

# **Where Do Black Men Live?**

*A Case Study of Housing Transience and Insecurity among African-Descended Men in  
Cambridge, MA, USA*

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**Declaration**

I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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**Abstract**

*Where do Black men live?* This is the overarching question addressed by this thesis. Using an abolitionist framework, it centres those who must fend for themselves and are in constant motion, trying to meet their shelter needs while evading carceral systems.

This case study, conducted in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2021–2022, provides an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered from surveys, in-depth episodic interviews, participatory action research, and service-based ethnography.

In addition to the overarching research question, this study examines experiences of low-income transient Black men; the ways in which residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity; the intersectional characteristics (i.e., gender and race) and relational ties of their housing networks; and the burning questions of who should and who does shoulder the burden of payment for housing these men.

The findings of this study are threefold.

1. There is a complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements that together result in de facto exclusion of low-income African-descended men.
2. Low-income African-descended men, to address their basic housing needs, rely on their social networks, networks composed predominantly of similarly low-income women, who end up bearing an inordinate burden.
3. The specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income African-descended men must be empirically examined in its own right. Collapsing African-descended men with other Black people or other men ignores the specificity of their social location.

An abolitionist logic and the concept of transience helps answer the questions posed by this thesis. Ultimately, this research finds that low-income Black men live in a state of perpetual motion, bearing more than their share of the burdens that are externally and politically motivated. Beyond the men, the members of their networks, the larger community, and even the government shoulder the burdens of ineffective and punitive social housing policies.

# # 1 Introduction

This research asks a simple question: where do Black men live? At the outset, though, there are a few things that I need to make clear, beginning with what I mean by 'Black'. Since this research engages entirely with 'Black' men, it is necessary to describe my understanding of Blackness and race. It is my position that the phenomena of race is socially constructed and has real world sociopolitical implications (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009). And race as it pertains to the pseudoscience of physiognomy, the study of physical features as regards character and ethnic origin, in the social, political, and economic world, historically and presently functions as a tool of categorization. Black Marxist thinkers like Cedric Robinson and Robin D. G. Kelley argue that capitalism intentionally developed a racial classification system to identify and justify the uneven distribution and methods of exploitation among working class people.

Throughout the thesis, I use the terms Black and African-descended. My use of these terms may be read interchangeably without changing my meaning. At the same time, my use of these terms, as opposed to just one or the other, comes from the use of these terms by research participants. All of my research participants are African-descended, meaning that they have ancestral ties dating back to the African continent. This is the case whether it is a recent immigrant relational tie, previous waves of African and African-Caribbean migration to the United States, or as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. However, not all of my research participants have adopted the term 'Black'. Some participants understood 'Blackness' to be affiliated solely with African-Americans. Although several of them were familiar with the UK concept of 'political Blackness' none identified with that term when referring to their own identity. So, throughout the thesis, I began to use these terms while thinking with various participants. The end result is a seemingly interchangeable use of the terms throughout the text.

Now, you may be wondering how I came to ask the question in the first place.

## ## 1.1 Background

In 2015, I was working as an administrator at a university. Other offices on my floor subscribed to *The New York Times*. My office did not. I was friends with the janitor, an African immigrant. We would share things, like food and office supplies. There were times when he would sneak me a copy of *The New York Times*. On 20 April 2015, he brought me a copy. The front-page article was '1.5 Million Missing Black Men' (Wolfers et al., 2015). Naturally, I wondered, *what happened to 1.5 million Black men?*

The article was about the census. I knew very little about it. I was not even sure I had been counted in the 2010 census. The article introduced me to the (racial) differential undercount. I began to pay more attention to discussions about the census. And every now and then I would search for academic articles about the census. I came across a series of articles by Phung Nguyen. Nguyen wrote that the relationship between housing, housing irregularities, complex households, and informal kinship structures are factors that contribute to census undercounting. Nguyen wrote that it is the responsibility of the census bureau to examine the status of dwellings and dwellers as they are. Nguyen named complex households and undercounting as a factor that needed to be accounted for methodologically.

Years later, I reread that 2015 *New York Times* (NYT) article. In reading with some knowledge of the census and undercounting—at that point, I had read Robey (1989), Skerry (2000), Pettit (2012), and Nguyen (1996, 2004, 2007), I had a very different appreciation for this article. Embedded in it were the identity categories that served as factors for understanding differential undercounting. The article identified gender as a significant category. When controlling for race, the undercounting of Black men relative to Black women was overwhelming. The NYT article also considered age, noting that while undercount rates, when controlled for race, are relatively similar for minors of all ages, for adults over 18 years old, the gap widens based on gender. This gender gap peaks in the late 30s, and then slowly it begins to close up again. By the 40s–60s, the men start dying off and the women live longer. The implications of this gap in terms of housing sparked my interest and became, over time, my inspiration for a thesis project.

In 2015, I looked up the census tract of the community where I was living, in the Fields Corner neighbourhood of Dorchester.<sup>1</sup> According to the census data, this community was densely populated by African-descended women. In fact, it was alarming how few men

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<sup>1</sup> Found at <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/d09af00c-2268-437b-9e40-fd06d0cd20a2> and information on women found at <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/e4c53914-4e51-4b01-9685-f7daa96d61e1/>.



appeared in the data, as compared to data for the general population. But at the same time, I noticed that there were so many men in the community. There were men at the bus stops with their children, men playing at the park, men running side stand businesses, men at the library. I was puzzled as to why the census tract showed so few men when they were so visible in the community. There was a clear mismatch between what I saw on a daily basis and the story the census data was telling. I decided to conduct some preliminary interviews with family and friends. My aim was to find out what was at the root of this mismatch.

I asked my brothers where they lived, where the government thought they lived, and if they thought they were counted in the census. I received some very interesting responses. Even in my family, the living arrangements were difficult to describe. The more I probed into the lives of the Black men in my life, the more I found that they were living in situations that were complex and involved lots of other people. If they were familiar with the census at all, they had strong opinions. Some were overwhelmingly for it, 'Of course I filled out the census'; others were overwhelmingly against it.

I became fascinated with the intersection of African-descended men and complex housing situations. I decided to do my master's on a phenomenon I encountered during my preliminary interviews; and I focused my dissertation on people formerly incarcerated on drug charges living as unregistered tenants in public housing. I did a case study in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the public housing estate where I grew up. My then supervisor suggested that I include a question about the census in my list of interview questions. He thought I could compare my research to the census tract data. I took his advice. In my data, it became clear that Black men who live between multiple households, often as unregistered tenants, were overrepresented in the undercounted population. My master's research data showed that their motivations for evading the census often reflected a desire to avoid detection by government entities, since their presence posed a very real risk to the people with whom they were residing.

In order to make sense of everything I found, I needed to learn more about housing policy. My master's dissertation became essentially a timeline of housing policies. I learned about policies that contribute to housing insecurity. At that point, I decided to continue to explore this as a doctoral research project. But I needed to narrow down the topic. I focused in on the two things I had identified in my master's work: the census undercounting African-descended men, and the complex housing circumstances of African-descended men. For the first two years of my PhD journey, I struggled to balance these two subjects. I could see a very thin bridge between them. I was also unable to conduct research during the census count in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 25 May 2020, two and a half months into the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And while the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests had a profound impact on me as an African-descended person, this event would later change the course of this research project epistemologically and ontologically. I had originally intended to do this research project in Boston at Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), this programme later merged with the city's Office of Housing Stability. The COVID lockdowns played a large role in my relocating the project to Cambridge. However, it was the context of the BLM uprisings and the calls to 'defund the police' that made the ultimate difference. I received no less than five emails from friends in Cambridge about the discussions among the city council to create a Cahoots-like alternative public safety programme. Four other Black women came together to form The Black Response.

I was hired to work at Community Service Care, a local non-profit, which is the fiscal sponsor for The Black Response (TBR) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I was brought in as a researcher to develop and oversee the work plan for the policing alternatives campaign. At first TBR intended to pressure the city to change their method into a community-based process. When it looked as if this would fail, they enlisted my support to design an overall process to learn about past programs, collect survey data from residents, and conduct interviews among heavily policed communities in the city. The aim was to submit this data to be included in the proposal that would inform the model for the alternative public safety program.

During my master's degree at SOAS and throughout my doctoral research experience at Goldsmiths, I continued to be exposed to the principles of decoloniality and the decolonising initiative. The discussions about alternative public safety and abolition are directly connected to the global decolonising movements. I use the term abolition to refer to a radical reimagining and restructuring of how society addresses issues of crime, justice, and harm. Throughout this thesis, I use abolition as a shorthand for prison industrial complex abolition (PIC). The notion of PIC abolition encompasses, not just the eradication of prisons and jails, but the entire spectrum of surveillance, policing, and punishment that disproportionately impacts marginalised and BIPOC<sup>2</sup> communities. An abolitionist logic, for reasons I will describe in the literature review, condemns systems that profit from incarceration of marginalised people and maintain systemic inequality. Activists and scholars around the world have linked the role of police as a violent tool of the state to maintain class order. There are examples in Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, and more. This means that decolonising is a global initiative, police abolition is a national initiative,

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<sup>2</sup> BIPOC stands for Black Indigenous People of Colour.

and the development of alternatives for public safety is the local manifestation. The scholars I read—Mariame Kaba, Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Andrea Ritchie, Zillah Eisenstein, MiMi Kim, Prentis Hemphill, Danielle Sered, Alex Vitale, and others—are all speaking to the inextricable link between punitive social policies of austerity and their impacts on low-income African-descended men (and beyond).

For quite some time, I tried to keep my two research projects separate. Yet over time it has become evident that the politics are linked. There is a politics of surveillance present in the collaboration between the local public housing agency and the police. Some of my research participants have been incarcerated and others make decisions to avoid detection and visibility by the criminal justice system. Many are aware that their options are limited due largely to the relationship of exclusion that social programmes, especially housing, have to criminalisation. This is happening at a time of ever-rising rents, amidst a pandemic, and during the passage of many encampment sweeps and the criminalization of surviving poverty in public. While I was somewhat aware of this, Cassie Hurd and Rachel Bolton of the Material Aid and Advocacy Program (MAAP) have made this crystal clear.

All of that is to say that this project has become an abolitionist project. It is now a contemporary abolitionist project. After all, George Floyd, murdered by the police, was a low-income, chronically under-housed, ever-transient African-descended man.

### ### 1.1.1 Methodology

As researchers we do not often acknowledge the role of fate in the development of our methods. Yet, the saying sometimes seen on West African taxis ‘l’homme propose, Dieu dispose’ (humans may propose, but it’s God who disposes) proved to be quite true in my case. In March 2020, the university shut down all in-person research, and I knew that the population I was working with would be impossible to find in the digital world. Doing research in this way would skew the data away from the hyper-invisible population that I sought.

Being that I was unable to conduct the census research, I decided to lean in on the complex housing research instead. I spent that year reading transience and life shock literature. In fact, a foundational conceptual framework for this research is *transience*, a concept I use to justify my methodological intervention—service-based episodic ethnography and participant observation. *Transience* is located with the transients themselves, rather than their spatial locations or encounters (i.e., shelters). And *housing transience* is the space and time whereby *transients* are grasping at resources within personal networks. Housing transients are those

who are *not yet* 'rough sleeping', but are not legally registered tenants of any 'one permanent' dwelling.

I questioned the quantitative methods in which the data is a count of encounters with a fixed location (i.e., shelters, housing programs, etc.). I decided that I needed to be in motion with my research participants. I needed to see what was happening between encounters with a fixed institution. What happened before and after an encounter with a shelter? I decided to learn about different housing policies and programmes in preparation for working as a quasi-social worker. I redesigned my fieldwork plan to be a service-based project. I got an internship that would turn into a job at an organisation and embedded myself there. I organised a housing surgery that was distinct from existing programmes, where I operated as a quasi-social worker for the duration of my fieldwork. I attempted to help my research participants meet their housing goals. In the process, I conducted some participant observation and episodic ethnography.

I gathered a lot of data, data that was overwhelmingly about housing insecurity. After fieldwork I realised that the literature on transience was more directly relevant to housing studies. It was going to take a lot more work to explain the relevance of housing to the census data. So, after conducting fieldwork I decided to pause on the census part of this research and focus my attention on the data that I had, which is on housing. Honing in on the municipal-level housing policy work changed my project significantly.

The stories that I had gathered were rich. The African-descended men I interviewed described the complexities of their agency and challenges in brilliant ways. I wanted to showcase their own words about how they rubbed against these policies via the eligibility requirements. The project has shifted to focus more on their narratives and the stories of how these men meet their housing needs.

In my analysis, I look at how housing transience figures in their stories. This research adds to the repository of empirical research on and with African-descended men on housing insecurity and transience. I am using the data to compose a typology of the formal and informal ways that these men meet their housing needs.

The point that I am making is that housing transience among African-descended men is a politically protracted phenomenon. That is, housing policies, via programme design and eligibility requirements, result in the disproportionate exclusion of African-descended men from government-subsidised housing programmes such as public housing, section 8 vouchers,

inclusionary housing, etc. Their exclusion is specific to their social location: race as Black, gender as men, and class as poor. African-descended men and women experience the navigation of housing markets, both public and private, differently. This results in the disproportionate representation of African-descended men among the transient, at-risk, and homeless populations.

The evidence I use to support this point includes: 1) the stories of the African-descended men themselves, 2) housing policy language regarding eligibility requirements, 3) municipal data on use and non-use of housing programs, and 4) meeting notes from a local social housing justice organisation. Throughout, the concept of housing transience is of critical importance. For the purposes of my argument, housing transience should be understood as the series of resilient coping mechanisms employed to meet one's housing needs.

