such as harassment and perceived employment discrimination might actually be barriers to economic progress, these findings build on the perception that social integration plays an intermediate role between movement and economic integration.

There is yet a broader implication of these findings for our understanding of policy aimed at reducing racial residential inequality. In his book, *Dark Ghettos*, Tommie Shelby returns to questions of the ghetto, and the variety of policies advanced by the academic and policy-making community towards it. He writes that rather than seeing the ghetto as a symptom of deeper societal failure to achieve a just society, “many view ghettos and their occupants as a “social problem” to be fixed” and from that starting point they “describe some salient and disconcerting features of ghettos...identify the linchpin that keeps ghettos in place...and then propose a cost-effective solution that would remove this linchpin” (Shelby 2016: 2). Shelby terms this a “medical model” of responding to racial inequality and contrasts it to a “systemic—injustice” framework that would implicate the entire society in remedying the underlying structural causes of racial inequality and rebuilding a society where the expectations of justice for all actually does prevail. Applying Shelby’s typology, one can see how the voucher program fits the medical approach to solving racial residential inequality, as it identifies problems of economic and social inequalities tied to the ghetto, identifies segregation as the ghetto’s linchpin, and proposes the voucher as a cost-effective solution that removes the linchpin. Rather than address the issues of racism in the attitudes of individuals and as expressed through institutional and governmental policies, the voucher program attempts to treat the effect of the cause rather than the cause itself. Shelby’s advocacy for an abolitionist approach to ghetto conditions resonates with Gregory’s view in that they both focus on root causes of racial residential inequality.

At present, there are a number of policy innovations that hold promise for the voucher program. One is the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule passed by the Obama administration, which would require local housing authorities to assess the state of fair housing in their localities and establish goals for remedying shortcomings in the local fair housing

landscape. The second is the move to reform how fair market rents are calculated, shrinking the geographic size of these calculations so that reimbursement rates are better pegged to local conditions (Palm 2018). This would certainly ease the suburban push of vouchers in Los Angeles County by raising the reimbursement rate within the city and lowering it in the valley. Finally, policy advocates have long asked for an expansion of the program to cover the millions of renters who qualify for vouchers but cannot receive them due to limited supply. This too would have a salient effect, increasing housing security for eligible renters, while also normalizing the program as it becomes more visible and widely used. All of these are worthy initiatives that would, directly or indirectly, substantially change the environment for voucher users and ameliorate some of the conditions for Black voucher renters in the valley. Yet, by Shelby's typology they remain largely in the "medical model" of societal responses to racial inequalities and must be coupled with changes that strike at the root of racial residential inequality in order to truly achieve more equitable goals.

With Shelby's framework in mind, it is something of a surprise that, despite the difficulties and indignities experienced by voucher tenants in the Antelope Valley, the tenants I spoke to almost universally preferred to stay. This is particularly true for tenants with children, and resonates with Chetty, Hendren, and Katz's (2015) findings about the strong positive effects of mobility for children. This finding becomes less puzzling, however, when seen in the broader context of federal housing support. Stripping away the other goals attached to vouchers, the most constant and reliable good produced by the program is the provision of safe, decent, and livable housing for its tenants, the original goal of the 1937 Housing Act as well. This, of course, applies equally well to the vast majority of public housing, both before and after the policy shift towards vouchers. Though it might not be able to use housing policy to consistently and successfully

solve other problems, we should remember that federal housing policy can successfully provide a basis for safe and decent housing for poor families, and that, in itself, is valued by the families living in those homes and communities (Bloom 2008).

Implications for the study of policing

This study illustrates how the criminalization of poverty extends to the sphere of housing through both the local housing authority and municipalities. The criminalization of Section 8 operates at two levels – the housing authority’s rules that may result in eviction and the municipalities rules that result in fines and pressure on landlords towards eviction. One crucial difference between the criminalization of poverty as originally described by Kaaryn Gustafson (2009) and as it operates in the realm of Section 8 vouchers is the involvement of private individuals in the policing of housing.

Individual participation in policing both advances the criminalization of Section 8 and works to reassert racial segregation. In cities like Oakland and Philadelphia, we see one important model of the relationship between policing and segregation. There Rios (2011) describes the hyper-segregation of young Black and Latino men as conducive to extreme surveillance and policing. Policing, therefore, takes advantage of segregation to create conditions and apply state pressure in a way that might not be possible without segregation. In the Antelope Valley, however, we see the relationship reversed. Here, local residents and the city government have landed on policing as a means of creating segregation. In this case we might find another way these two pillars of racial inequality are in fact intertwined.

This case is also suggestive of the ways that policing might differ when examined not in urban settings but in suburbs. In suburbs, despite having fewer residents in total, it may be harder for police to patrol and surveil large residential areas simply because of their geographic spread,

and in the valley this gap in policing is filled by local residents, who gain further incentive to watch their neighbors and report infractions by the possibility that doing so might result in their removal if they are voucher tenants.

Finally, this case illustrates the role of municipal codes in policing minority populations. In Ferguson, municipal codes were written in such a way as to pre-criminalize Black residents, ensuring that they were almost certainly violating some code at all times and that the fines or penalties for these violations were impossible burdens. In contrast to the Antelope Valley, Ferguson's municipal code and policing apparatus was organized not to remove the Black population but to maintain control over it and to extract fines from it in order to fill the city's budget (Lowery 2016). Similar examples of municipal codes being used to criminalize marginalized populations are emergent in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and other cities around the country (Mead et al 2017; Desmond and Valdez 2012).

Future directions for research

This case can be bolstered by additional data from the Antelope Valley. One source of such data would be public records data on calls made to the code enforcement hotline or complaints made to the local housing authority. These can be used to understand the severity of public response and its temporal or spatial relationship to Black movement. An additional source of data might come from landlords, whose perspective as a party between the city and residents might be useful. Finally, interviews with community activists and lawyers who fought the policing regime in court could help shed light on the case as well. But this case also prompts broader questions around qualitative research on the voucher program and research on the relationship between policing and public housing.

First, voucher movement poses a unique set of challenges to qualitative researchers. The difficulties of locating voucher tenants in person without the benefit of access to public housing or mixed-income developments shaped the study's methodology and limited its sample size. While this study explores critical questions about the social experiences of voucher tenants, it does so by relying on a small number of interviewees located through visits to the County Housing Authority, methods with clear limitations. These shortcomings can be overcome through larger follow up studies or surveys administered to a larger population of voucher holders in cooperation with local Housing Authorities. Determining how representative the case of the Antelope Valley is of patterns and practices around the country would be manifestly beneficial to social science around neighborhoods, policing, urban policy, and racial inequality.

Second, this case can be compared to other instances of racialized opposition to voucher movement. One of the most prominent of these comparison cases occurred around the same time in Antioch, a suburb in Northern California. The efforts by local residents there to combat voucher movement were different and by some measures more successful. It would be worth examining how these cases compared to each other and why the relatively more liberal city may have been more successful in preventing Black voucher movement than the relatively more conservative Antelope Valley.

Third, this case raises important questions about the long-term relationship between policing and public housing. If we think of vouchers as the tail end of nearly a century of public housing policy, we can also look back and consider how policing related to public housing over time, geography, and program format. Having already suggested parallels between this case and research on mixed-income developments, I believe there is ample warrant to produce a deeper

history of policing and public housing that could make a useful contribution to social science and policy.

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