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Removing the public from public housing: Public–private redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in Washington, DC

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, urban regimes have long brought together public and private actors to provide public services. Given this, how do public–private partnerships (PPPs) change public housing? To answer this question, I examine a public housing project: the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in Washington, DC. In 1993, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded one of the first federal HOPE VI grants to a PPP to demolish the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and construct the mixed-income Townhomes on Capitol Hill in its place. The redevelopment that was supposed to help the residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, in fact, permanently displaced nearly every one of them. I argue that the PPP, within the context of the 1990s dismantling of the state's democratic accountability and welfare functions, allowed business groups and homeowners to stage a coup and take control of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings.

In the 1970s, in the face of federal budget cuts and increasing interurban competition for capital, cities turned to public–private partnerships (PPPs; Harvey, 1989; Peck, 2014; Sagalyn, 2007). As the urban regime literature has demonstrated, however, local governments in the United States have always had to work with the business sector because it controls the resources, such as capital and materials, needed to realize government programs (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001; Orr & Stoker, 1994).¹ For example, public housing, at least in the United States, has always been a public–private endeavor (Vale & Freemark, 2012). Cities, including Washington, DC, had always funded public housing with bonds from (private) Wall Street banks. The DC Housing Authority (DCHA) hired private firms to demolish existing buildings, private architects to design public housing, private construction firms to build it, and private companies to make repairs and landscape sites.² Private architects, developers, and construction companies could easily move between constructing private buildings and constructing public housing as integral parts of urban renewal across the country and around the world.³ In Washington, DC, the urban regime had long brought together public and private actors. I thus ask, how have PPPs changed public housing, a program already shaped by public and private entities?

To answer this question, I examine the case of a small public housing project, the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, in Washington, DC. In 1988, DCHA emptied the Ellen Wilson Dwellings with the promise to renovate the buildings and allow the residents to return (Lang, 1999).⁴ With a \$7.5 million comprehensive renovation, DCHA had planned to refurbish the kitchens and bathrooms, redesign the exteriors, upgrade utilities, and add a basketball court, four playgrounds for small children, two outside pavilions, a common garden for growing vegetables, extensive plantings, and a new community building (Jackson, 1988). However, this renovation never took place, and the buildings were left vacant for years. In 1993, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) then awarded one of the first federal Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI grants—originally called the Urban Revitalization Demonstration grant but soon renamed HOPE VI—to a PPP formed by the DCHA and a private developer group to demolish the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and construct the mixed-income Townhomes on Capitol Hill in its place. Only 7 of the 134 Ellen Wilson households ever returned to the new development.⁵ The Townhomes on Capitol Hill have been heralded as a success story for public housing, affordable housing finance, resident-led development, sustainability, and land use practice (Henderson, 2008; Lobo, 2017; Slingerland, n.d.; Zielenbach & Voith, 2010). Yet, the redevelopment that was supposed to help the residents of Ellen Wilson, in fact, permanently displaced nearly every one of them. I argue that, due to the organized initiative of the local business community and the inability of the state to mediate between the business sector and the low-income residents, the PPP enabled what might be called a coup by business and homeowners and the permanent displacement of those who wished to live in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings.

Literature review

In its most basic form, a PPP is a formal relationship between one or more government agencies and one or more private sector entities to bring about a public policy outcome.⁶ HUD's HOPE VI program encouraged public housing authorities to form PPPs to redevelop their sites. Much of the management literature investigates whether PPPs have realized their promises, for example, to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and mobilize new expertise and capital, or how PPPs might be reformed to do these things (Brown & Yates, 2012; Roehrich, Lewis, & George, 2014; Sagalyn, 2007). Critical geographers, in contrast, have focused on PPPs as a key characteristic of entrepreneurial urbanism (Harvey, 1989; Peck, 2014). Entrepreneurial urbanism reorients public policy to realize the demands of capital and the middle class, neglecting, or even rejecting outright, the right to the city of, in this case, public housing residents. Using this critical literature, we would predict that the introduction of PPPs would result in the destruction of public housing units and the permanent displacement of public housing residents, as in fact did happen in the case of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings.

However, there are also broader political struggles involved. As Schaller (2016) argues, entrepreneurial cities rely on local “communities” to realize their development strategies. Local elites seek to control these communities by narrowing the field of stakeholders and even erasing the working classes both physically and politically from these communities. Scholars should not take part in this erasure or in claims about the inevitability of entrepreneurial policies. Studies of the origin and evolution of HOPE VI as a policy participate in this erasure by focusing on interviews with, or statements by, those making and implementing the policy, without considering the communities displaced by these powerful elites (e.g., Katz, 2009; Zhang & Weismann, 2006). This is also the case with existing scholarship on the Ellen Wilson Dwellings (e.g., Raffel, Denson, Varady, & Sweeney, 2003; Varady, Raffel, Sweeney, & Denson, 2005; Zielenbach & Voith, 2010).⁷ To adequately understand PPPs, scholars must go beyond one-sided, even partisan, analyses and instead study the broader *politics* of the entrepreneurial city, including the long-term mobilizations of various stakeholders, such as public housing residents, who are often invisible in policy-focused studies.⁸ I thus use government and private archival documents, which allow me to access the intentions, words, and actions of many stakeholders at the time.

Miraftab (2004) presents a systematic model for studying these broader political struggles. She identifies three main political actors involved in PPPs: the community, the business sector, and the state. She argues that PPPs may become a “Trojan Horse of neoliberal development” (p. 89) and thus not benefit the poor and marginalized when (a) the community to be served by the PPP, here the public housing residents, is politically weak; (b) the private business sector initiates the PPP primarily to realize its own interests; and (c) the state cannot effectively mediate between the business sector and the community to equalize the political field.⁹ Applying Miraftab's (2004)

framework to the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, I have determined that the main political actors were the public housing residents, the local business sector, and both the DCHA and HUD. Those in the business sector initiated the PPP and soon took on the role of the state and the role of the community, undermining the political power of public housing residents and realizing their own interests. Rather than privatization, the Ellen Wilson Dwellings demonstrated the collusion of local private and state forces, which created a new kind of state, one that served the rich at the expense of the poor.

Here I start by discussing the national public housing policy terrain. Then I explore the emergence and consequences of the PPP through the perspectives and actions of the different stakeholders.

The U.S. public housing policy terrain

The stakeholders involved in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings battled within a shifting public housing policy terrain, and DC public housing residents in particular had played central roles in shifting this terrain. So, at an earlier time, they were not political weak. During the 1980s, public housing authorities across the country had allowed thousands of units to fall into neglect, effectively destroying these units (National Housing Law Project, 1990). Public housing residents sued public housing authorities to stop this destruction by neglect. On February 13, 1989, President George H. W. Bush appointed Jack Kemp as HUD secretary, who soon responded to this situation. Inspired by the Thatcher government, Kemp implemented HOPE I, II, and III (fundamentally different from the later HOPE VI program) policies to give or sell for a nominal sum public housing projects to their residents (Glasheen & Hornig, 1993).¹⁰ The HOPE I program, which specifically dealt with traditional public housing, could award grants to “PHAs [Public Housing Authorities], Indian Housing Authorities, resident management corporations, resident councils, cooperative associations, public or private nonprofit organizations, and other public agencies” to take ownership of a project, renovate it, and transfer the units to project residents or others (Glasheen & Hornig, 1993, p. 77). According to Glasheen and Hornig (1993), HUD under Kemp had interpreted HOPE I as permitting the uncompensated taking of traditional public housing projects by non-PHA entities for conversion to homeownership with “no requirement of active participation or even support by the PHA” (pp. 70, 77). Technically, these programs only temporarily involved PPPs because they completely privatized public housing. Some public housing residents and organizers, such as Kimi Gray in Washington, DC, supported these programs because they would stop de facto demolitions by neglect, block the selling off of public housing to private developers, and allow residents to remain in their apartments and communities, though these would no longer be public housing or rental apartments.