### **### 1.1.2 The Findings**

The overarching thesis question being investigated by this research project is *where do Black men live?* This leads to the obvious question of *why* they live where they live. In these chapters, I illustrate the structural forces at work that limit the housing options available to low-income African-descended men. This research project then is not just telling us where Black men live, although the spatial locations matter; it also advances explanations for why they live where they live.

I identify three main problems. The first is that African-descended men experience prolonged periods of housing transition; the second is that (municipally governed) social housing programmes are not addressing this problem; and lastly, the private markets are not equipped to address this problem either, considering the global housing crisis. I show that (municipally governed) housing programme eligibility criteria result in exclusion on the basis of gender—the exclusion of men. And that this exclusion is felt acutely by African-descended men. Yet, academic research on African-descended men and housing has significant gaps. The result is that there is shockingly little data and literature on how housing-transient African-descended men meet their housing needs. The four gaps that this research aims to fill are: 1) a methodological gap, 2) a data gap, 3) a knowledge gap, and 4) a practical-knowledge gap. I explore each of these gaps in depth in the methodology chapter.

#### **#### 1.1.2.1 Research Questions**

In light of these gaps, my research explores a number of questions. My primary research question is *where do Black men live?* My secondary research questions are:

- What are the experiences of housing-transient Black men?
- Do residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity among already housing-transient Black men?
- What are the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks that house transient Black men? How is this gendered? How is this racialised?
- Who should and does shoulder the burden of payment for this housing insecurity?

In examining my primary research question, I needed to determine if where low-income Black men live is different from where other Black people live or where other low-income men live and, if so, why? This project uncovers a complex web of policies, programmes, and practices that serve to limit this population to informal housing options. This has the effect of excluding them from more secure social safety nets such as government-subsidised housing programmes that come with other rights such as being counted in the census and voting.

My overarching argument is that the housing insecurity and transience experienced by this population is a politically protracted phenomenon. By politically protracted, I mean that the policies are engineered and re-engineered by legislators over time, then implemented by various government and programme administrators. This results in prolonged periods of instability and insecurity for those who are habitually under-housed. Low-income African-descended men have experienced this acutely, but their experiences are seldom the subject of housing policy research. This haphazard suture of policy design, programme implementation, and eligibility requirements actually results in extended periods of housing insecurity for marginalised populations. For those who are in need of housing assistance, and for whom these programs *ought* to be designed, this is experienced as a seemingly endless sentence to subsistence. While the intention of these policies is not necessarily to exclude low-income African-descended men, over time, this is their result. This is described in the crisis theory and austerity policy literature. Austerity policies limit state resources to some 'deserving' populations and create a line of demarcation between those who are and those who are not considered deserving. Low-income African-descended men generally fall into the undeserving

category, experiencing de facto exclusion from government-subsidised housing programmes. I elaborate upon this in the Findings chapters.

This overarching argument, that housing transience among low-income African-descended men is a politically protracted phenomenon, entails three points illustrated in my research findings: **Finding 1:** The specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income urban African-descended men needs to be empirically examined, not collapsed with others. Collapsing them with other Black people, other men, or other low-income people ignores the specifics of the intersection at which they are socially located. **Finding 2:** There is a complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements that work together, and the result is de facto exclusion of low-income African-descended men. And **Finding 3:** To address their basic housing needs, these men rely on their social networks, networks composed predominantly of similarly low-income women, who end up bearing an inordinate burden as a result.

#### #### 1.1.2.2 Finding 1

*The specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income urban African-descended men needs to be empirically examined, not collapsed with others. Collapsing them with other Black people, other men, or other low-income people ignores the specificities of the intersection at which they are socially located.*

Low-income African-descended men are pathologised for the destruction of the ‘negro family’ (Moynihan, 1965). In solidarity with African-descended men, I need to acknowledge that they experience discrimination that is specific to their social location, being racialised as Black, gendered as men, and classed as low-income or working class. The gendered experiences specific to cis-men result in discrimination that is uniquely experienced by Black cis-men. For example, one should not presume that the experience of Black trans-men is the same as that of Black cis-men. This experience of gender discrimination is exacerbated by challenges of being

low in economic class (Massey & Lundy, 2001). Experiences are grim for those who are poorly educated (Mincy, 2006), and for migrant Black men (Lee & Martinez, 2012). All of which is to say that an intersectional analysis of Black cis-men's experience is crucial if we are to understand the specific experiences of marginalisation and discrimination among this population. Many scholars critique the notion of 'Black male privilege' (Johnson, 2018; Curry, 2022; Sexton, 2018). By most socioeconomic metrics, African-descended males have fallen behind nearly everyone else in areas including education (Reeves, 2022), employment (Mincy, 2006), and health status (Zonderman et al., 2016). Housing trends seem to be no different. My point here is that, in order to have a clearer picture of the specific types of discrimination and disadvantages faced by low-income African-descended men, we need to examine their experiences as those of a distinct group.

Advocacy groups, municipal governments, social agencies, and charities have been sounding the alarm for decades on the disproportionate rate of housing insecurity experienced by African-descended men in the United States (United States, 1968; Perry, 2020; Edwards, 2021; City of Cambridge Ad hoc Working Group on Homelessness, 2022). According to a report published by an ad hoc working group on homelessness in Cambridge, Massachusetts, '40% of people experiencing homelessness in Cambridge are Black/African-American, compared to 11% of the general population, a disproportionality of more than three and a half times the general population numbers'. Low-income urban African-descended men are chronically under-housed (Kerner Commission Report, 1968; Katz, 2014). As far back as slavery, all the way through Jim Crow-era segregation, and into the current moment, African-Americans have been systematically denied rights and socioeconomic opportunities, especially in housing (Rothstein, 2017; Massey & Lundy, 2001; Taylor, 2019; and more). Bentley-Edwards et al. (2018) wrote, 'The conclusions of the Kerner Commission affirmed the prophetic words of W. E. B. Du Bois in 1903 when he observed that the presence of black skin on the body of a male in the United States was perceived as intrinsically problematic'. While most other minority groups, including



Indigenous Americans and Latinx people, share similar histories of discrimination and exclusion, African-descended populations are disproportionately overrepresented in homeless populations with no signs of positive change (Suffolk Law School - Housing Discrimination Testing Program, 2020; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2023). African-descended people (and other minorities) are disproportionately represented in homelessness research and services. This is a direct product of institutionally implemented inequality, a hallmark of systemic racism, which continues to unevenly distribute resources creating disparities in critical areas, such as the implementation of housing policies and programmes (Vitale, 2001; Soss et al., 2011). The result is housing insecurity and homelessness for already economically vulnerable and politically disenfranchised populations.

While race-based discrimination in housing is widely studied (Xanthos et al., 2010; Pattillo, 2010; Massey, 2015; Rothstein, 2017; Taylor, 2019; and many more), the impacts on various categories of people are not equally examined. An exception is the work of Massey and Lundy. In their 2001 paper, 'Use of Black English and Racial Discrimination in Urban Housing Markets', they take an intersectional approach to rental housing access in Philadelphia. Massey and Lundy conclude, 'it is the combination of black race and lower-class origins that is most powerful in reducing access to housing, especially when they are combined with being female'. Also working in Philadelphia, controversial ethnographer A. Goffman (2015) notes the complex interplay between race, class, and gender: she illustrates that housing prospects differed widely depending on whether one was perceived as a 'respectable' Black man, 'criminal' Black man, or a reproductive-age Black woman.

The above studies took place in Philadelphia some 20 years ago. Meanwhile, in the Boston area, Suffolk Law School is doing the most comprehensive research study. Their Housing Discrimination Testing Program covers race-based discrimination and gender-identity-based discrimination, but they fail to distinguish the two in their analysis, grouping all Black participants together. As a result, their reports provide little or no specific

information on the housing experience of Black men, or Black women for that matter. The Suffolk programme isolates gender and race, but does not examine each thoroughly. While the Suffolk research project prioritises race, class, and gender, they have not produced any reports to date on the housing discrimination experienced by Black men.

Despite the rhetoric portraying African-descended men as violent, under-productive, and a general nuisance to society, research does not examine empirical data on discrimination against Black men exclusively. While there is scholarly production about race and racism that centres Black men (Awkward, 2002; Curry, 2017, 2022; Sexton, 2018), these studies tend not to be empirical. Empirical studies such as studies on health outcomes (Lincoln et al., 2011; Cheatham et al., 2018) and quantitative criminology (Carr et al., 2007; Glynn, 2013) neglect the social impacts of *housing* policy on the everyday lives of Black men. Thus critical empirical studies on the impacts of housing policies centring African-descended men exclusively are sorely needed.

#### **#### 1.1.2.3 Finding 2**

*There is a complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements that work together, and the result is de facto exclusion of African-descended men.*

There is a temporal entanglement of housing policies. That is, housing policies have accumulated throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Most policies and programmes are not repealed, but amended, while more policies are added. Imagine housing policies as a ball of yarn, the more yarn added, the bigger the ball becomes. Over time, it becomes harder and harder to disentangle the individual threads of yarn from the ball.

There is also a spatial entanglement of housing policies. In the United States, there are often four levels of government operating to address issues experienced by communities. These four levels are the federal (or national), state (or commonwealth, territory), county (or parish, district), and the municipal (city or town). Additionally, within this scale, there are a number of

potential points of origin where policies and programmes are designed. For example, on the municipal level: the zoning board or planning board might create policies that impact housing development and programme implementation. City councillors, mayors, city managers, city departments, civic task forces, commissions, consultants, and committees may create housing policies and programmes. Communities can create their own organisations to contribute to the landscape of housing programmes. These programmes may be funded as quasi-non-governmental organisations (QUANGOs), funded by the city, county, state, or federal government or any combination therein. Policies can be designed to include or exclude these community-developed initiatives (cooperatives, community land trusts, civic association social housing, tenant councils, and condo boards are examples). Communities can introduce 'home rule' petitions and ballot initiatives to make policy change through the electoral process. For example, in 1994 there was a ballot initiative to eradicate rent control throughout Massachusetts, introduced by a civic association, the Small Property Owners Association (Chan, 1994). County and state governments have various committees within the senate and house of representatives that can initiate housing policies or programmes. In Massachusetts, individual state senators can allocate up to \$100,000 a year in the state budget to any local initiative; they may even create their own initiative. And there are federal-level housing policies that are developed and overseen by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Federally funded programs, like section 8 vouchers and public housing, are administered through public housing authorities and QUANGOs that operate within individual municipalities. These are broad strokes to explain the potential origins of housing policies and sub-policies. This is even more complicated when the funding origins for these initiatives are considered. All of that is to say, there is indeed a complex web of housing policies.

Once housing policies are passed, the process for administering the programme is a site of potential discrimination. The concessions that policymakers make about the reach of a programme has a significant impact on the design and implementation of the programmes.

Housing programme regulations and eligibility requirements are determined based on the concessions and limitations described in the policy. The funding limitations determine not just the number of people who are served by a programme, but the number of people who are not served; this is done through the defined eligibility criteria and the protocols for enforcement. Housing programme regulations and eligibility requirements are not objectively developed. They are a product of social ideology, sociopolitical discourse, and spatio-temporal concessions (Katz, 2013). That is, housing policies are designed to serve a specific population, and by extension, programmes are also designed to exclude certain undeserving populations. Eligibility requirements for government housing programmes are determined on the basis of who the programmes are meant to serve. For example, Lawrence Vale (2013) looks at the eligibility requirements for entry into public housing in the 1930s and 1940s compared to the changes in purpose in the 1960s through the 1990s. Is the purpose of public housing to serve the upwardly mobile working poor, like in the 1930s and 1940s, or is it meant to shelter only the poorest (Vale & Freemark, 2012)?

Housing studies ask questions about the purpose of housing: Is it a commodity or a right (Pattillo, 2013)? What does a right to housing mean? A right to what? Without housing to anchor a citizen to residency, what rights are citizens entitled to? These questions add further complexities to the web of housing policies. Furthermore, there are burdens of responsibility, proof, and payment. Who should shoulder the burden of payment for housing a citizen with no official residence? Should it be the city where they petition for housing? Should it be the state where they are located? Or does it fall to the federal government? If it does, the model of disseminating funds to municipally governed agencies still leaves the burden of proof of residency to the individual. The housing programme administration and eligibility requirements determine those who legally meet eligibility criteria, *de jure*. And by extension, those who do not meet the eligibility criteria are not included, *de facto* exclusion. Absent sufficient funding to reach all those in need, housing programmes are designed to create *de facto* exclusion, and

African-descended men are habitually overrepresented among those under-prioritised and are therefore experiencing chronic de facto exclusion in housing programmes. This creates an undue burden on men.

There is an under-prioritisation of low-income African-descended men in an under-funded area of government spending—housing. These men are effectively excluded from government-subsidised housing programmes due to categories of prioritisation (families with custody of children, the disabled, and the elderly). In the past 50 years, the United States government has declared itself to be in a perpetual state of austerity. Austerity measures are political-economic policies that aim to reduce the public debt through slashing government spending in social programmes, tax incentives, or both.