Democrats and some Republicans sought to stop the privatization of public housing and “save public housing” in a new form (Cisneros, 2009, p. 4). While continuing HOPE I, II, and III, in 1992, Congress introduced the Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) program, which would later be named HOPE VI (U.S. Congress, 1992b). Emerging out of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, the URD had a fundamentally different philosophy from previous programs. First, in contrast to the continuation of public housing communities in privatized housing of HOPE I, URD provided substantial funds for major rehabilitation, as well as demolition, of severely distressed buildings. According to the law, public housing authorities could replace the demolished or disposed units with Section 8 rental vouchers, other conventional public housing units, or units available for resident homeownership, and displaced residents “shall be eligible for these replacement units” (U.S. Congress, 1992b, p. 106).

Second, HUD and the National Commission promoted PPPs. The National Commission (1992) demanded that revitalization projects allow “mixed income developments,” (p. 25) “economically integrating” (p. 16) the broader neighborhood, and encourage new partnerships of “PHAs, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and residents” (p. 31), in other words, PPPs. Third, unlike earlier rehabilitation programs, URD required that its funds also be used to provide residents community and supportive services, such as literacy training, job training, day care, and youth activities. Finally,

the National Commission (1992) demanded that HUD go beyond “bricks and mortar” and recognize that public housing residents should “lead” this transformation as “the intended beneficiaries of this ‘kinder, gentler Nation’” (p. xv).¹¹ The National Commission and URD thus envisioned a fundamentally new kind of public housing with public housing residents as both leaders and recipients of assistance.

The HOPE VI program evolved over time, driven by government encouragement and developer initiative (Goetz, 2013; Katz, 2009; Popkin, Katz, & Cunningham, 2004; Zhang & Weismann, 2006). Arriving in early 1993, President Bill Clinton’s HUD secretary Henry Cisneros reshaped URD in line with his vision and renamed it HOPE VI, while cutting the budgets of the HOPE I, II, and III programs.¹² Cisneros brought into HUD private-sector experts in real estate management and finance to use “market dynamics” to reorganize public housing (Cisneros, 2009, p. 11). He also brought in desegregation advocates, who called for the demolition of public housing to end racial segregation and lent his plans an anti-racist, social justice tone.¹³ To Cisneros, simple renovation or reconstruction would always lead to failure. Therefore, to him, PHAs needed to replace public housing buildings and “change whole neighborhoods,” especially by attracting market-rate residents (Cisneros, 2009, p. 7). In 1995, HUD ended the rule requiring one-for-one replacement of public housing units in new mixed-income developments, which resulted by 2008 in the demolition without replacement of over 220,000 units of public housing, as well as the selling off or conversion of thousands more (Goetz, 2013). This continuing destruction of public housing and displacement of its residents undermined their roles as leaders and beneficiaries.

The residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings

When the DCHA moved them to renovate the buildings in 1988, the residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings lost their most important claim to power: their bodies in the buildings. With their bodies in the buildings, the former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings could have claimed tenant rights and more easily declared themselves “the community” and “the residents.” They could have used the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, as Williams (2004) has explored in other public housing locations, as an organizational base for broad grassroots activism and, using Soja’s (2010) term, for spatial justice movements. Local homeowners and the real estate industry sought to appropriate and eradicate these spaces by using the HOPE programs and, most important, PPPs. As a result, as I discuss later, they transformed politics in Washington, DC. However, this did not happen without a fight.

The Ellen Wilson residents, public housing residents more generally, and the homeless wanted to live in public housing, wanted it to be improved, and did not want it to be destroyed. DCHA always had a large waiting list for public housing units, which demonstrated a large demand for and interest in public housing. In 1989, the list had over 16,000 eligible families, for a system with approximately 10,000 units.¹⁴ Those living in public housing recognized that more powerful actors wanted to seize their communities. The Ellen Wilson Dwellings were considered quite vulnerable to capture. At a DCHA-wide advisory council meeting with Mayor Marion Barry in 1979, Vivian Williams, who lived in a public housing development near the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, said, “We have a priority. I would very much like to see us keep our eye on Ellen Wilson. This property is right up on Capitol Hill and if we aren’t careful folk will take it right from under us” (NCHA, 1979, p. 6). In addition to working on resident councils, public housing residents also used lawsuits to protect their communities. In 1985, for example, residents at the Fort Dupont Dwellings had presented a landmark legal case, *Edwards v. District of Columbia*, against the District government for intentionally letting the project fall apart in order to declare it uninhabitable and demolish it.¹⁵ Many of these residents refused to move from the buildings, keeping their bodies in the buildings as a political strategy. In 1992, a group of lawyers filed another lawsuit, *Pearson v. Kelly*, in the name of a broader group of those who wished to live in public housing: DC residents on the DCHA waiting list. The lawsuit challenged DCHA’s “failure to renovate vacant public housing units and make them available for occupancy on a timely basis” (“Special Master,” 1994). This lawsuit led the Supreme Court of the

District of Columbia to put the DCHA into receivership to force it to make more public housing units available through accelerated renovation. Many DC residents wished to live in public housing and sought to protect it.

From the start, public housing projects provided an organizational base for political activism. Like other projects, the Ellen Wilson Dwellings had a tenant council and community center. Community organizations worked closely with the residents to provide services and organize grassroots activism at the community center.¹⁶ The residents had successfully demanded the renovation of the buildings, a significant achievement, even though it led to their supposedly temporary displacement. Public housing residents became a large political constituency in Washington, DC. Politicians, such as Mayor Marion Barry, visited the public housing projects on the campaign trail or to announce new programs. Public housing had become more than housing. It became a location for politics, rights, and social life more generally. And many low-income residents sought to be a part of this.

Similar to others displaced by HOPE VI redevelopment, the Ellen Wilson residents wished to return to their rehabilitated development (Lang, 1999).¹⁷ And others also wished to live there. People continued to live in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings under difficult conditions. In early 1991, the DCHA reported that the Ellen Wilson Dwellings were 96.7% vacant, which meant that possibly four units were still considered inhabited by legal residents (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1991).¹⁸ At this time, unauthorized residents also lived in and visited the buildings, which Mayor Sharon Pratt-Kelly identified as “a stronghold for criminals and vagrants” (Pratt-Kelly, 1993). This was not how it appeared to the new residents. In 1992, Michael Burgess, a 37-year-old who supported himself washing cars and shoveling snow, resided in an apartment and said, “It’s the best I’ve got. ... At the shelter it’s dangerous but this is the safest spot in the world” (Rosenbaum, 1992c, p. B3).

Public housing residents continued to fight for the renovation of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. National public housing organizer Kimi Gray lived in another DC housing project, Kenilworth-Parkside, and led its resident management corporation in 1988 to purchase and manage the project. To do this, she had allied with Jack Kemp and his HOPE I program. In 1991, Gray told the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing that public housing organizers and residents were fighting across the United States to maintain and renovate public housing, after decades of abandonment and neglect. However, according to Gray, cities and developers wanted to take public housing properties all across the country: “And all the prime land left is ours now. So now the game is to get rid of us” (NCSDPH, 1991, pp. 85–86). To protect low-income housing, Gray advocated turning over public housing management and ownership to resident management corporations. In her presentation to the National Commission, Gray mentioned the fight to keep Ellen Wilson: “Right now we’re fighting in this city to keep one of our prime properties from Capitol Hill. I mean we are physically fighting” (NCSDPH, 1991, pp. 86–87). In order for the Ellen Wilson Dwellings to remain public housing or, at least, housing open to low-income African Americans, community organizers had to keep it out of the hands of “Capitol Hill,” which she and other public housing residents understood as the local business owners and homeowners plotting to take control of it. Now, we turn to these actors.

The business sector

As the DCHA moved Ellen Wilson residents out in 1988, the Capitol Hill business community and neighborhood groups strategized to take over the project. The local business association, the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals (CHAMPS), led this effort. CHAMPS, headed by the president of the local National Capital Bank, brought together local business owners and real estate agents. They worked closely with the local historic preservation organization, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, and the Sousa Neighborhood Association.¹⁹ The majority of these actors were homeowners on Capitol Hill, some living near the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. Though they had major disagreements, they shared much as local homeowners and as participants in a coalition of

organizations promoting local growth, based on housing restoration and neighborhood marketing, on Capitol Hill.²⁰ With the public housing residents displaced, these groups could claim the title of “the community” and take control of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in their own interests. The local business people and homeowners realized this coup with the help of the state and a PPP.

Earlier, this group of business people and homeowners had been involved in the plans to renovate the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. They initially supported the immediate physical renovation of Ellen Wilson as planned, but they never wanted the original residents to return. The group emphasized that the “rehabilitation” of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings required the “careful selection of tenants who will maintain a safe and attractive environment” (*Letter to Valerie Hult, Department of Public and Assisted Housing*, 1989, pp. 1-2). The DCHA director and the mayor had accepted their demand and discussed ways to involve the Sousa Neighborhood Association in the selection of tenants (Singer, 1989). However, due to the lack of adequate funding and other obstacles, the renovation plan stalled (Government Accounting Office, 1998). The group became panicked and insisted that the DCHA immediately construct a strong fence and secure windows and doors to block squatters from entering the buildings (*Letter to Valerie Hult, Department of Public and Assisted Housing*, 1989, p. 2).

Arriving in early 1989, the new HUD Secretary Jack Kemp opened up new opportunities for this group. CHAMPS formed the Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson and put together a plan to take control of the housing project. A neighbor of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and a member of the coalition, Karl Zinsmeister, wrote a letter to the president of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society:

I think a meeting with Kemp and assistants is probably the most important step for us (though I think we ought to meet with the DC people first). I've worked a lot in the Kemp wing of politics and I can tell you this project ought to ring all the right bells for him right now. (Zinsmeister, 1989, p. 1)

Though the coalition had connections with Kemp, they did not want to realize Kemp's complete vision. Kemp sought to give public housing, through his HOPE I program, to its residents. This meant rehabilitating public housing, privatizing it, and making the current public housing residents the owners. Zinsmeister had a different vision:

We should also start thinking about economics soon. My back-of-the-envelope tells me the Ellen Wilson site is worth maybe 15 million dollars. Can we begin to think in specifics about what kind of person or group might be interested in undertaking a mixed development of the site that included a big chunk of low-income housing. Is there such a person or group? Or would it have to be done as a not-for-profit venture, (maybe as a Community Development Corporation or whatever they call what has been formed to organize the Eastern Mkt. rehabilitation???) (Zinsmeister, 1989, p. 1)

He saw an opportunity for a developer, nonprofit or for-profit, to rebuild the housing project as mixed-income and privately owned. The redevelopment of Cochran Gardens in St. Louis inspired him, which he presented as “much like ours—the project was a mess, but nice neighborhood, expensive houses, etc. ... Business people were the real angels of the transformation” (Zinsmeister, 1989, p. 2). The local business community—as supposed “angels”—explored how to use HOPE I in a new way: to privatize the project possibly without the involvement of its residents (Zinsmeister, 1989, p. 2).

By June, the Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson made its first public statement, calling for a “Brave New Ellen Wilson” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, p. 5). In this statement, they demanded complete redevelopment, rather than renovating the existing buildings, making their argument with a language of spatial othering and disaster commonly used in reference to public housing (Goetz, 2013; Oakley & Fraser, 2016). They envisioned chaos within the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, but this chaos shifted around in time. The coalition, at points, presented the problems as deepest during the 1988–1989 period: “Never again will members of our community let social conditions at Ellen Wilson return to the poisonous state they reached in 1988–1989”; “dramatic steps be taken now to assure that Ellen Wilson does not return again to its recent cancerous state” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, pp. 4, 3). They also assumed the chaos existed earlier when the public housing residents lived there: “The anarchy in Ellen Wilson deformed the lives of hundreds of its

residents” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, pp. 2–3).²¹ These elites presented the Ellen Wilson Dwellings as a place of absolute, timeless chaos. Of course, no, or very few, public housing residents lived in the project in the 1988–1989 period, so the destruction of the project came from other sources. These fantastical ideas could be voiced because Ellen Wilson residents were not present to dispute them.

These visions of endless anarchy allowed the coalition to assert that a completely “new, unified community” designed by “a fresh social blueprint” had always been needed (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, p. 6). The renovation of public housing projects, in their minds, would always fail—will end up as “a massive squatter’s camp”—because, in their view, public housing projects in their traditional form always fail (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, p. 6). So, the coalition wished to go “beyond bricks and mortar” and start anew. In contrast to the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing’s call to go beyond bricks and mortar to provide services and recognize public housing residents as the leaders of the transformation, the coalition made the residents the object of social discipline: “Some new regimen or set of rules must be put in place to inspire a sense of dignity and self-mastery among residents. Otherwise our efforts will be for naught. New drywall takes days to hang and finish. It can be destroyed in a matter of minutes.” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989 p. 6). Viewing public housing residents as a destructive force, the group sought to create a new kind of society within the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. This “social blueprint” demanded both selecting the “right” tenants, as determined by the coalition, and creating a social order to impose self-control, discipline, and, in effect, in a more colonial language, “civilization” on the selected tenants. This social order assumed, in the coalition’s words, “a hierarchy of responsibility and opportunity within public housing, and that only those individuals who had proven they took care of their apartments and paid their rents, etc. should be relocated to a re-born Ellen Wilson” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, pp. 7–8).²² This social engineering project assumed a child-like resident in need of adult guidance along the path of self-control toward adulthood and full citizenship.