These policies of the last 50 years have also meant that there is never enough social housing to meet the needs of the obviously deserving (celibate female-headed households with children, families with disabled members, and the elderly)—nevermind the ‘undeserving’. The ‘undeserving’ are mostly able-bodied men—those who ‘ought’ to be paying for their housing through their own labour. This ignores the fact that many ‘able-bodied men’ are denied gainful employment as a result of intersectional systemic social forces such as racism and classism. Low-income African-descended men bear the brunt of this. The under-prioritisation of low-income chronically under-housed African-descended men is another example of de facto exclusion of African-descended men from government housing programmes. This results in a dangerous and burdensome situation for the women in their social networks.

An abolitionist logic understands that there is an inverse relationship between funding for social programmes and the police budget. That is, as funding for social programmes such as housing, education initiatives, and health programmes decreases, the police budget increases (Vitale, 2021). This is to protect the interests and property of stakeholders. Policymakers have been incentivised to enact neoliberal policies such as public-private partnerships, like the 2013 Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. According to the HUD website (2022), ‘RAD

was created in order to give public housing authorities (PHAs) a powerful tool to preserve and improve public housing properties and address the \$26 billion nationwide backlog of deferred maintenance'. However, critics such as Lowell and Smith (2022) say that RAD resulted in displacement of the lowest-income residents and gentrification in surrounding neighbourhoods. The inverse relationship between police budget and social programmes also results in the criminalisation of the interests of working class people who rely on social benefits (Vitale, 2021). In the past 50 years there has been mass patrolling and surveillance of low-income African-descended communities. From Nixon's declaration of the 'War on Drugs' in 1971, to the Reagan and Bush Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988 respectively, and through the 1990s tough on crime era under Clinton, those within and adjacent to public housing have witnessed and personally experienced a rise in incarceration (Garland, 2001; Alexander, 2010, pp. 7, 9; Gilmore, 2007; A. Goffman, 2014). Policies such as the 1988 Public Housing Drug Elimination Act and 1997 one-strike rule have inextricably linked government-subsidised housing eligibility with the criminal justice systems and policing. The disproportionate representation of African-descended men in the criminal justice system is yet another example of the de facto exclusion of African-descended men from government-subsidised housing programmes.

There are a lot of housing policies in the United States. The ways that policies are administered create an entanglement of housing policies and programmes that have neglected to serve the interests of housing-insecure low-income African-descended men. The insufficient funding requires strict eligibility requirements be enforced, which often leave out able-bodied working-age men, such as African-descended men. Combined with political ideologies that discredit African-descended men from social deservedness, austerity measures in social programmes such as government-subsidised housing have sharply increased perceptions that this population is undeserving. This can be said to be a de facto exclusion as it is the result, though there isn't any formal legal exclusion that specifically names African-descended men as ineligible.

### #### 1.1.2.4 Finding 3

*To address their basic housing needs, low-income inner-city African-descended men rely on their social networks, networks composed predominantly of women, who end up bearing an inordinate burden as a result.*

There is a housing crisis in the United States (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). Housing policy (design), programme implementation (structures and agencies), and eligibility criteria (regulations) are not only neglecting to serve the housing needs of African-descended men, a chronically under-housed population, but are forcing African-descended men to rely on their own social networks, predominantly women, to meet their housing needs. Absent effective government programmes, low-income African-descended men rely on their social networks to meet their housing needs. Their social networks of housed people are made up largely of women. These women tend to be similarly low-income and reliant on government-subsidised housing programmes (public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary zoning). Scholars Amanda Geller (2013) and Marah Curtis (2011) have examined various aspects of housing security among formerly incarcerated populations, large swaths of which are African-descended men. A. Goffman has illustrated the reliance of criminally labelled men on low-income women in their social networks in *On the Run* (2015).

Government-subsidised (rental/support) housing programme regulations expressly prohibit unregistered tenants from residing long-term in subsidised units. This has the effect of interfering with the formation of romantic partnerships among low-income and government-dependent populations, such as African-descended populations who are reliant on public housing. In the extreme, policies such as Alabama's Substitute Father Regulation (also known as 'the man under the bed' rule) (§ 602(a)(22) (1964 ed., Supp. III)) were designed explicitly to prohibit the formation of legally recognised coupling among low-income populations. This entailed surveillance for enforcement, and women found to have developed any kind of romantic relationships were in danger of losing their benefits. These kinds of protocols and

regulations for enforcement make the development of strong long-term relationships (e.g., coupling, marriage, romantic cohabitation) regulational hazards for the head of household, who risks losing their housing. In some families, couples have gone so far as to separate or divorce so that the woman and children may qualify for housing (and other social programmes).

#### **#### 1.1.2.5 The Burden on Women**

The result of these policies is an asexual design that is temporally static. Patricia Hill Collins in *All in the Family* (1998) explains that the state is the macro family, which at scale makes the nuclear family a micro unit. In that vein, Katz (2013) explains that the role of the government is to intervene as a patriarchal figure in situations where the micro patriarch is absent (Soss et al., 2011). Social welfare programmes are designed as the intervention mechanism for the patriarchal state to facilitate those responsibilities. This interpretation of social welfare programmes shows an obvious exclusion of males from those programmes. In order to qualify for these social welfare programmes, the government requires fidelity. A poor woman in need of social resources must remain uncoupled in order to continue to qualify. This is enforced through rigorous recertification processes and ongoing surveillance by the local police via patrolling and electronic monitoring. This means that the government expects poor women to be asexual for as long as they need to access social services. This presumes an indefinite period of fidelity to the government—in effect, a long-term sentence to an asexual existence for the deserving poor. The government is preventing poor women access to their sexuality in exchange for government housing services (Spillers, 1987; Katz, 2013). In denying poor women sex, they are also preventing them from reproducing, which is seen as an act of producing unproductive citizens. When this ‘contract’ is violated and women act on their sexual desires, housing a romantic partner as an unregistered tenant, these women may be punished with fines or eviction—they are thrust into housing insecurity themselves.



These elements (housing policy design, programme implementation, and eligibility requirements) force these low-income African-descended men to rely on social networks. In this research project, my research participants named these elements and their impacts in their housing narratives. These elements serve to destabilise both men and women, making it impossible for these men to have a visible and acknowledged role in their families and as members of their community. Again, these three elements factor prominently in the narratives of housing-insecure men relying on their social networks for lodging. And importantly, the women in their networks who figure in their housing narratives are also navigating these elements with them. The women are the most likely (again, due to the three elements mentioned above) to have housing (government-subsidised and market). The social impact may be the strain this reliance causes in their relationship and that puts the women at risk for eviction as a violation of their lease agreement.

There are sociopolitical impacts of unregistered tenancy. These men experience challenges with proof of residency. This doesn't just impact their ability to apply for municipally governed social housing programmes but also other aspects of sociopolitical life, such as voting. Unregistered tenancy is acknowledged as a cause for undercounting in the decennial census (Brownrigg & de la Puente, 1992). This results in under-allocation of federal resources and congressional representation. The de facto exclusion of low-income African-descended men from housing programme eligibility reinforces systems and cultures that burden the women in their lives financially and in myriad other ways.

#### **#### 1.1.2.6 Social Divisions**

Social welfare policies, programmes, and practices have had the effect of demonising low-income African-descended men. This creates fissures in African-descended communities, exacerbating existing chasms formed by historical intersectional inequities (i.e., race, class, ability, etc.) in the American social and political systems. African-descended women, along with

everyone else, are encouraged, through socialisation and ideological pathologisation, to view low-income African-descended men as freeloaders, deadbeat dads, super-predators, drifters, and gang members. We are all discouraged from looking at the entire picture. Without a nuanced and intentional understanding of the ways that policies, programmes, and practices operate, the underproductive African-descended man becomes responsible for the crisis of the *negro family*, what Moynihan (1965) termed 'the tangle of pathologies'. This demonising is precisely what I am trying to counter with this research.

### ### 1.1.3 Conclusion

I want to be very clear, I am not mobilising an anti-male feminism with these findings. And my arguments should in no way be interpreted as such. My point here is that African-descended people live entangled social lives. It is not possible to follow one person's trajectory in a vacuum. This entanglement is not considered intentionally in housing policy design. This failure prevents meaningful approaches to address the underlying issues of a wide array of stakeholders in this discourse (i.e., domestic violence, crime and criminology in public housing/surrounding communities, etc).

In working on this project, I have come across a number of critics who have asked that this project address this or that thing. These critics tend to be essentialists. Folks have claimed that race is not the primary 'cause' of hardship in the lives of these men, that it is in fact class. Or there are those who claim the very fact of their maleness as a privilege, and therefore that as men, these African-descended men cannot experience gendered discrimination. Audre Lorde said, 'There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives'.

This project is intersectional, abolitionist, and holds a transformative justice lens. I conducted this research and wrote about these experiences with the aim of calling African-descended men into a Black feminist discourse that makes space for men, for

difference, and for a future where we can all be free to self-actualize. I am a Black feminist. As an African-descended low-income immigrant woman, I recognize that I must always hold politics that cannot stray away from contradictions and from plurality. I exist at the intersection of multiple vulnerable identities. I must be able to be in solidarity with other struggles, especially with Black men who share many of my struggles. I hold this belief and practise this politic with the grace of my elders in the Combahee River Collective, who in 1974 wrote, 'We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism'.

I named that this project is explicitly abolitionist. This research is engaged in the very real struggle of my research participants against the harms of incarceration and the continued harms of the carceral state. In *Abolition. Feminism. Now.*, Davis et al. outline 'how and why abolition is unimaginable without feminism, how feminism is unimaginable without abolition...' (2022). My understanding is that the feminist movement, in all its plurality, at various points, in different locations, and with various leaders, has made concessions that have resulted in this point in history. The feminist domestic violence movement has been entangled with the carceral state, meaning that the response to intimate partner violence has led to incarceration. As a direct result of that history and those choices, the current movement is challenged with disentangling the response to domestic violence from the carceral state. Domestic violence continues. The most marginalised women (sex workers, drug users, those with histories of incarceration, undocumented women, and others) have no defences from it. Anti-feminists seek to connect the choices of feminist leaders with the resulting mass incarceration of Black and brown communities, that includes the mass incarceration of women and girls. They aim to divide marginalised men and women and prevent feminist progress. Abolitionist feminism calls marginalised men into the conversation. Abolitionist feminism, with its emphasis on healing, accountability, and addressing the root causes of harm, has space to share resources and tools with men. It is intersectional in its ability to recognize when and where anyone can be

vulnerable. By seeking to get to the root causes of harm, both the harmed and the one who uses violence gain from a process that centres their humanity.

In this project, I seek to call in men, especially African-descended men, to a conversation that exposes the institutions that make them vulnerable and invisible. I want to make an argument that sits at the intersection of race, class, and gender—where the race is Black, the class is poor (working class), and the gender is men. I understand the experience at this particular intersection to be acutely different to that of poor Black women. I also understand that poor Black women (and trans and non-binary people) and men live entangled lives. The social-relational ties between genders is an important factor. Social policies in the United States at every level (federal, state, and municipal) are gendered. But the ways that people navigate these social systems and institutions are not disentangled according to the sex/gender system of our society.

## ## 1.2 Thesis Map

There are five sections of this thesis: Section 1: Introduction, Section 2: Literature Review, Section 3: Methodology, Section 4: Findings, and Section 5: Conclusion. Several of the sections have chapters within them. Section 1 has two chapters, the Introduction and this Thesis Map. Section 2: Literature Review has four chapters. They are: 1) The Abolition Chapter, 2) The Gender Chapter, 3) The Housing Chapter, and 4) The Transience Chapter. Section 3: Methodology is one large section. Section 4: Findings has four substantive chapters.

In Section 2: Literature Review, I begin Chapter 1 by justifying the use of prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition as the overarching framework of this research. I do this by explaining what it is and its relationship to research on Black subjects in the United States. After setting the foundation for abolition as a framework to examine racialised beings, in Chapter 2, I dig more deeply into the intersection of race and gender, to contextualise my research subjects, African-descended men in the United States. In Chapter 3, I explore the experiences of African-descended men in the context of housing. This is central to explaining the complexities of the research question, *where do Black men live?* Also in this chapter, I present relevant housing policies and programs that my research participants bump up against. I link the housing insecurities African-descended men experience, housing policies, and the PIC abolition framework to explain the prolonged periods of housing transitions these men experience. And finally, in Chapter 4: Transience, I locate my use of transience as a framework to make sense of the coping mechanisms that these men use to meet their housing needs.

Section 3: Methodology has two substantive parts, fieldwork and data analysis. The fieldwork chapter begins with a reflexive analysis, acknowledging that I, the researcher, am not an African-descended man, and locating my political commitment to this project in Black Radical Feminist frames including intersectionality. I transition to the research by first describing the research design, followed by the gaps in existing research, before introducing the conceptual frameworks (standpoint epistemology, transience, critical race theory's tenets of intersectionality

and counter-storytelling, and prison industrial complex abolition). After the conceptual frameworks, I describe the fieldwork and the methods of data collection (serviced-based ethnography and participant observation). In this part, I also describe my target demographics and the process employed for recruiting participants. I end this part with a description of where this project concludes with regard to saturation. The second part describes the data and methods of analysis. This part begins with a summary of participants, including a description and explanation for the missing participants (the misfits, incarcerated, and the first contacts only). Then I transition to the process of co-constructing the narrative data. This data serves as the bulk of the data that I use throughout for my analysis. After going over timelines and timeline analysis, a method of keeping track of the data in chronological form, I move into the final part, analysis by chapter. In this part, I describe the methods and process of analysis for each data chapter. I conclude with a transition to the findings.

Section 4: The Findings has four chapters. The section begins with a brief introduction to the section to present a rationale of the order and structure of the chapters. Then I transition to the first findings chapter, *Where Do Black Men Live?* This chapter is simply a presentation of data from empirical ethnographic research. Chapter 2 is entitled, *The Burden on Community*. It presents a narrative analysis of participatory action research. Chapter 3, *The Burden on Networks*, is an analysis of narrative data—the same narrative data that was co-constructed with the research participants. And Chapter 4 is called, *The Burden on Men*. This is a discussion chapter.

Section 5 of the thesis is *The Conclusion*. In this section, there is a summary of the aims and findings of this project. This section lays out the key findings of this project and its possible applications, as well as suggestions for future research. Final remarks situate this work in the abolitionist landscape and the emerging intersection of abolition and property literature.

## # 2 Literature Review

My overarching conceptual framework, which informs the theoretical and methodological approach as well as the analysis of the project, is *abolition*. Abolition is the practice of dismantling and removing a system. For the purposes of this project, the system that needs abolishing is what encompasses the police and prison industrial complex, or PIC abolition. The term prison industrial complex comes from the earlier term 'military-industrial complex'. 'Prison-industrial complex', like its predecessor, refers to financial investment and systems derived from private-sector and government interests to profit from increased spending on prisons and policing (Diaz-Strong et al., 2009).

By PIC abolition, I mean what Mariame Kaba explicitly states in her 2020 *New York Times* article, 'Yes, we mean literally abolish the police'. I was first moved to this position by reading Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. In it, she argues that the criminal justice system in the United States (and beyond) is used as a system of social control. She emphasises that this system discriminates on the basis of race and that it particularly targets Black men. Later, scholars and activists including Kemberle Crenshaw, Andrea Ritchie, Beth Richie, and many others have pointed out the harmful impacts of policing on women and trans-people. Alexander dug into the history and policies of the War on Drugs to show a direct trajectory to mass imprisonment of the poor and marginalised communities. From reading Alexander to taking part in the Black Lives Matter movement in the 2010s, I have come to see that the police, prisons, and the financialization of prisons and police surveillance, often referred to as the prison industrial complex, are harmful and cannot be reformed. That is an abolitionist position which I accept.

While Michelle Alexander is where I entered prison industrial complex abolition, there have been entire movements advocating PIC abolition that preceded her publication. In *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, first published in 1983, Manning Marable

emphasises the accelerating pace of incarceration. In the novel, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, first published in 1974, James Baldwin illustrates the deceptive practices that result in wrongful mass incarceration. Angela Davis published *Women, Race, and Class* in 1981. In it, she emphasised the state systems that incarcerate and harm disempowered communities. And there were many more.

While historically, (PIC) abolition has been considered by many as a fringe radical activist movement, after the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings, abolition has moved into the public discourse and has forefronted critical abolitionist thought and scholarship of the past and present. I have, perhaps bravely, located my research—its methods, objectives, and questions—within the contemporary discourse of (PIC) *abolition*.

Prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition is about dreaming up and building this world free of imprisonment, punishment, policing, and surveillance (Kaba, 2021). Embedded within abolition, as a framework, is a dedication to the study of the built environment, social relations, structures, and institutions that are created to surveil, police, punish, and imprison vulnerable identity categories as bodies out of place and time (Gilmore, 2007). Informed by these radical thinkers, this literature review seeks to convey that abolition is indeed the right framework for examining the overarching research question of *where do Black men live?*

As a work of sociology, this thesis ought to be grounded by academic literature. However, abolition is not situated within any specific academic discipline. Nevertheless, activists on the frontline of the abolition movement employ research skills to critically study punitive systems and evaluate experiments to advance the abolitionist cause. These activists collect data in the form of stories, surveys, and artefacts to highlight the need to dismantle harmful cultures, structures, and institutions. They aim to build new practices and institutions with



approaches that incorporate values that will lead to an abolitionist future.<sup>3</sup> Through careful efforts—namely those of Just Practice, Interrupting Criminalization, and Project NIA—abolitionist practitioners are amassing an archival collection of abolitionist political thought and practises. While contemporary abolition literature at this point in time does not explicitly centre housing, abolition is nonetheless where this project belongs. In this chapter, I will illustrate why this is the case and what my research adds to this archive.

## **## 2.1 Abolition Chapter**

Housing scholar Matthew Desmond (2019) has said, 'If you want to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation'. So, that is where I begin. There are links between the institution of slavery, the 13th Amendment of the United States Constitution, and the contemporary movement to abolish the PIC. Nikole Hannah-Jones (2021) illustrates the widespread consensus among historians of Anglo-America that the institution of transatlantic slavery established its roots in 1619. Since slavery's founding, enslaved people have resisted the institutions of enslavement in myriad ways.

Take marooning as an example. Manning Marable and Derecka Purnell, among others, have outlined a history of Africans in the Americas, including the Caribbean, who escaped enslavement to form their own communities or join Indigenous communities. Running away is a subversive act that frees individuals while disrupting and undermining the slavocracy. Runaways like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were key leaders in the movement to abolish slavery, helping to upend the institution while critically documenting its impacts.

There have been notable rebellions, uprisings, and other forms of resistance led by enslaved people; this includes the 1804 Haitian revolution, which resulted in the end of chattel slavery and colonialism in what is now Haiti. This revolution is the only rebellion of enslaved

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<sup>3</sup> As an example, see Andrea Ritchie's 'Building a Coordinated Crisis Response Network' through Interrupting Criminalization. (<https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/non-police-crisis-response-guide>).

Africans and African-descendants that led to the founding of a nation-state in the Americas (James, 1938). There was also Nat Turner's Rebellion in Virginia, in 1831 (Marable, 2000). There was the Amistad mutiny in 1839, where captured Africans bound for enslavement in the Americas rebelled on the slave ship and ultimately won their freedom in Connecticut courts (Kamara & Van der Meer, 2000). Historians note the significance of the Amistad incident as a catalyst in the 19th-century abolitionist movement. These are just a few examples of rebellions against the institution of slavery in the Americas, but there were many more movements and acts of resistance by both the enslaved and members of society at large.

The abolition movement formed to abolish the seemingly permanent institution of slavery, freeing all enslaved people as well as those who held them captive. Throughout the 19th century, individuals, communities, and institutions one by one rebelled against the institution of slavery. The abolitionist movement was a multi-racial, international movement. The European-descended William Lloyd Garrison was an outspoken abolitionist (Kendi, 2016). So was John Brown, who led the raid on Harpers Ferry (Du Bois, 1997), an act that is widely considered to have been a catalyst for the American Civil War. Institutions such as The Society of Friends, known as the Quakers, stood up against the system of slavery. In 1865, against all odds, the United States Congress ratified the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery in the United States.

The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reveals the link between the institution of slavery and the contemporary PIC abolition movement. Indeed, it reads,

### **Section 1**

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime** whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Paul Wright, the editor of Prison Legal News, pointedly explained, 'the effect of the Thirteenth Amendment was not to abolish slavery but to limit it to those who had been convicted of a crime'

(1994). *Critical race theory*, an academic framework that describes racial bias as inherent to Western society's legal and social institutions, helps us make sense of the links between the institution of slavery and the contemporary PIC abolition movement. Whereas the 19th-century abolitionists sought to abolish slavery altogether, the legal system subverts this objective by creating a permitted pathway to enslave through the criminal justice system. In this way, the objective of 19th-century abolitionists was thwarted, and the pathway to slavery through criminality established. Paul Wright's statement describes the link between the 13th Amendment and the contemporary abolition movement, which seeks to dismantle the criminal justice system and to build alternatives in its place. This link suggests, as many abolitionists believe, that the contemporary abolition movement is a continuation of the movement to abolish slavery in its contemporary forms.

### **### 2.1.1 Prison Expansion and Abolition**

The loophole of legal enslavement has allowed for the evolution and expansion of the prison industrial complex. Our present justice system, including police and prisons, is based on the same historical institutions, systems, practices, and logic of slavery, the institution that 19th-century abolitionists sought to eradicate. Before the Civil War and the passage of the 13th Amendment, prisons in the south were designed for and filled with poor white men, as sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois explained in *Black Reconstruction in America*. Frederick Douglass (1845) explained that the slave plantation was an inherently violent place and the violence was deployed as both a deterrent and response to misbehaviour. That said, there were relatively few Black people in prisons before the Civil War. The plantation system had its own violent mechanisms for handling misbehaviour, and it was unnecessary for enslaved African-descendants to be jailed along with misbehaving free whites (James, 1938; Jones-Rogers, 2019; Hannah-Jones, 2021; Purnell, 2022; and many more).

Following the American Civil War, there was a ramping up of the building of prisons and the professionalisation of policing. John Eason (2019) writes in *Big House on the Prairie* (2019) that by 1970, there were a total of 511 prisons throughout the United States. For example, the first prison in California was San Quentin State Prison, established in 1852 (Gilmore, 2007). Folsom Prison, the second prison built in California, was commissioned in 1867, two years after the passage of the 13th Amendment. According to Ruth Wilson-Gilmore (2007), between 1852 and 1964, the state of California built 12 prisons. Other states transformed plantations into prisons. Famously, the Louisiana State Penitentiary, popularly referred to as Angola, was the Angola Plantation before the Civil War. According to the Marshall Project,<sup>4</sup> Arkansas' Cummins Prison Farm (or the Cummins Unit) was previously the Cummins and Maple Grove plantations, respectively. The W. F. Ramsey Unit, now a prison, was once five separate plantations in Rosharon, Texas (Chammah, 2015). There are many more examples. The expansion of prisons reflects the shifting of enslaved Africans as property to freedmen to be controlled by the justice system. Abolitionists recognize the inextricable link between slavery/plantations and our present day prisons.

### **### 2.1.2 The Evolution of Policing**

My primary question in this abolitionist research project, *where do Black men live?*, is inextricably tied to modern carceral institutions. I seek to centre policing as that institution. I have come to adopt a socialist explanation of the evolution of policing, which is that policing developed alongside the notion of private property (Marable, 2000). It is my position that police have been, and continue to be, the mechanism that enforces property rights by protecting the property and interests of property owners. Thus, I am interested in examining the role of policing as regards housing/property.

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<sup>4</sup> The Marshall Project is a new organisation that focuses on the U.S. Criminal Justice System. See <https://www.themarshallproject.org/>

Policing as an institution developed and professionalised over time. From the late 19th, throughout the 20th, and into the 21st centuries, the prison industrial complex has targeted low-income and racialised peoples (Alexander, 2010). For example, Purnell (2022), and many others, write about the work of slave patrols in the South during legal slavery. Throughout the 20th century, Black radical discourses have produced a wealth of literature on the impact of policing, surveillance, violence, and incarceration on individuals and communities. Take Bayard Rustin's '22 Days on a Chain Gang' as an example (1949). Or Etheridge Knight's *Poems from Prison* (1968). This includes Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail' (1963), as well as Angela Davis' breadth of works on police abolition, including the essential question, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003).

News stories permeate the culture, including the stories of Eleanor Bumpurs<sup>5</sup> and Anthony Baez<sup>6</sup> (Feuer, 2016). One of my first exposures to the violence of policing was within the Haitian community—specifically, the sodomization of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima by the New York Police forces (Ioanide, 2007). In the infamous murder case of Carol Stuart, as outlined in the Boston Globe series (Walker et al., 2023), the Boston Police Department tore apart the Black and Brown community in the Mission Hill neighbourhood. They did so in search of a Black murderer when the husband was the murderer all along. In the 21st century, the Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the disproportionate rate of police murders of Black, Indigenous, and other persons of colour (Carbado, 2017). Since the passage of the 13th Amendment, policing has disproportionately targeted Black people for incarceration and violence.

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<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Bumpurs was an elderly and disabled Black woman who was facing eviction from her public housing apartment when she was killed by New York Police in 1984 while experiencing a mental health crisis.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Baez died by asphyxiation as a result of an encounter with New York Police in 1994. The encounter began as a result of the Baez brothers' football hitting the police vehicle.

It is important to remember that in a slavocracy, enslaved people were considered to be property. The passage of the 13th Amendment effectively ended chattel slavery except in the case of criminal offences. Yet, from the end of legal enslavement until the present day, the PIC has only grown. There are currently more people incarcerated in the United States than anywhere else in the world. And as Garland (2001) asserts, the label of criminality is not simply applied to individuals, but to entire social groups. Blacks, youth, and the poor or working class are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system (Pettit & Western, 2004). This is seen in mass incarceration of African-descended populations and the over-policing of their neighbourhoods (Garland, 2001; Alexander, 2010; Pettit, 2012; Harding et al., 2019; Rios, 2011).

## **## 2.2 Gender Chapter**

As Angela Davis, Andrea Ritchie, and Kimberle Crenshaw have shown, an important feature of the prison industrial complex is that it is a gendered system. In this chapter, I will focus on the intersection of gender, race, and class to make sense of abolition in this project.

In the seminal text, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex"', Rubin (1975) writes, 'Every society also has a sex/gender system—a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention and satisfied in a conventional manner...'. Peterson (2020) advances this view, explaining that as a system, sex and gender requires legal and social regulation. Manning Marable and bell hooks illustrate the hierarchies of social location and intersections within societies whereby one intersection of gender (man), race (white), and class (upper) is deemed superior to others. In this chapter, I use gender discourses to socially locate Black men and my approach to the question of where they live.