Using anti-racist language for racist purposes, the coalition called for an end to segregation and isolation to make Ellen Wilson “well integrated into a successful neighborhood” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, p. 7). With the national criticism of concentrated poverty and the warehousing of the poor in “ghettos,” urban planners demanded an end to this segregation and the actual realization of integration by class and by race. Yet, the coalition used calls for integration to displace public housing residents permanently and to enable the coalition’s takeover of the area.²³ This integration would take place architecturally and socially on terms defined by the coalition. The coalition envisioned the extension of “Capitol Hill, a stable mixed neighborhood” through the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, a space, to homeowners, of anxiety-provoking anarchy or possibly an unmentioned autonomy. The Ellen Wilson Dwellings would be architecturally integrated by destroying the existing 1930s garden apartment style and expanding the local Victorian-era architecture through the space. The incorporation of wealthier households, it was claimed, would also socially integrate the Ellen Wilson Dwellings into the broader community and thus “could help counteract the ghettoized isolation that plagues many public housing projects” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, p. 8). The extension of Capitol Hill would incorporate this area into the world of middle-class or wealthy homeowners and business people. This “integration” would not only permanently displace lower-income African Americans but would also reduce their political concentration, autonomy, and power in the area.

The coalition met with experts to develop a plan to take control of the agenda and the development. In July 1989, the coalition hired a consultant, Dorn C. McGrath, Jr., a professor of urban and regional planning, at George Washington University, to do this. According to his plan, the goal was to create a “model mixed-income, perhaps mixed-use housing resource” based on the “cooperative efforts of the public and private sectors of the community” (“A New Vision for Ellen Wilson, Draft Feasibility Study,” n.d., p. 1). He laid out the potential financial resources, the language that could be used to discuss the project, and the next steps:

First, the community must immediately “seize control” of the modernization/renovation plan and process for the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. Community leaders must discuss the feasibility study with government officials and receive a commitment that the plan for Ellen Wilson will address the goals, objectives, and major components of the concept described in this document. (“A New Vision for Ellen Wilson, Draft Feasibility Study,” n.d., p. 15)

According to the document, the coalition could seize control by establishing an Ellen Wilson Housing Partnership as a nonprofit administered by a board of directors, which would be made up of members of the DC government, the banking and investment community, and nonprofits. The former Ellen Wilson residents were not mentioned. McGrath told the coalition then to develop all of the other plans as well: site, architectural, financial, development, and management. The community leaders did not come from among the public housing residents, as was understood in the original HOPE I and HOPE VI programs, but rather the local homeowners, real estate agents, and local bankers—those not displaced—usurped the title of the community and the residents. This was a coup.

The coalition soon formed a community development corporation (CDC), which they named the Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation. The Ellen Wilson CDC had 13 members, of whom three were central members of the coalition: James Didden, the president of CHAMPS; David Perry, leader of another local homeowner association and the deputy executive director of the Federal City Council, a powerful business association promoting economic development in Washington, DC; and Richard Wolf, previous president of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. These three members had earlier met with local politicians and public housing representatives, inviting two to the CDC.²⁴ The coalition had a vision and a formal organization—the CDC—to realize its interests.

In December 1991, the CDC submitted a letter of interest to the DCHA, setting out its plan. They stated, “The mere provision of housing is not enough. What caused the Ellen Wilson project to fail will not be cured by merely rehabilitating 134 units” (Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation, 1991, p. 1). In their view, a completely new community was needed. They proposed about 350 units, with at least 134 units of “housing for low income households” (Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation, 1991, p. 1) mostly as condominiums and some as Section 8 rental housing. This plan to privatize the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and its later name, “the Ellen Wilson Economic Empowerment Plan,” reflected the spirit of Kemp’s HOPE I Program. However, in the name of integration, the coalition sought a new set of residents, thus differing from Kemp’s HOPE I. The entire development would be integrated by income throughout, so “that no portion of the project could be labeled either ‘low income’ or ‘market rate’” (Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation, 1991, p. 1). In their minds, this would be more “conducive to the well being of low income residents” and “would produce a new community that would be physically and socially reconnected to the adjacent neighborhood.” (Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation, 1991, p. 2). In fact, this supposed integration would displace the overwhelming majority of the Ellen Wilson residents.

The CDC created a joint venture with three for-profit companies—Telesis, Corcoran-Jennison, and the McHenry Company—which brought new knowledge to the CDC. Telesis was a private developer of low-income housing, which had already redeveloped another public housing development in Washington, DC. Corcoran-Jennison provided a model for the new Ellen Wilson Dwellings: its conversion of the Columbia Point public housing development into the mixed-income Harbor Point in Boston (Raffel et al., 2003; see also Roessner, 2000; Vale, 2002). Corcoran-Jennison was to privately manage the development with the involvement of resident organizations (Fosburg, Popkin, & Locke, 1996). McHenry Company was a real estate management company. The coalition had another organization, the joint venture, and a model to realize its plans.

The Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson prepared to seize the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. In the late 1980s, the arrival of Jack Kemp and a worldwide turn among elites against many groups seen as destroying cities empowered homeowners living around the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and working in local real estate, banking, and business associations on Capitol Hill to forward their interests.²⁵ They did so through techniques used in other HOPE VI sites noted by other scholars: spatial othering,

social engineering and disciplining, integrationist language, and practices from settler colonialism (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015; Fraser et al., 2013; Imbroscio, 2008a; 2008b; Oakley & Fraser, 2016). Though stalled due to inadequate funding and continuing political battles about the nature of public housing, the coalition's plan with a new PPP would soon gain momentum. But before turning to that part of the story, I turn again to the public housing residents.

The residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, part II

In December 1991, the DCHA received not only the Ellen Wilson CDC's letter of interest but also two other letters with philosophies and politics very different from the CDC. On December 17, 1991, Eric C. Fedewa submitted a letter of interest. In this letter, he described a model that "comes straight from the writings, speeches, and my personal experiences with Jack Kemp, David Caprara, Alfonso Jackson, Bob Woodson and even Kimi Gray" (Fedewa, 1991, p. 1). Fedewa proposed buying public housing, renovating it, and selling it as low-income condominiums: "Due to the high costs of brand new buildings, the only realistic choice for Ellen Wilson may be: rehabilitation or nothing at all" (Fedewa, 1991, p. 13). A residential management corporation made up of the tenants would run the condominium development. According to Fedewa, the project would "empower" low-income people to become "self-sufficient" and bring them into "the economic mainstream of the free enterprise system" (Fedewa, 1991, p. 4). This proposal reflected the views of Jack Kemp and the HOPE I program and might allow Ellen Wilson residents to return.

The national public housing organizer Kimi Gray and Donato Padula of Padula Construction also submitted a letter offering to renovate Ellen Wilson Dwellings, as well as two other public housing developments. Since 1980, Padula Construction had worked as contractors on the rehabilitation of vacant public housing units in DC. Their proposal offered to renovate and maintain public housing communities, along with providing employment, which reflected long-standing public housing residents' demands. Their proposal included resident involvement not only in management but also in the very rehabilitation: "Ken-Park Construction, organized by the Kenilworth/Parkside Resident Management Corporation, is an entrepreneurship vehicle, designed to assist Public Housing residents to attain economic self-sufficiency through business development, employment and training" (Padula Construction, 1991, p. 1). This proposal also reflected the earlier HOPE programs and thus might allow Ellen Wilson residents to return. The DCHA did not accept either of these proposals.