Sociologist Patricia Hill-Collins (1998) provides some context for understanding how race, gender, and nation intersect to produce state cohesion, which she refers to as “the national family.” She makes the argument that the nuclear family is a microcosm of the macro family, or the nation. Hill-Collins explains how this construction of the national family forms along racial lines. In this way, whiteness is seen as naturally and biologically superior—like men’s inherent superiority. Blackness is seen as naturally and biologically inferior—not unlike women’s inherent inferiority.<sup>7</sup>

A seminal text on racialised gender exclusion among African-descended Americans is *The Moynihan Report* (1965). In it, author Moynihan reminds readers of the sex/gender system of the United States. The report says,

Ours is a society which **presumes male leadership in private and public affairs**. The arrangements of society facilitate such leadership and reward it. A subculture, such as that of **the Negro American, in which this is not the pattern, is placed at a distinct disadvantage**.

—The Moynihan Report, 1965

In what can be read as a response to Moynihan, Spillers (1987, p. 66) writes that, ‘Those persons living according to the perceived “matriarchal” pattern are, therefore, caught in a state of social **“pathology”**’. The conclusion of the Moynihan report states that there needs to be national action to intervene in the production of such a *subculture* that does not conform to the American sex/gender system as described.

In *The Undeserving Poor*, Katz (2013) explains the way that the construction of the United States social security programme plugs into these notions. He writes, ‘Its founders assumed it would serve household heads and designed it in ways that overlooked the needs of women’. This analysis was informed by Diane Pierce’s (1985) article entitled ‘Toil and Trouble: Women Workers and Unemployment Compensation’. Katz’s point was that the framers of social

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<sup>7</sup> Other races fall at different rungs, like on a ladder.

security were American *men*. Socialised into the American sex/gender system, they held deep biases against women and designed a social welfare system that upholds heteropatriarchal values and expectations that would prioritise the social position of men—that is, the role of men as the labourers and the social welfare system that rewards labour production.

Radical feminist organisations, like the Redstockings and the Combahee River Collective, sought to address the root causes of patriarchal oppression, with an analysis that is focused on social systems as well as legislative or economic changes. A radical feminist analysis makes sense of the structure of social welfare systems where women who fulfil their reproductive labour by mothering are rewarded (by the state) with resources to fulfil this function (in the absence of a man). It is the nuclear family that serves as the model for social welfare programmes, to the great disadvantage of those who fall outside its strictures. This radical feminist reading of the American social welfare state is fundamental to Katz's argument about deservedness; labour and its value is fundamental to who is and isn't deserving. This notion of deservedness has become foundational in my thinking about gender in policymaking.

### **### 2.2.1 The Social Location of Racialised Men**

According to feminist scholar, bell hooks (1984), 'equality between the sexes will not bring about equality for all, because there is no equality between men'. There are those whose perspectives and reality are rarely ever acknowledged, those at the margins. So, despite Thomas Jefferson's<sup>8</sup> assertion, all men are not created equal within social systems. Black feminist scholars have documented, over centuries, their nuanced understanding of uneven power distributions, especially in the context of gender, race, and class (Davis, 1981; Busby, 2019).

In her seminal text, *Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory*, hooks (1984) writes:

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Jefferson wrote in the 1776 Declaration of Independence, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'.



White women and Black men have it both ways. They can act as oppressor or be oppressed. Black men may be victimized by racism, but sexism allows them to act as exploiters and oppressors of women. White women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people. Both groups have led liberation movements that favor their interests and support the continued oppression of other groups. Black male sexism has undermined struggles to eradicate racism just as white female racism undermines feminist struggle.

Texts like *The Moynihan Report* (1965) have constructed the lazy and unproductive Black male figure in popular media. However, Black male authors documented their plight in novels and memoirs. Take for example Ralph Ellison, author of *Invisible Man* (1952), Eldridge Cleaver, who wrote *Soul on Ice* (1968), James Baldwin, who wrote *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974), Ernest Gaines, who wrote *A Lesson Before Dying* (1993), or even Wes Moore, who wrote *The Other Wes Moore* (2011), and many more.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were critical discussions in the social sciences about Black men as 'males-in-crisis' (Awkward, 1995), super-predators (Fleisher, 1995), and generally as thugs and criminals (Anderson, 1999). Sexton (2018) makes it clear that violence perpetrated by Black males cuts across race, class, geography, and gender and therefore requires a deeper, nuanced, and critical systemic analysis. This is needed to contextualise, with grace, the depth and complexities of the Black male experience in the United States. Meaning, there is a challenge in portraying Black males as individuals with agency who are also victims of systemic forces at their particular intersection of gender and race. In this project, I use a Black feminist<sup>9</sup> standpoint to conduct my analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> Black feminism or womanism, originating in Black sexual politics (scholars such as Hill Collins, 2004), refers to the position that all people of all gender expressions are equal and deserve to be acknowledged and treated as such in social and legal circumstances.

### ### 2.2.2 Black Men and Violence

In *Unruly Bodies* (2020), Hohle uses the concept of *figurative violence* to refer to social campaigns that impose the construction of threatening figures onto bodies to inspire their allies and immobilise adversaries. Hohle writes,

Figurative violence includes two aspects of embodied violence: actual violence and symbolic violence. The former refers to committing acts of aggression while the latter refers to how the body is embedded with symbolic meanings associated with a threat to the dominant group's moral framework. A body can be threatening without having to commit an act of violence by its association with a political movement. Figurative violence illustrates when members of a political group exercise power over the self, it will activate resistance from the state that is different from a nonthreatening embodied performance. (2020)

Considering the racialised figure, reading Hohle in concert with Moynihan's description of the American sex/gender system, and Katz's notion of deservedness, we are left with three critical conclusions: 1) the African-descended male is already presumed violent and a physical threat to individuals and by extension the whole of society (Awkward, 1995; Fleisher, 1995; Anderson, 1999); 2) the under-performance of the African-descended male as the patriarch is another type of aggression, this time against the established social order (Moynihan, 1965; Hill-Collins, 1998); and 3) in breaking the social contract (Mills, 1997), by being violent in the public sphere, under-productive in the labour market, and failing to be patriarchs in the private sphere, Black men are undeserving of social sympathy and public resources.

### ### 2.2.3 How Does the Father Figure?

On the subject of the failures of Black men, I'd like to examine how fatherhood figures. I will connect the father figure to abolition by applying sociologist Susie Scott's description of the sociology of nothing (2018). The sociology of nothing is the examination of the social impact of phenomena including absences, silences, and invisibility as well as non-identification, non-participation, and non-presence. The biggest crime of Black men is in their absence as fathers and members of the nuclear family (Moynihan, 1965). So, the sociology of nothing is a

good framework for examining ‘fatherlessness’ or the absence of the father figure as a social phenomenon. I’d like to establish my position on the matter: the father figure is a social construction, it was devised within the overarching American sex/gender system. Embedded in the culture of poverty is a white supremacist myth claiming that lacking economic resources and considering the political state of Black communities, the pathology of the Black family can be boiled down to the result of Black people’s own moral failings through a series of poor generational collective choices. But, as Perry (2020) illustrates, father figures are embedded throughout communities. The functions designated to biological male patriarchs of nuclear families are assumed, distributed, and performed throughout communities. Family formations contort to meet the socio-temporal needs of any group of people. The roles people adopt are adaptive to socio-temporal circumstances; indeed in the Black communities they have had to go all the way back to slavery (Perry, 2020). The malleability of Black families is something that comes back up in the data chapters. I bring up the absence of (Black) fathers because their absence figures prominently in policymaking and will be relevant in my data analysis in later chapters.

Originally projected onto Mexican families, Oscar Lewis’ culture of poverty reduces human actors to nurture—meaning that the discourse generally presumes that subjects are doomed to repeat problematic actions inherited through generations (Katz, 2013). That is, absence begets absence. So, the framers of the United States social welfare programmes, informed by their sex/gender socialisation, constructed social policies to address the absence of nuclear patriarchs. Take the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)<sup>10</sup> programme as an example. Developed and implemented after the First World War and amidst the Great Depression, it developed a payment method for families with children. Historically it was

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<sup>10</sup> In the **1935** Social Security Act, Congress set the federal share of AFDC payments at 33%, up to individual payment maximums of \$18 for the first child and \$12 for additional children. See <https://aspe.hhs.gov/aid-families-dependent-children-afdc-temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf-over-view>.

exclusionary, as social welfare programmes integrate and include more racialised people. As Katz and Sophie Lewis (2022) describe, as the poor women's campaign organises and campaigns to make social resources more and more available to families, there is an ideological shift that takes place in policymaking. Moynihan report's pathologising Black family formation takes place within a political context meant to inform policymaking. Kiara Bridges (2017) explains that, 'the public does not support welfare programs that are thought to create disincentives to working in the labor market, that make marriage an economically disadvantageous choice, or that incentivize childbearing outside of marriage'. All of this is to say that the absence of fathers figures in policymaking. The figuration of absence in policymaking is gendered, classed, and racialised to produce exclusion and nonparticipation.

The disadvantage that Moynihan describes is that Black families are punished for their failure to produce nuclear formations. As the national family dictates that the state is left to shoulder the burden in the absence of fathers, this leaves the Black family reliant on social institutions to meet their basic needs. The abolitionist logic illustrates the ways that the state punishes Black males for their absence. And, by extension, the state punishes the Black family for continuing to circumvent the established structure. Everybody gets punished. It is important to keep this in mind as we look at social housing policy.

### **### 2.2.4 Gender, Abolition, and Housing**

There is an entire body of academic literature examining the impacts of poverty on African-descended *women* in the United States. However, my research centres low-income urban African-descended men with a gendered analysis of the impact of social welfare programmes and their exclusion from them. I acknowledge that Black men are not exclusively punished. However, Katz (2013) writes, 'The other undeserving poor were young black men. In fact, men in need always had elicited less sympathy than women'. This is where I socially locate Black men in this research—as victimised and oppressive, as visible and invisible.

In examining the disadvantage experienced by non-normative Black family formations, Katz described the political conditions as shifting away from favourability. In fact, Katz describes that in the latter third of the 20th century, there was an active political movement to disincentivize use of public resources. Katz describes that the public ideology used gendered and racialised tropes (welfare queens, gang members) to construct the undeserving citizens (Black and poor). Note that these tropes are not simply gendered and racialised, but they are classed and rooted in moral criminality too. The undeserving citizen is constructed during the War on Drugs and the financialization of policing throughout the United States. This is why I use abolition as a framework for examining the thesis question.

## ## 2.3 Housing Chapter

With a research question like *where do Black men live?* I thought I would have to situate my work in housing studies. I have spent four years reading in various disciplines about gender—in particular Black men (Awkward, 1995; Fleisher, 1995; Anderson, 1999; Mincy, 2006; Sexton, 2018)—and about housing—in particular homelessness (Roy, 2017), municipal housing policies (Vale & Freemark, 2012; Hamilton, 2019; Garboden et al., 2018), and displacement (Roy & Carlsson, 2021). In this chapter, I want to situate my thinking at the intersection of housing, race, gender, and abolition.

For many years now, there have been abolitionists calling out the carceral and punitive practices against people who survive poverty in public—the homeless (Roy, 2021). In Cambridge, relative to other populations, the unhoused populations have the most repeat encounters with police and para-policing institutions (MAAP - Hurd & Bolton, 2021). There has been a ramping up of encampment sweeps in Boston, Cambridge, and beyond. Municipal governments are passing anti-homeless laws,<sup>11</sup> criminalising sleeping in public or pitching tents

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<sup>11</sup> For example, in December 2023, the City of Boston passed an ordinance that bans the setting up of tents and tarps on public property. See <https://www.boston.gov/departments/mayors-office/unlawful-camping-ordinance>.

in public spaces. The policies and politics of shelters are harmful, carceral, and punitive (Herring, 2021). Shelters often have sobriety mandates, expectations of punctuality without exceptions, and entanglements with government agencies like the police department and/or the department of children services. These entanglements require these sorts of exclusionary policies. In Cambridge, MAAP does the crucial work of educating community members, city employees, and politicians about the needs of the people who are surviving housing crises in public spaces. It is with these marginalised populations in mind that I find abolition to be the most useful conceptual framework for this research. Those surviving poverty in public—transient and under-housed populations—are required to be cautious because of the inevitable link between housing insecurity, police patrolling, and incarceration. Some bodies stick out as out of place, like a Black male body. Such are the experiences of housing-transient low-income African-descended men. In this section, I will develop abolition as a framework for examining the links between housing and PIC abolition.

### **### 2.3.1 The Corporatisation of Landlording**

The housing crisis, in all its permutations, has reached unprecedented dimensions. There are issues of under-construction, misallocation, predatory financialisation, exclusionary practices, uneven access, and so many more challenges convulsing into a mega housing crisis (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). As my project is focused on the municipal level, I'd like to focus on the smaller end of this scale. There has been a massive shift in the practices of the literal gatekeepers to housing—the landlords. Changes in landlording are fracturing and destabilising the everyday lives of all working and 'surplus' classes as they struggle to access housing. While the changes in landlording could be a dissertation all on its own, Matthew Desmond's *Evicted* (2016) and Desiree Fields' *The Rise of Corporate Landlords* (2014) illustrate systemic changes in the financialisation, professionalisation, and corporatization of landlording. The changes they illustrate have had disastrous impacts on the housing prospects of low-income people.

Desmond traces the professionalisation of landlording from its humble informal beginnings to its current race- and class-stratifying and predatory practices. In *Evicted*, Desmond brings us into the spaces where landlords learn and share tips about how best to exploit housing-insecure populations (i.e., extract the highest possible rent). Fields examines the links between the deregulation of financial investments into the housing markets after the 2008 recession. The result has been more and more corporations in the domain of residential property management. The shift to corporatizing landlording and property management has also meant a lack of relationality in housing. Corporate detachment has led to a rise and acceleration of the process for evictions, as Desmond (and others) track at the Princeton University Eviction Lab and Ananya Roy and others do at The UCLA Anti-Eviction Mapping Project.

Meanwhile, the federal government is investing less and less in the business of landlording. That is, the underfunding of public housing has resulted in the loss of affordable housing units on the municipal level. Since Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), a federal loan programme that allows long-term contracts for local housing authorities to borrow funds for improvement projects and to convert public housing projects into project-based voucher programmes, in 2013 public housing authorities have been losing housing units (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2021). They have fewer property units and fewer resources for maintaining the units, despite historically serving as the primary landlord for deeply affordable housing tenants (between 40%–25% area median income), especially in large urban centres (Vale & Freemark, 2012). Public housing authorities (PHAs) have come to encroach on the management of deeply-deeply affordable (25%–15% AMI) options such as single room occupancy units (SROs) and long-stay shelters ever since the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997.<sup>12</sup> PHAs that have come to manage these housing options incorporate their eligibility criteria, ties to law enforcement, and surveillance-heavy tendencies

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<sup>12</sup> See the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program page of the HUD website (2023) retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/sro/>.

into their property management administration (Owens, 2020). This leaves fewer options for people who have historically been dependent on less regulated housing such as SROs and shelters. These are people who have histories of eviction, under-employment, poor credit histories, historic and/or present use of substances, and so on. As Alex Vitale (2021) explains in *The End of Policing*, neoliberal austerity policies leave these people with fewer independent options to choose from. In essence, the literature described a consolidation of services to the poor. The management of the basic services by non-profits is entangled with carceral government agencies like the police. The service organisations, or what Kurti and Shanahan (2021) have termed 'carceral non-profits', have become another surveillance arm of the state to the poor. This is evident in *carcerally entangled agencies* that manage *deeply affordable housing* programmes such as public housing and single room occupancy units.

### ### 2.3.2 Surveillance of Bodies Out of Place

In his 2020 pamphlet, *On Property*, Professor Rinaldo Walcott explains that there has been a systematic shrinking of the commons. By the commons, he means the collective ownership of public spaces and third spaces like libraries and community squares. Historically, people could freely occupy and belong in these spaces. While there is a long history of lords and lands relevant to his point, the primary takeaway is that there has been a privatisation of public spaces that has taken place before our very eyes. Anti-homelessness construction (such as armrests on benches and slanted or segmented benches) prevents access to spaces for rest for those who survive poverty in public. The commons have indeed shrunk. Moreover, these spaces have been transformed into spaces of economy—meaning that capital needs to be exchanged in order to have access and the right to use and stay. This is privatisation.

This privatisation transforms community members into those who belong and those who are out of place. Walcott recounts his own experience as a Black man out of place in certain 'public' spaces in Toronto, Canada. As he and others point out, these locations are ripe for



policing to remove bodies that are out of place. This is a fear or burden that all people who are perceived as out of place carry with them. As Walcott notes, bodies that are racialisable as Black, gendered as male, and ascribed as low-income are too often the figure of the criminal and are the bodies that are most often in violation of belonging and in need of police intervention (2021).

In *The Sum of Us*, Heather McGhee (2022) outlines the history of public swimming pools and why they have disappeared. She describes the racially entangled history of dismantling access to public spaces for all. More recently, we've heard the stories of white women, referred to popularly as Karens and Beckys, calling the police on young African-descended people who are at a park<sup>13</sup> or a pool<sup>14</sup> or even Starbucks (Fortin, 2018). These African-descended people were presumed bodies out of place, even in so-called public spaces, further illustrating the shrinking of the commons. For those who survive poverty in public spaces, we have reached a point where there are fewer and fewer spaces to occupy outside of jails and prisons. A recurring theme in the later chapters.

There appears to be a resurgence of post-Civil War laws such as anti-loitering,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See "Amy Cooper, White Woman Who Called Police On Black Bird-Watcher, Has Charge Dismissed" ([NPR, February 2021](#)).

<sup>14</sup> See "Texas Cop Who Attacked Black Teen Girl at Pool Party Not Charged" ([Vice, June 2016](#)).

<sup>15</sup> Loitering laws make it a public safety offence for an individual to be in a public place. For example: General Law - Part IV, Title I, Chapter 272, Section 95: 'Whoever without right enters, remains in or loiters within a station, waiting room, or terminal of a public transportation facility, or upon the platform, stairs, grounds or other premises of a public transportation facility, after having been forbidden so to do either by notice posted thereon, or by the person who has the lawful control of said premises, or by a railroad, railway or railway express officer or by any police officer, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars and may be arrested without a warrant by such officer and kept in custody in a convenient place, not more than twenty-four hours....'

anti-vagrancy,<sup>16</sup> and modern Jim Crow practices such as ‘sundown towns’.<sup>17</sup> Encampment sweeps have been on the rise throughout the country (Roy, 2017; McCool, 2020). Encampment sweeps are when police or other police-entangled agents (such as non-profit workers, social workers, etc.) remove the meagre belongings of people who survive the housing crisis in public. These sweeps take with them papers necessary to prove identification, residency, immigration status, and eligibility for certain programmes. These encampment sweeps also take with them the affective relationships people have to their home spaces, especially in a tent.

While I was in Sweden, Professor Irene Molina and doctoral researcher Ase Richard introduced me to the concept of *renoviction* (Listerborn et al., 2020). This term refers to the process whereby property owners invest in the renovation of a property, at great inconvenience to the present tenants, just to jack up the rents beyond the affordable reach of the present occupiers and thrusting them off course and out of stable spaces of belonging.

The result of these experiences is something Mindy Thompson Fullilove (2016), a psychologist, refers to as *root shock*. She writes, ‘Root shock is the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one’s emotional ecosystem. It has important parallels to the physiological shock...’. Root shock importantly merges the housing issues with public safety issues and public health concerns. Fullilove traces the generational impacts of urban renewal on African-American communities, explaining the common shared experience of root shock among African-descended Americans. This displacement they experience is linked to historically racist

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<sup>16</sup> Vagrancy laws make it a crime for a person to wander from place to place without visible means of support. For example: General Law - Part IV, Title I, Chapter 272, Section 66: ‘Persons wandering abroad and begging, or who go about from door to door or in public or private ways, areas to which the general public is invited, or in other public places for the purpose of begging or to receive alms, and who are not licensed or who do not come within the description of tramps as contained in section sixty-three, shall be deemed vagrants and may be punished by imprisonment for not more than six months in the house of correction.’

<sup>17</sup> Examples of sundown towns in Massachusetts are Brookline, Swampscott, and Belmont. Cambridge Housing Authority has entered into a ‘full service Property Management contract with the Belmont Housing Authority...’. See <https://cambridge-housing.org/belmont-housing-authority/>. For example, the City of Arlington, MA, does not allow overnight parking without a residential permit ([Traffic Rules and Orders Article V, Section 14](#)). See <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/i-want-to/learn-about/parking>.

policies such as exclusionary zoning and racially exclusive covenants, as outlined by Richard Rothstein in *The Color of Law* (2017).

### **### 2.3.3 The Policies**

In this project, I came across three government-subsidised housing programmes that repeatedly intersect in the lives of my research participants and the members of their social networks. These programmes are public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary housing. Whereas all three programmes exist throughout the United States, their implementation in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where this case study takes place, is what I examine throughout the project. In this next section, I explain a brief history of each programme, describe how each operates in Cambridge, and end with why each programme is relevant to this project.

### **### 2.3.4 Public Housing**

#### **##### 2.3.4.0.1 Brief History**

The first public housing in the United States was Milwaukee's Garden Homes in 1923. It is said to have inspired similar projects throughout the country. The Federal Housing Act of 1937 established the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and created the U.S. Public Housing Authority to authorise grants, loans, and subsidies to municipal housing agencies for construction and maintenance of public housing (Vale, 2013). The intentions and operations of the USHA, USPHA, and local PHAs, like the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and Boston Housing Authority (BHA), in creating public housing, was to provide a stepping stone for working families to ascend into the middle class via property ownership (BHA Report, 1940). According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website (April 2022), 'Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single-family houses, high rise apartment buildings for families with children, and

mid-size buildings for elderly families'. As of 2018, there are about 1.1 million apartments that make up the nation's public housing stock, which constitutes less than 1% of the nation's overall housing stock (HUD Website, April 2022). Local public housing authorities (PHAs) have the mandate to house low-income populations in deeply affordable units (i.e., public housing). Deeply affordable is defined by HUD as populations that earn 25%–35% of area median income (AMI).

A little background here: in 1973, President Nixon ordered a moratorium on federal subsidy programmes for home ownership (Section 235), rental and cooperative housing (Section 236), rent supplements, low-rent public housing, and college housing. This obviously included funding for public housing. This period in housing policy history had detrimental impacts for low-income people, as outlined by sociologist Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor in *Race for Profit* (2019). The 1974 Act and the creation of section 8 effectively ended the Nixon moratorium. This also led to the ousting of then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) George Romney, which began the shift to lessen government's interest and role in landlording the poor.

The Reagan administration sought to reduce traditional subsidies for public housing and to focus on providing more flexible housing benefits to tenants. Meanwhile, the then HUD secretary, Samuel Pierce, was involved in a number of scandals. He repeatedly made deals that benefitted his friends and allies. In the 1990s, the Clinton administration implemented some of the largest and most controversial reforms to public housing. One such example was HOPE VI which renovated badly distressed public housing but also led to massive displacement of long-time tenants and the removal of units from the programme.



Figure 1 Cambridge Public Housing artwork

#### ##### 2.3.4.0.2 Public Housing in Cambridge<sup>18</sup>

The public housing authority in Cambridge is the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA). It was established in 1935, two years before the National Housing Act that established USHA. Boston established the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) in the same year. Unlike Boston and other major cities like Chicago and New York, which established the housing authorities as city departments, Cambridge incorporated CHA as a separate non-profit organisation (501c3). Its objective is to provide long-term rental housing and rental assistance (City of Cambridge, 2022). CHA operates as a quasi-non-governmental organisation (QUANGO). It is technically independent from the oversight of municipal government—that is, CHA is not governed by the City Council. However, CHA is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners (CHA, 2022). According to CHA's bylaws, one member must be a housing authority resident, one is appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts, and the remaining three are selected by the Cambridge City Manager and confirmed through a vote by the Cambridge City Council. The CHA receives large grants, contracts, and other benefits to work in partnership with city, state, and federal government entities. Over the years, they have expanded their business model to include the property management of properties for other entities such as non-profit organisations, SROs, and shelters. CHA has grants to run other programmes for its residents and other city residents including early childhood programmes such as Baby University (which teaches parents to be parents to students from an early age) and Head Start (a federally funded nursery programme for low-income families). They run other education initiatives for youth and adults alike. According to the FY22 Moving to Work (MTW) report, the CHA serviced 7,158 households through a combination of their federally funded voucher programmes, public housing, and Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) units.

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<sup>18</sup> Artwork found in the CHA MTW Report FY22. The artist is Uzma Wahid, a deaf artist and a resident of Cambridge.

#### **#### 2.3.4.1 The Relevance of Public Housing**

In coordinating this research, I was never too far, always within no more than three blocks, from public housing projects. So, public housing figured in proximity. I conducted interviews inside of public housing units. I walked with my research participants to collect documents in public housing units. I sat with my research participants while they contemplated whether a public housing unit would be an option for that night or if that would endanger the resident. In the narratives, public housing residents made up a great deal of the foundational, or anchor, networks of the most transient men. Their mothers, grandmothers, and close friends lived in public housing, so they found themselves in public housing. This was especially the case if they themselves grew up in public housing; they would be more likely to have close ties in public housing projects.

The history of public housing and its relationship to government entities is central in understanding how and why it is relevant to this project. Its close ties to the city government, especially the Cambridge Police Department, means that the projects have uniformed and plain clothes officers patrolling the grounds. There are e-surveillance devices such as video cameras and audio surveillance devices like ShotSpotter (SoundThinking) throughout the property. Not to mention, the public housing authority regularly partners with the police on things like raids in units, evictions, and mundane things such as handing out summer camp pamphlets to families. The operations, practices, and policies of CHA influence the lived experiences of my research participants in some crucial ways that will be outlined in later chapters.

### **### 2.3.5 Section 8/Housing Voucher Choice**

#### **#### 2.3.5.1 Brief History**

The Housing Voucher Choice is often referred to as “section 8.” It is Section 8 of the U.S. Federal Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. § 1437f) - Low-income housing assistance, and it reads (without subsequent amendments):

**(a) Authorization for assistance payments**

For the purpose of aiding low-income families in obtaining a decent place to live and of promoting economically mixed housing, assistance payments may be made with respect to existing housing in accordance with the provisions of this section.

The 1937 National Housing Act distressed conservatives, who never believed the government should be involved in the business of landlordism. They wanted to provide support to the market-rate property owners and proposed rent supplement programmes such as ‘rent certificates’ as a way to provide low-income housing instead (see U.S. Chamber of Commerce and NAREB, 1954).<sup>19</sup> In the 1960s, and later accelerating in the 1970s, housing policymakers moved away from constructing and managing large publicly owned projects to other types of public-private partnerships, with private landlords and developers. During this era, section 8 vouchers and precursors to zoning programmes such as inclusionary zoning were developed (Vale, 2013). More on inclusionary zoning later.