Other DC residents sought to live in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. On May 30, 1992, about 20 homeless Vietnam veterans occupied the Ellen Wilson Dwellings (Naylor, 1992b).²⁶ From late May to early October 1992, these veterans renovated the Ellen Wilson Dwellings as both a construction job training exercise and a future home for them and other homeless people. They called themselves the Committee for Restoration of the Ellen Wilson Development (CREWD) (Bell, 1992). They began immediately to clean out the apartments and spackle the walls, readying them for painting. In less than 3 weeks, one unit had plumbing and generator-produced electricity (Naylor, 1992a). They planned to renovate all 134 apartments and, according to a reporter, "dedicate each apartment to a DC veteran who died in Vietnam" (Naylor, 1992b). They hung a banner from a third-floor window stating, "Homeless veterans working for a better future" (Naylor, 1992b). One veteran decided to run for local political office. By October, the mayor invited CREWD to submit a bid for the planned renovation of Ellen Wilson (Bell, 1992), whereas the DCHA told them numerous times to leave.

By occupying the buildings, the veterans gained negotiating power and a great deal of public support. In early October 1992, however, Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly evicted the then over 30 veterans in Ellen Wilson (Rosenbaum, 1992b, p. B1). The District government began bricking up the windows and doors. Then, 35 veterans took over the roof of Ellen Wilson, with one, Cecil Byrd, perched on top of the Ellen Wilson smokestack. During these evictions, "There were all kinds of people there, reporters, people from radio stations, people from the neighborhood. People donated all kinds of food for us"; and "We had our signs on the roof and we had a lot of people

donating food. People was just coming by dropping off food” (One of the Group, 1993, pp. 18–19). Reverend Jesse Jackson, as the District’s shadow senator, took part in their negotiations with the mayor, which brought the veterans down from the roof (Rankin & Rosenbaum, 1992, p. A11). Even after they were evicted, the veterans continued to negotiate to renovate the buildings, but they were quickly marginalized from the decision-making process. A newspaper article stated that the mayor “said no decision would be made without consulting residents who live in the area. ... The buildings will stay vacant until the city, neighbors of the complex, and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development agree on a plan for the apartments” (Rosenbaum, 1992a, p. B3). The homeless veterans no longer in the buildings were not considered “residents who live in the area” and could be ignored.

Because HOPE I was still in effect, the CDC did have to ask whether the “residents” wanted to own the buildings. However, the CDC did not approach the former Ellen Wilson residents but rather asked the citywide public housing resident council whether they wanted to purchase the development or part of it (Government of the District of Columbia, [1993], p. VI). The council members and other public housing resident organizers supported the redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings at least in part because, in their minds, it was better than selling the land to private developers.²⁷ The redevelopment plans promised to keep public housing units in some form.

In contrast to the local business group, neighborhood associations, and developers, many people with low incomes wanted to live in public housing and specifically in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, renovated or not. On October 6, 1992, the city government evicted the veterans, on the same day that the law enacting the URD program, later known as HOPE VI, passed.

The business sector and the state, part II

In the redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, the state and the business sector were so intertwined that the state did not act independently to reconcile the wide variety of interests involved. The state at the municipal level did not play a mediating role among the different actors and did not level the playing field. The state at the federal and municipal levels mediated primarily between battling elite groups and appeared hostile to the interests and demands of public housing residents. Furthermore, in 1995, through different mechanisms, the DC government and the DCHA were put in receivership, which weakened democracy and further empowered private business interests.

With the implementation of the URD program and the eviction of the veterans, the DCHA quickly requested proposals from developers and selected the Ellen Wilson Redevelopment Joint Venture, consisting of the Ellen Wilson CDC and its for-profit companies, to submit a proposal for an URD grant. Thus, the DCHA and the Ellen Wilson Redevelopment Joint Venture became a PPP. In 1993, HUD awarded this PPP a \$15.7 million implementation grant in the first year of the URD program. In 1995, the DCHA and the now named Ellen Wilson Redevelopment LLC executed a formal contract and thus became an official PPP (Northup, 1995, p. 1). HUD then awarded the PPP an additional \$9.4 million, making a total of \$25.1 million in URD/HOPE VI funding.

The PPP further marginalized the former Ellen Wilson residents from the decision-making process. The shift from outright privatization in HOPE I to public–private governance under URD/HOPE VI changed the political battle over the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, making the former residents no longer stakeholders or leaders but rather merely potential customers. In the section on consultation with residents in its 1993 proposal, the PPP stated that it would discuss its plans not with the original residents but rather with the president of the DCHA-wide resident council and the Ellen Wilson CDC because the Ellen Wilson Dwellings were vacant and thus had no tenant organization (Government of the District of Columbia, [1993], VI). By September 1995, the new proposal’s “Resident Consultation Overview” stated:

... a central tenet of the Ellen Wilson Redevelopment is that residents will be deeply involved in every aspect of the physical revitalization and the supportive and community services effort. However, as the Ellen Wilson site is presently vacant, ‘resident’ for this project refers to any individual living within the borders highlighted on the following map [the area from 2nd to 8th St, SE and Pennsylvania Ave to M St, SE], as well as former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. (Resident Consultation Overview, 1995, p. 1)

By 1995, the PPP would consult with *any* individual living within this broad area. The “former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings” seem to be an afterthought. The displacement, supposed to be temporary, allowed the business sector and homeowners to appropriate the title of the residents and the community from the former Ellen Wilson residents.

At the same time, the annual and quarterly reports stated emphatically that the Ellen Wilson CDC represented the public housing residents (Ellen Wilson HOPE VI Status Report, 1995a, p. 1). The DCHA-wide resident council was no longer consulted. In at least one report, the former residents moved from those stakeholders consulted to the category of “marketing”: “A meeting of former Ellen Wilson residents is anticipated in late August to ensure that they are aware of the opportunity to move back to the Ellen Wilson site once it is revitalized” (Ellen Wilson HOPE VI Status Report, 1995b, pp. 2, 4). Under “resident consultation,” meetings were reported with the Capitol Hill Brokers Council, the alternative administrator, and CHAMPS, as well as “continued telephone discussions with former Ellen Wilson residents regarding project status” (Ellen Wilson HOPE VI Status Report, 1995b, p. 2; Monthly Progress Report, 1995a, p. 2; Monthly Progress Report, 1995b, p. 1). The PPP did not consider the former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings as stakeholders, let alone leaders, in the planning process but rather as potential customers.

Though the PPP marginalized the former Ellen Wilson residents from decision making, the infighting among the local business owners and homeowners dominated the public debate. This public debate split between those who supported the original plan of the Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson —“the Ellen Wilson Economic Empowerment Plan” and its privatization of public housing—and those who supported the PPP and its new form of public housing. A newspaper article reported that one local politician “neatly summed up the division last week when he said he feels like he’s in the middle of two armed camps” (Loeb, 1996, DC3). This dichotomy excluded the public housing residents and the homeless.²⁸

In the spirit of Kemp’s HOPE I, the supporters of the Ellen Wilson Economic Empowerment Plan wished to have 70% market-rate and 30% subsidized condominiums (Rice, 1995), which would create, what they deemed, a “a truly mixed-income, financially sound development” (“Why the Plan for Ellen Wilson Won’t Work,” 1995, p. 3). They called for “real homeownership” with reduced interest rates and down payment relief to those “who would otherwise find it difficult to buy a new home in a desirable [*sic*] neighborhood” (“Why the Plan for Ellen Wilson Won’t Work,” 1995, p. 3). If its plan was not realized, this group wanted nothing to be built.²⁹

In contrast, those supporting the CDC called for a limited-equity cooperative. They followed a nationwide trend in the 1980s and 1990s when 18,000 units of public housing were converted into affordable cooperatives (Sazama, 1996). The CDC planned for 20 market-rate units and 134 affordable (limited-equity) cooperative units distributed as follows:

Band 1: 33 units, 0–25% AMI

Band 2: 34 units, 25–50% AMI

Band 3: 67 units, 50–115% AMI (47 units, 50–80% AMI, and 20 units, 80–115% AMI) (Van de Toorn, 1995, p. 10)

The plan had no rentals and, instead of the original 134 units of public housing, there were now only 33 units in the income range of most public housing residents. The majority of the original 134 households in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings could not return.