The earliest implementation of a section 8-like programme is in the omnibus act of 1965. The Johnson administration authorised rent supplement payments to owners of certain private housing units occupied by families (Weaver, 1965; Vale, 2013). The purpose of this section of the policy was stated as ‘financial assistance to enable certain private housing to be available for lower income families who are elderly, handicapped, displaced, victims of natural disasters, or occupants of substandard housing’. The omnibus act or Public Law 89-117 authorised ‘The Housing and Home Finance Administrator . . . to make, and contract to make, annual payments to a “housing owner” on behalf of “qualified tenants”’; Public Law 89-117 (H. R. 7984 (89th)). This provision was included in the law commonly referred to as ‘urban renewal’.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Committee on Rehabilitation, National Association of Real Estate Boards, A Primer on Rehabilitation under Local Law Enforcement (Washington, D.C.: The Committee, 1952, 1953, 2d ed; Build America Better Council (NAREB)), Blueprint for Neighborhood Conservation; a Program for Large-Scale Elimination of Slum, Blight, and Unfit Housing Conditions (Washington, D.C., National Association of Real Estate Boards, 1953); Build America Better Council, Blueprint for Action: To Build America Better, a Check List for Real Estate Boards (Washington, D.C., National Association of Real Estate Boards, 1954).

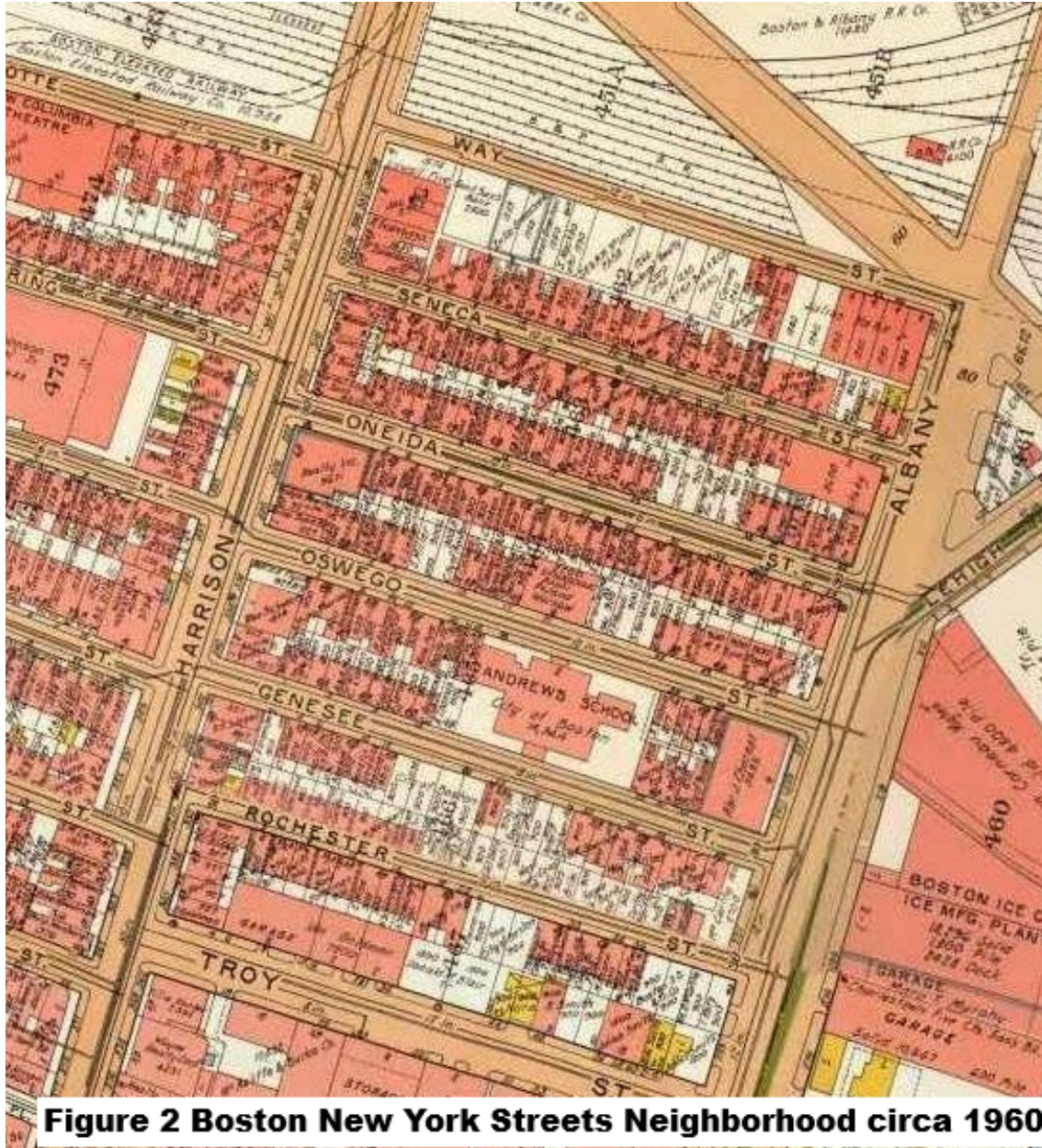
<sup>20</sup> Public Law 89-117 (H.R. 7984 (89th)) includes a statute that reads:

### **##### 2.3.5.1.0.1 Slum Clearance and the Development of Section 8 Vouchers**

There is a clear and explicit link between slum clearance, displacement, public housing authorities and the development of the section 8 vouchers. Addressing urban blight and slum clearance was a concern to the U.S. government at every level; a series of federal and Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws were passed between 1952 and 1966, collectively known as 'slum clearance' or 'urban renewal' (Collins & Shester, 2010). For example, in 1952, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a bill with additional funding to aid in 'relocation projects' for those displaced by slum clearance and urban redevelopment. This is recognised as the precursor to the modern voucher choice programme; it was called the 'Experimental Housing Allowance Program'.

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1. to have an income below the maximum amount which can be established in the area, pursuant to the limitations prescribed in sections 2(2) and 15(7) (b) (ii) of the States Housing Act of 1937, for occupancy in public housing dwellings; and
  2. to be one of the following—
    3. displaced by governmental action;
    4. sixty-two years of age or older (or, in the case of a family to have a head who is, or whose spouse is, sixty-two years of age or over);
    5. physically handicapped (or, in the case of a family, to have a head who is, or whose spouse is, physically handicapped);
    6. occupying substandard housing; or
    7. an occupant or former occupant of a dwelling which is (or was) situated in an area determined by the Small Business Administration, subsequent to April 1, 1965, to have been affected by a natural disaster, and which has been extensively damaged or destroyed as the result of such disaster.





Displacement, due to slum clearance, was rampant. Slum clearance created a housing crisis which was impossible for local housing authorities to manage with their level of supply (Boston Housing Authority, 1962).<sup>21</sup> Take for example the South End neighbourhood of Boston, referred to as The New York Streets, so called because the streets were named for upstate New York cities (Harrison Avenue, Albany, Seneca, Oneida, Oswego, Genesee, Rochester, and Troy

<sup>21</sup> I am using examples from Boston Housing Authority because the Cambridge Housing Authority does not appear to have access to USHA reports or any CHA reports going back to before the digital era; whereas the BHA archived their USHA reports at the Boston City Archives where this material was found.

Streets) (King, 1981). The 1950–1952 BHA report writes of it, ‘Typical slum conditions in an urban Redevelopment Study Area. South End “New York Streets” section of Boston’. This caption is accompanied by a photo of boarded-up buildings surrounded by clothes hanging on lines. In a book entitled *Chain of Change*, prominent African-American Boston activist Mel King writes of growing up in the New York Streets neighbourhood, ‘When I was away at college, my family sent me a series of articles from the *Traveler* which called the area Boston’s “Skid Row.” I was surprised because I had always called it home. But there it was, right in print’. He says the area was home to a thriving Black community who lived alongside Irish, Portuguese, Albanian, Greek, Lithuanian, Armenian, Jewish, Filipino, and Chinese immigrants. He says there were very few ‘Yankees’, referring to British-descendants who were the early settler colonists of the region. King (1981) goes on to say,

The *Herald-Traveler* series which described the Dover Street area as “Skid Row” was an important factor in the “renewal” of the New York Streets. Labelling those streets as slums depersonalized the issue, and blocked out any understanding of the impact urban renewal work has on the lives of the people, like my family and friends, living there, and provided a rationale for some “light industry.” The fact that the *people* living in the area had significantly fewer options than other groups by virtue of their color, national background, and economic status was blotted out. Those articles helped reinforce the attitudes that allowed the city to come in and raze my family’s house. (King, 1981)

By 1958, the slum clearance project was well under way. The 1950–1952 BHA report says, ‘the Authority had completed the land clearance, site preparation and sale to private developers of the area known as the New York Streets in the South End’. This site now houses the Torre Unidad Boston Public Housing project funded by the federal government during urban renewal as part of the 1949 Housing Act. The BHA reports illustrate the intentions of BHA to displace the occupants of neighbourhoods deemed as slums to install PHA managed housing.

Moreover, while families awaited the development of new public housing properties, a compromise was struck. The innovation was to pay local landlords to house low-income tenants. This innovation was paid, in part, with funds from the omnibus act of 1965. The 1970

BHA Report mentions an Economic Opportunity Coalition (EOC) grant that supported displacement efforts; the EOC grant expansion was part of the 1965 Omnibus Act.

Malcolm E. ('Mike') Peabody, Jr., is largely credited with the development of the modern section 8 programme in Massachusetts. The use of public-private partnerships to provide rental assistance to low-income people was expanded in the 1970s, during the Nixon administration. Massachusetts was the site of the first state-level rental assistance programme, the Experimental Housing Allowance programme. Its champion was Malcolm E. 'Mike' Peabody, Jr., brother to then Massachusetts Governor Endicott Peabody. Mike Peabody ran the programme until it became a federal programme, at which time both he and the programme were transferred to HUD in the EOC Department. Peabody went on to run the programme for the federal government.

The 1974 Housing Act is widely believed to be the predecessor of the section 8 voucher programme as we know it today (2022). The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-383) consisted of three parts: new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and existing housing certificates. It allowed for a massive expansion of the section 8 programme nationally. Vale (2013) writes:

Policymakers championed efforts to provide low-income tenants with **portable housing certificates** that could be used to subsidise their rent in private-sector dwellings. HUD oversaw an expensive and elaborate Experimental Housing Allowance program to assess the desirability of both demand-side and supply-side aspects of providing tenants with direct housing subsidies.

The 1974 Housing Act included legislation that supported the construction of privately developed housing projects known as Section 8 New Construction and Substantial Rehabilitation or 'project-based section 8' developments (Vale, 2013). This act also created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, merging seven categorical programmes into a block and making flexible funds available by a formula which considers

population and measures of distress including poverty, age of housing, housing overcrowding, and growth lag.<sup>22</sup> The merging of these categories made the process for local PHAs to apply for federal grants much easier. The simplification of the process for submitting federal demonstration grant applications contributed to the renewed interest in public-private partnerships such as the section 8 voucher programme as well as other demonstration programmes.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a decrease in popularity of public housing projects, as well as welfare programmes in general; this was reflected both in the public discourse as well as with policymakers (Katz, 2013). In 1983, the Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act (H.R.1) amended the 1974 act in at least three important ways: 1) it required no less than 51% of the assistance provided under the CDBG programme be used to support activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income; 2) it set new definitions of which municipalities are considered a 'metropolitan city' and an 'urban county'; and by extension, it revised population requirements; and 3) it defined 'low and moderate income' as families whose income does not exceed 80% of the AMI.

Under the housing voucher choice certificate programme, PHAs and HUD entered into an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) for the units that are available to receive assistance. Contracts were written for five years and were eligible for renewal for up to 15 years. As part of the contract, HUD would cover the difference between the tenant's calculated rental costs and the contract rent of a unit, set at 30% of household gross income. The contract rent was typically capped at the HUD-set Fair Market Rent (FMR) estimate for the area.

Before 1998, voucher-based programmes were demonstration programmes, meaning local housing authorities applied for HUD funding to implement a voucher-like programme. Each

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<sup>22</sup> See HUD Exchange CDBG Reports page - <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg/cdbg-reports-program-data-and-income-limits/>.

PHA had slightly different names and regulations for the programme. The 1998 Quality Housing and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (QHWRA) (P.L. 105-276) merged all of the previous iterations of the section 8 programmes, sometimes called housing certificate programmes. The merger allowed the emergence of the modern version of the programme, in which the rental benefits are referred to as 'vouchers'. From then onward, all 'certificates' were converted to 'vouchers' under an official federal programme with standardised terms.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 included provisions that impact three aspects of the section 8 programme. First is Section 220, which is a modification of Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher inspection requirements. It says:

PHAs are required to inspect units that are to receive Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher subsidy payments prior to approval of a family's tenancy and annually thereafter. The inspections are to ensure that the property meets standards set out in statute.

The second concerns Section 238 and the 'Redefinition of "extremely low-income (ELI)"'.

The term 'extremely low-income' (ELI), which is used for eligibility and targeting provisions in various federal housing assistance programs, is defined as income no greater than 30% of local area median income.

And the third is Section 24, which concerns the modification of utility allowance for section 8 voucher holders. It states:

Section 8 voucher holders whose utilities are not included in their rent are provided with a utility allowance to help offset their utility costs. . . . Section 242 would base a family's utility allowance on a family's size, rather than a unit size.

Today, section 8 is the largest federal government housing assistance programme in the country. It enjoys bipartisan support. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the programme helps more than 5.5 million Americans afford housing.