Though the supporters and opponents of the CDC plan bitterly argued, especially about the number of units and the type of ownership, these two groups shared much. Both groups agreed that public housing was a failure and could destroy entire neighborhoods and cities. Both groups excluded the Ellen Wilson residents, the veterans, and the homeless from decision making, with

the exception of the two former Ellen Wilson residents on the Ellen Wilson CDC. The homeowners and local real estate interests on both sides took on the role of the residents and the community, thus privileging their own interests over those of public housing residents and others.

Both groups shared a racist and classist view that low-income residents could not live together because they needed discipline learned from wealthier people. For example, an opponent of the CDC's plan, Bryce Suderow (1996), wrote,

I predict that in a few months after its residents move in, the low-income residents at Ellen Wilson will be climbing into the window of their mid- and upper-level neighbors to steal their stereos and television sets. ... Within five years, we'll be saddled with a ghetto. (p. 5)

Similarly, a supporter, the executive director of the Ellen Wilson CDC, Ed Batal (1996), rejected "the Ellen Wilson Economic Empowerment Plan" because

I don't see how you can dilute that pathology with 300 or 400 market rate healthy households. Those 134 families are still going to have all the problems that exist. How long will it be before they're going thru the back window of the \$250,000 townhouse next door? How long will it be before they have their crack parties? ... I don't care if you put 1,000 market rate families in. If you have 134 very low-income families, it does not work. (p. 18)

To Batal, in agreement with Suderow, nearly everyone needed to be displaced, and the PPP helped to do that. The heated battles between these two groups obscured their similarities, as well as the demands and needs of the public housing residents, the homeless, and others.

In this period, the state and private business became even more intertwined. At the federal level, Cisneros brought a network of affordable housing experts and market-based real estate experts to HUD. This intertwining also happened at the local level. The Ellen Wilson Redevelopment Joint Venture, which was awarded the URD/HOPE VI grant in 1993, originally included the McHenry Company, a private real estate management firm. Later, because HUD would not provide HOPE VI funds directly to distressed public housing authorities like DCHA, the DCHA asked the McHenry Company to leave the PPP, form a joint venture, McHenry/TAG, and become DCHA's alternative administrator, which would manage the Ellen Wilson HOPE VI project (Contract for Redevelopment of Ellen Wilson Dwellings, 1995, pp. 1, 3).³⁰ As part of the HOPE VI budget for the Ellen Wilson redevelopment, McHenry/TAG was to be paid \$1,125,000 as alternative administrator (Burnette, 1995, V-3). McHenry Company, a for-profit company, moved smoothly from the private sector side to become the state representative and mediator between the private sector and HUD. These connections meant that HUD and DCHA could not work independent of those profiting from the project.

In 1995, the DC government was taken over by an external financial control board, which focused on balancing budgets. On April 17, 1995, Congress established the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (better known as the financial control board), "effectively stripping the Mayor and Council of all power over the District's financial affairs for an indeterminate period of time" (Johnson & Mikesell, 1998, p. 2). In an effort to balance the city budget, the financial control board cut back dramatically on providing help to the poor in DC. As a result of the congressional takeover of the DC government and the undermining of democracy in DC, the city government could not act either as a mediator or in a redistributive role.

As a result of the *Pearson v. Kelly* case, which sought to renovate vacant public housing units for those on the long DCHA waiting list, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia forced DCHA into receivership in 1995. The DC government had rejected the need for a receiver, saying that a receiver would not solve the problem of vacant units ("Defendants' Post Hearing Memorandum," 1994, pp. 1, 9-10). Furthermore, the receiver undermined home rule, because the receiver would not have to follow District regulations and would have emergency powers. The court assigned David Gilmore from 1995 to 2000 as the DCHA receiver. Gilmore entered into the battle among elites and had the sole right to transfer property and negotiate the terms without public hearings (Fehr, 1998). He visited community meetings and then declared that the Ellen Wilson redevelopment would move

forward, supporting the PPP's redevelopment plan (Van de Toorn, 1995). DCHA demolished the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in 1996, redeveloped it as the Townhomes on Capitol Hill by 1999, and attained full occupancy by 2000. The receivership, in fact, resulted in a net loss of existing public housing units in both the Ellen Wilson Dwellings and across the city, thus not realizing the intent of *Pearson v. Kelly* (Cunningham, 1999; Kovalski, 1994).

The takeover of DC and DCHA in 1995, as well as changes at the federal level, produced a further shift in governance and a lack of accountability. In an earlier plan, the PPP had proposed services at the new development provided by the District government, including DC Public Schools and DC Department of Parks and Recreation (Government of the District of Columbia, [1993], II-3). As HOPE VI evolved and emphasized social services, HUD allocated \$3 million to the Ellen Wilson Redevelopment LLC for such services (Slingerland, n.d.). The LLC began its neighborhood planning process with Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings organized by a nonprofit organization, the Youth Policy Institute (YPI). The now externally controlled DC government thus delegated decision-making processes about which social services were necessary to the YPI, which hired university students to investigate the existing services and service needs in the area. Instead of mobilizing political officials and formal state institutions with potential democratic accountability, the YPI organized the public discussions about needed community and support services in the new development. What did YPI discover? According to one of the YPI organizers, "After 26 meetings of the full Committee and 63 sessions of the working groups," the CAC "decided that the existing services in the neighborhood were substantial and did not need to be duplicated or marginalized by creating new providers" (Slingerland, n.d.). The YPI funneled the funds to existing service providers. Furthermore, the CAC decided to keep meeting indefinitely, though there is no evidence that these meetings continued at all or that anyone monitored the provision of services.

A coup allowed for the removal of the public from public housing. Yet, the DCHA website still lists the Townhomes on Capitol Hill as one of its "public housing" properties (DCHA, n.d.). According to affordable housing developer Richard Baron (2009), the Diaz opinion in 1994 determined that public housing did not have to be owned by a public housing authority but rather could be owned by a private entity following certain public housing rules. The Ellen Wilson Dwellings followed two of these rules: (a) there had to be a declaration of restrictive covenants, which records the number of public housing units originally funded— and, in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, records the distribution of this number over the three income bands — and must remain "public housing" units — and maintain these income bands — for at least 40 years, and (b) the land had to remain owned by either the DCHA or by a land trust, thus ensuring the "public purpose" of the development (DCHA, 1995, p. 1).³¹ The Ellen Wilson plan appeared as public housing because DCHA owned the land and established the income bands, which had to remain in place for 40 years. However, most official reports did not recognize Ellen Wilson as having any public housing units (Baseline/RP Data Cover Sheet, 1998, p. 1). This public housing is no longer permanent affordable housing but rather a kind of Section 8-style unit with public or nonprivate landownership and nonresidents in control of the PPP. HOPE VI through PPPs allowed the local business community and homeowners to remove the public from public housing.

The residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, part III

The PPP undermined, rather than supported, the interests of the former Ellen Wilson residents and others who wished to live there. Only 7 of the former 134 Ellen Wilson households returned to the new development. The PPP at one point planned to include 33 families funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), but, late in the process, TANF-funded families were deemed ineligible because of "non dependable income source [TANF]" (HOPE VI Quarterly Project Report, 1999, Worksheet D). In effect, they were excluded from housing for the poor because they were poor.

However, the former Ellen Wilson residents and their stories went out into the world, influencing other public housing residents and reshaping the terrain of public housing policy. In a Center for Community Change (2003) report, residents in a nearby public housing development knew what happened to the Ellen Wilson residents. One person said that they had learned from the negative experience of the Ellen Wilson redevelopment:

They say we're going to come back, but I just don't see it. I would love to stay here, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen. Where are the old residents of the "Ellen Wilson" HOPE VI across the street? Now that HOPE VI is done there, it's mostly business people living there. Only 2% of the residents are Black. Housing was promising residents at Ellen Wilson that they would get back in—but it didn't happen. At our meetings now we say that we don't want the same thing happening to us that happened over there. (Center for Community Change, 2003, p. 26)³²

The public housing residents under threat of displacement from HOPE VI knew what happened to the Ellen Wilson residents and worked to make sure that "the same thing" did not happen to them. In this way, Ellen Wilson residents and public housing residents more generally continued to transform the policy terrain, in the face of PPPs and coups by those with more power.

Conclusion

How have PPPs changed public housing, a program long shaped by public and private entities? To answer this question, I examined the case of the redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in Washington, DC. I argued that, due to the organized initiative of the local business sector and homeowners, the inability of the state to mediate among stakeholders, and the removal of the residents from the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, the PPP enabled a coup by local business and homeowners and the permanent displacement of the former residents, homeless veterans, and others who wished to live in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings. The PPP helped to realize this permanent displacement because the local business community and homeowners initiated the PPP in their own interests and successfully defined themselves as the residents and the community. The media focused on the battles over the redevelopment between elites, between those in the mid-1990s with the right to inhabit the space and to participate in the production of the city, between those with the right to the city. Both elite groups understood public housing as a failure and supported the displacement of the former residents, though to different degrees.

I also argued that to understand public housing policy, we need to go beyond interviews with the makers, innovators, and implementers of policy. When scholars do not include the displaced in their accounts of PPPs, they not only mischaracterize events and debates but also actively support those with the power. By using a wide variety of archives, as well as newspaper articles, I have attempted to access the intentions, words, and actions of many stakeholders at the time and to document the broader politics of the entrepreneurial city. The stakeholders involved in the Ellen Wilson Dwellings battled within a shifting public housing policy terrain, and DC public housing residents wielded political power and worked to shift this terrain. The removal of the former residents from the Ellen Wilson Dwellings undermined their political power. The state at the federal and city levels could have mediated between the private sector and the marginalized population to equalize the political field. However, HUD and the DCHA receiver supported the PPP and not the former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, and the city government and the DCHA were taken over by external forces and did not perform mediating or redistributing roles. It is important to consider each of these stakeholders when writing of the history of policy, in order to truly understand the politics of entrepreneurial urbanism.

To this day, those involved in the Ellen Wilson redevelopment on the PPP side feel proud to have taken part in this attempt to "save public housing," but they also took part in displacement of its residents. Within the confines of the elite debate about the Ellen Wilson Dwellings captured in the media, they fought the good fight, the fight to support affordable housing, the fight to rethink

public housing. Though those displaced by HOPE VI clearly understood that public housing had not been saved but had been taken, in the words of DC public housing resident Vivian Williams, “right from under us,” others involved in the redevelopments remembered the promises of integration, unity, and social justice but rarely checked the actual results. This happened across HOPE VI sites.³³ PPPs provided the opportunity for this and other takeovers and the removal of the public from public housing.

Notes

1. According to Mossberger and Stoker (2001), urban regimes are relatively stable and long-term coalitions of local government officials and private businesses built around a chosen agenda. They are thus not the same as PPPs.
2. I use DCHA throughout for clarity, even though the agencies in charge of public housing changed their names over time. The Alley Dwelling Authority was created in 1934. It was renamed the National Capital Housing Authority (NCHA) in 1943. In 1987, the NCHA was abolished. The DC Department of Public and Assisted Housing (DPAH) took over many of its activities and then was replaced by the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) in 1994. In the footnotes when referring to specific archival documents, I use the correct name of the agency.
3. In the DC Archives, the minutes of NCHA’s Legal Division document NCHA’s contracts for these services with private businesses from 1954 to 1968.
4. In agreement with Lang (1999), Clark (2002) wrote, “Poor residents did occupy the 134 units comprising the former Ellen Wilson Dwellings and were promised the right of first return to a rehabilitated development” (p. 168).
5. An evaluation conducted in 2000 determined that 13 former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings returned to the new site (Holin & Amendolia, 2001). A member of the PPP stated that only seven households from the Ellen Wilson Dwellings returned, which is the number I am using here (Richard Gervase, Telesis, personal communication, July 8, 2015).
6. I have modified the definition given by the Commission on Public Private Partnerships in London in their 2001 publication *Building Better Partnerships* (cited in Brown & Yates, 2012, p. 448).
7. In contrast, Clark (2002) includes displaced communities in her work on the Townhomes of Capitol Hill, but her research takes place in and around 1999, later than this story.
8. In his study of social movements formed by public housing residents against HOPE VI in New Orleans, Arena (2012) has studied this broader politics. Schaller (2016) examines how the discourses used to legitimate business improvement districts, a kind of PPP, can open up a political field for nonelite actors to make claims. In contrast, most studies of HOPE VI have focused on it as policy, exploring its politically complicated origins and transformations (Baron, 2009; Crowley, 2009; Goetz, 2010; Katz, 2009; Zhang & Weismann, 2006), its similarity with earlier urban renewal (Hyra, 2008; Vale, 2013), and its consequences for individuals, neighborhoods, and public housing stock (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015; Goetz, 2013; Goetz & Chapple, 2010; Popkin, 2006; Popkin et al., 2004; Zielenbach & Voith, 2010).
9. Similarly, Sagalyn (2007) notes that the state can take on this role of reconciling “conflicting interests of its multiple constituencies” (p. 12).
10. In the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 (U.S. Congress, 1990), the Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE) programs were authorized. In the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (U.S. Congress, 1992a), the HOPE programs were given numbers: HOPE I as HOPE for Public and Indian Housing Homeownership Program, HOPE II as HOPE for Homeownership of Multifamily Units Program, and HOPE III as HOPE for Homeownership of Single Family Homes Program. Though not officially called this, HOPE VI and V may have been considered the HOPE for Elderly Independence Program and the HOPE for Youth: Youthbuild Program. Using the term HOPE VI suggests a connection with these programs focused on homeownership. However, in contrast to the earlier the HOPE programs, the HOPE in HOPE VI meant Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere and thus did not necessarily involve homeownership. See also Glasheen and Hornig (1993) for a discussion of the first three programs.
11. The National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (1992) wrote that “resident participation and involvement at all stages of the turnaround effort is a basic requirement” (pp. 19–20).
12. Zhang and Weismann (2006) argue that the Republican threat in 1994 to shut down HUD forced Cisneros to transform HOPE VI, but his work with the Enterprise Foundation since the early 1980s likely exposed him to, or reflected his own support for, private sector solutions to affordable housing needs (Cisneros, 2009).
13. In the 1980s, lawyers Elizabeth Julian and Michael Daniel won a class action case *Walker v. City of Mesquite*, in which they argued that HUD had established and maintained racial discrimination in the provision of housing assistance programs in the Dallas area. The consent decree required, among other things, the demolition of much of West Dallas’s public housing units and the housing of residents elsewhere. See discussion in *Baylor v.*

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (1990). Elizabeth Julian was brought into HUD in 1994 (Julian & Daniel, 2009).

14. The DCHA waiting list over time has been as follows: 5,840 in 1955; 7,200 in 1974; 16,481 in 1989; and more than 70,000 when the list was closed in 2013 (NCHA, 1955, third topic; NCHA, 1974, p. 3; Shieber, 1991, p. 6; Dvorak, 2013, p. B1).
15. In the 1985 *Edwards v. District of Columbia* case, Brenda Edwards and eight other current and former residents of the Fort Dupont Dwellings sued the District government, arguing that the law required it to consult with them as tenants and it did not during its decision to demolish the Fort Dupont Dwellings. In their case, the plaintiffs argued that the District government intentionally let public housing fall apart in order to declare the project uninhabitable and demolish it. The plaintiffs called these actions by the District government “constructive demolition,” demolishing a public housing project by evacuating the tenants and abandoning the project (Goetz, 2013; Krislov, 1988).
16. The Friendship House collection in GWU Special Collections documents many of the programs and activism organized at the Ellen Wilson community center.
17. Popkin (2006) found from surveys across several HOPE VI sites that 70% of those displaced wished to return to their public housing development. Journalist Laura Lang (1999) met with a former resident, Alice Stewart, who asked, “If you’re writing a story about Ellen Wilson, you should find out why we can’t go back. ... It doesn’t seem fair.”
18. The 1989 phone directory continued to list several residents in the buildings. These residents may have sought to stay in Ellen Wilson in order to retain their right to housing. Some of the former residents may have also been living as squatters in the project.
19. The Sousa Neighborhood Association was named after John Phillip Sousa, who had lived in the area.
20. Logan and Molotch (2007) have argued that various businesses (property development, real estate, locally owned banks, newspapers, some corporations) and nonprofits (universities and civic booster groups) cooperate as place entrepreneurs in cities to promote a progrowth agenda that benefits their interests to the detriment of others’ interests. On Capitol Hill, we can see a local version of such a growth coalition.
21. According to Willse (2015), “The racialization of housing insecurity means it has always been a population without selves [since they do not own private property]. Thus we get a pathological population. In other words, the population itself is imagined to be endemically disordered and costly” (p. 107).
22. In their statement, the Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson called for “A Brave New Ellen Wilson” and “a re-born Ellen Wilson” (Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson, 1989, pp. 5, 8). Though the coalition may have meant that they were going to be brave and try something new, they inadvertently called for a social engineering very similar to that described in the dystopian novel *A Brave New World* (Huxley, 1932/1984). Moreover, they also suggested that their Coalition to Save Ellen Wilson sought to “save” Ellen Wilson, the wife of Woodrow Wilson and supporter of racial segregation and “slum” demolition, or bring her and her white segregated world back to life, possibly in zombie form, as the “re-born” Ellen Wilson.
23. Imbroscio (2008a) has criticized this “Dispersal Consensus,” which benefits the powerful members of growth machines and disempowers poor minorities (p. 153).
24. The 1992 Ellen Wilson CDC had three public housing residents (Vivian Williams and two former Ellen Wilson residents Sallie Dancy and James Jennings), two religious leaders (Arnold Keller and Richard Stetler), a local politician and Sousa Neighborhood Association leader (Dion Johnson), three people involved with the housing, architecture, and real estate (Frances Taylor, Lorraine Bennett, and Brenda Sanchez), one in generic business (Felix Patterson), and the three central figures in the coalition (James Didden, David Perry, and Richard Wolf; Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation, 1992, p. 1–2). These three earlier met with 8 individuals, including Vivian Williams and Dion Johnson.
25. Neil Smith (1996) argued that, as a result of the late 1980s economic crises, the middle class had developed a vengeful—revanchist—attitude toward many groups in cities that had supposedly destroyed the city: “minorities, the working class, women, environmental legislation, gays and lesbians, immigrants” (p. 44). The white middle class sought to retake the city in a vicious manner, which had profound political consequences.
26. To understand these events, I have also benefited from personal conversations with Cecil Byrd and Dominic Moulden.
27. One of the public housing representatives, Ms. Sallie Dancy, confirmed that the representatives thought that the Ellen Wilson Dwellings might eventually be sold to developers (Dancy, 1992, VI-7).
28. Imbroscio (2008a) discusses how the national housing debate divided into a similar dichotomy: “Our choice, in their view, is between the neo-conservative reactionary policies of the Bush Administration or the neo-liberal individualism of the DC’s Clinton Administration (or, more relevantly, its reincarnation)” (p. 153).
29. According to a newspaper article, “The growing opinion is that nearby residents would rather have nothing at all on the site—just a grassy plot, a bare slope, a grove of trees and shrubs—than new public housing, which they fear would bring a rash of crime and drive down property values” (Spencer, 1995).
30. From its beginnings in 1934, the DCHA had great difficulties with funding. Under congressional control, the DC government and the DCHA had continually suffered from the lack of adequate funding and substantial

debt. In 1975, the District of Columbia formally began home rule and gained control of the DCHA with its debt and deteriorating housing stock. Four years later, HUD declared the DCHA a distressed public housing authority.

31. The model for the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, the Boston Housing Authority's Harbor Point, however, required much more from the developers. The BHA "used a ground lease to set conditions on rehabilitation, resident relocation, repair and maintenance, restrictions on management options, financial reporting, resident consultation, and other issues" and required that the PPP be at least 50% controlled by a resident task force (*Ownership Structure for EWRLLC*, 1995, p. 1). However, Vale (2002) still declared that Harbor Point "cannot really be said to have reclaimed public housing. Rather, this model is premised on eliminating as much public housing as politically possible, while permitting market forces (aided by a massive public subsidy) to lay claim to a choice location" (p. 30).
32. According to Holin and Amendolia (2001, p. 17), the PPP also gave preference to residents of the nearby Arthur Capper and Carrollsborg development if they met the eligibility and screening requirements. Ten of these residents joined the 13 former residents of the Ellen Wilson Dwellings in the Townhomes on Capitol Hill.
33. As Blagburn (n.d.) has argued about the Ellen Wilson Dwellings, there was no accountability, and few people paid attention to the results. According to the National Housing Law Project (2002), "HOPE VI has been characterized by a lack of clear standards, a lack of hard data on program results, and misleading and contradictory statements made by HUD" (pp. i-ii).

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