#### **#### 2.3.5.2 Section 8 Vouchers in Cambridge**

In Cambridge, the section 8 voucher programme is coordinated by CHA. In addition to running the federally funded Section 8 Voucher programme, CHA runs a number of other

federal- and state-funded voucher programmes as the local PHA, such as the Move to Work (MTW) programme. MTW is a 2022 expansion of the 1994 Moving to Opportunity (MTO) programme, a demonstration that combines tenant-based rental assistance with housing counselling to help very low-income families move from poverty-stricken urban areas to low-poverty neighbourhoods. MTW operates as a demonstration programme for local PHAs to design and test 'innovative' approaches to help low-income residents find employment to become self-sufficient. The CHA runs the MTW voucher programme as well as VASH, Shelter Plus, Mod Rehab, Mainstream, and DHVP/NED.<sup>23</sup>

These section 8 vouchers operate in some instances as mobile vouchers, meaning that the individual is allocated a voucher, and when they move the voucher goes with them. Alternatively, there are project-based vouchers, whereby a building or a unit is subsidised by the voucher programme, and anyone living in that unit automatically receives the subsidy. This operates as a sort of state-subsidised rent control. There are project-based section 8 buildings and units all throughout the City of Cambridge. Section 8 voucher holders are also scattered throughout the city. However, in recent years, the fastest growing housing programme for voucher holders has been the inclusionary programme.

### **#### 2.3.5.3 The Relevance of Section 8 Vouchers**

Throughout this project, section 8 vouchers come up quite frequently. Notably, the process for acquiring the vouchers and the means of proving eligibility becomes important. It figures in how individuals and families become eligible: we will see this in Quintin's narrative (Appendix ## 7.18). It figures in how some individuals come to live in expensive areas creating chasms within families: we see this with Hakeem's story (Appendix ## 7.8). We also see that members of the networks of my research participants find refuge in the section 8 programme

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<sup>23</sup> CHA's breakdown of the number of vouchers offered by each programme: HVP/NED 100, VASH 165, Shelter + Care 46, Mainstream 289, Mod Rehab 92. Participant breakdown by programme: DHVP/NED 86, VASH 153, Shelter + Care 29, Mainstream 244 Mod Rehab 71.

and in turn offer refuge in those spaces. However, the restrictive practices of the local housing authorities socially restricts and punishes section 8 tenants and the precarious members of their networks.

### **### 2.3.6 Inclusionary Zoning Housing**

#### **#### 2.3.6.1 Brief History**

The first known inclusionary zoning programme was established in Fairfax, Virginia, in 1971 (Hamilton, 2021). In general, inclusionary housing programmes are developed as part of inclusionary zoning or incentive zoning policies. In the United States, and elsewhere, the term zoning refers to policies that regulate the uses of land within a municipality (i.e., a city or town), county or parish, state or commonwealth, and country. Inclusionary zoning policies are municipal-level (or county-level) planning ordinances that require developers to set aside a percentage (fixed-share) of new units as 'affordable'. They do this through the zoning code or similar governing processes.

The term inclusionary included in the title of the programme juxtaposes this programme with historical exclusion. Exclusionary zoning refers to tactics intended to exclude non-white populations, especially African-descended Americans, from certain locations (Loewen, 2005). While exclusionary practices were combinations of both legal, unspecified, and illegal practices, the legal approaches in exclusionary zoning include civic association governing codes and membership requirements, racially exclusionary covenants (in other words, restrictive clauses included in property deeds), and more (Rothstein, 2017). The effect of exclusionary zoning policies is race- and class-stratified cities and towns. Inclusionary zoning, in its appropriation of the opposition to exclusionary zoning, markets itself as a programme that is meant to undo the historical harms of exclusionary practices through zoning incentives.

In her 2019 policy brief entitled 'Inclusionary Zoning Hurts More Than It Helps', researcher Emily Hamilton describes inclusionary zoning initiatives as varying widely in their

implementation and therefore their impact on housing crises. Their implementation considers four sides to the experience: the development/management companies, the municipality, the inclusionary tenants, and the market-rate tenants. For the development and management companies, the implementation of inclusionary programmes varies in terms of the incentives. She writes, 'Some [inclusionary programmes] require developers to provide income-restricted units as a condition of building new market-rate housing, . . . others offer density bonuses in exchange for the optional provision of income-restricted homes'. For the inclusionary tenants, she explains, 'In some jurisdictions, inclusionary zoning units must be affordable to low-income residents (those earning less than half of their area median income) while in others, inclusionary zoning units are targeted to those earning the median income or even higher'. So, this programme is not designed to combat racially motivated exclusion, or even to serve as affordable housing for low-income tenants. In her 2021 article, 'Inclusionary Zoning and Housing Market Outcomes', Hamilton goes on to find evidence that inclusionary zoning programmes actually increase market-rate house prices, driving the median rental market up. Meaning that inclusionary zoning actually has the effect of further race and class stratifying cities that implement inclusionary programmes.

Massachusetts has a robust inclusionary zoning practice. The state constitution grants home-rule authority to municipalities to pass inclusionary laws (see Chapters [40B](#) and [40R](#)). However, inclusionary programmes have not been without detractors in Massachusetts. There are local governments that prohibit the adoption of some forms of compulsory participation in inclusionary housing, whether it is for ownership housing, rental housing, or both.

#### **#### 2.3.6.2 Inclusionary Zoning Housing in Cambridge**

An inclusionary zoning programme was introduced in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1998. This was just a few years after rent control was outlawed via a state ballot initiative in 1994 (New York Times, 1994). Cambridge has created two inclusionary zoning programmes.



There is one programme for rental housing and one for homeownership; both are administered, not by CHA, but by the Cambridge Development Department (CDD). The inclusionary zoning percentage was set at 11.5%. In April 2017, the city council unanimously passed an amendment to the inclusionary zoning ordinance that required market-rate developments reserve 20% of the floor area to be used as affordable units in new developments. It is worth mentioning that on August 31, 2016, the summer prior to the city council vote, two high school students (Mari Gashaw and Emmanuela Fede) and two adult Cambridge residents (Abe Lateiner and Andrew King) chained themselves to City Hall as part of the local Black Lives Matter campaign. They demanded an end to gentrification and called for an increase to the inclusionary housing zoning code from 11.5% to 25% (Lasarte, 2016). They were arrested for this protest. The change from 11.5% to 20% happened after and likely as a result of the protestors' efforts.

The inclusionary programme is one of the most popular government-administered housing programmes in the City of Cambridge. Policymakers like it because it is adding more units to the affordable housing stock than any other housing programme in the city. Prospective tenants like the idea of having a brand new unit of luxury quality. At present, the inclusionary programme has some 1,100 affordable housing units in the CDD's housing programme stock. According to a CDD report (2021),<sup>24</sup> there are 12 new buildings that house the inclusionary programme—that is, buildings that house inclusionary units. A total of 398 new units of affordable housing were added to the housing stock in 2021, and 13 were part of the homeownership CDD programme; thus there were 385 new affordable rental units. 77 total studios were added, and one was for homeownership; 189 one-bedrooms were added, and three were for homeownership. 262 units were eligible for applicants who earn between \$42,280 and \$70,750, or 50%–80% AMI.

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<sup>24</sup> CDD Report can be found at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FJrPIA\\_1k5xMO2fHz9F5h9RUhFnL0l4S/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FJrPIA_1k5xMO2fHz9F5h9RUhFnL0l4S/view?usp=sharing).

### #### 2.3.6.3 The Relevance of Inclusionary Zoning

Being that the inclusionary programme is the fastest growing government-administered housing programme in the city, many of my research participants either live or stay in inclusionary units. By live, I mean that they reside as legally documented residents in inclusionary units. By stay, I mean they are frequent overnight guests of documented tenants of inclusionary units. Additionally, as a community responder, working with my research participants toward housing goals, I favoured the application process of the inclusionary programme to other government-subsidised programmes because the application process was much simpler and the wait times were shorter. As a result, many of my research participants who did not have a previous history with the programme were introduced to the programme during our work together. At the end of this project, several research participants resided in inclusionary units themselves.

The experience of navigating a government programme via a private company, by way of the management companies, is crucial to the point that this project seeks to make. My research participants, in their experience of housing transience—that is, living between multiple households—find themselves ducking in and out of visibility to systems and structures that surveil and punish them for being bodies out of place. Notably, the inclusionary unit management companies serve as para-police, tracking these men and ready to call the police on a whim (see Orion's narrative 2 - Appendix ## 7.16).

Indeed, the experiences that my research participants have in navigating all three of these programmes, public housing, section 8, and inclusionary, is the experience of surveillance and fear of punishment. They navigate their visibility and invisibility in the proximity of these housing spaces to the carceral state. This process by which they navigate visibility and invisibility to police and other institutions that make up the PIC is further illustrated and examined in the findings chapters.

#### #### 2.3.6.4 The Orshansky Index

All three of these policies centre on the notion that housing should cost no more than 30% of one's income—this comes from the *Orshansky Index*. Mollie Orshansky, a government economist, was tasked with developing a metric to assess the relative risks of low economic status (or, more broadly, the differentials in opportunity) among different demographic groups of families with children. She developed what is known as *The Orshansky Index*, a research tool, where the criteria for determining eligibility for anti-poverty programmes is based on the finding that low-income families use of about one-third of their income on food, and so income thresholds can be determined by multiplying the costs of food by three (Katz, 2013). According to an article published on the SSA website entitled, 'Remembering Mollie Orshansky—The Developer of the Poverty Thresholds' by Gordon M. Fisher (2008), 'One major source for Mollie's July 1963 article was a special tabulation of Current Population Survey data, which SSA purchased from the Census Bureau at a cost of \$2,500. The results showed that the median annual income of non-farm female-headed families with children was \$2,340. This article also mentions that 'a task force planning the War on Poverty did not call on SSA or Mollie to develop an improved measure'.

It should be noted that Orshansky herself meant for the index to be used as a research tool and denounced its use as an instrument for policymaking (Fisher, 2008). Orshansky pointed out validity issues with the index, in that it assumes 'that the house-wife will be a careful shopper, a skillful cook, and a good manager who will prepare all the family's meals at home'. Katz (2013) also points out that she says the index does not include 'additional allowance for snacks or the higher cost of meals away from home or meals served to guests'. In 1968, the Office of Economic Opportunity utilised her index as a standard for poverty estimates using only data from the Department of Agriculture's economy food plan, which at the time was 25% less than the index that Orshansky herself had used.

Considering the validity issues with the Orshansky Index, it is not a statistically valid metric for measuring what low-income households should or could be able to shoulder. That is, the idea of using 30% of one's income on housing is outdated and not necessarily an ideal method for determining the housing affordability threshold. The rigidity of this rule complicates the discussion about the burden of payment. Not to mention that outside of government programmes, low-income people are paying well above 30% of their income on housing. The insistence on this 30% as the threshold neglects the lived realities of low-income people.

### **### 2.3.7 Gender and Burden in Housing Policy**

In order to understand the dilemma faced by Black men, we need to review the history of housing policy in the United States. Take for example, the 'man in the house rules' (also known as 'the substitute father rule'). These were a series of regulations and practices that effectively denied benefits to poor single-female-headed families who received welfare payments if evidence of a man was found. This was especially the case for recipients of Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC), if or when there was a man staying in the household. To find evidence of a man's presence, the government coordinated midnight raids on these poor families. Government employees searched household units for relics left behind by derelict men, or hid in the bushes to spy and eavesdrop on families in search of evidence of the presence of men. The idea was to find men who were shirking their responsibilities and pawning them off onto the government (Katz, 2013). These 'man in the house rules' have been scrutinised by researchers and policymakers for decades (Washington, 1968; Katz, 2013; Kurwa, 2020). The burden these practices placed on children ultimately led to the Supreme Court's reversal of Alabama's 'man in the house rules' laws in the court case *King v. Smith*, 392 U.S. 309, 88 S. Ct. 2128, 20 L. Ed. 2d 1118 (1968). The children in the household filed the case; the Supreme Court found that these policies were harming the children and acting contrary to the aims of the programme. The burden of these 'man in the house rules' on women continues to be examined

in gender and poverty studies (Valk, 2000; Kurwa, 2020). Nadasen (2009), in particular, notes the critical role of the organising efforts of Johnnie Tillmon, who founded ANC Mothers Anonymous,<sup>25</sup> and the work of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) in *Goldberg v. Kelly* - 397 U.S. 254, 90 S. Ct. 1011 (1970), which was instrumental in the court's finding that termination of welfare benefits deprived welfare recipients of the means necessary to live. The case decision borrowed from Charles Reich's publication entitled 'The New Property' (1964), which asserts that welfare-bestowed resources are akin to property and cannot be removed on the basis of fraud or without the completion of due process. Activists and sympathetic policymakers rallied around the point that welfare benefits are akin to property.

Many scholars today are still interrogating this political shift (Vale & Freemark, 2012; Katz, 2013; Dantzler & Rivera, 2021). After the Great Depression, social housing programmes were conceived of as property with all its attendant benefits. Take for example the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known popularly as the GI Bill. This bill allowed thousands of (white) returning soldiers to purchase property. The 1949 National Housing Act led to the construction of hundreds of thousands of public housing units, and Dantzler (2021) and PHA USHA<sup>26</sup> reports from the era illustrate that the rapid investment in public housing was a temporary measure to house returning soldiers and their families while they completed the process for acquiring their own property insured by the government mortgage backed scheme (Boston Housing Authority, 1940). The government was underwriting what it considered deserving people (i.e., patriotic, white, nuclear families) in acquiring their own property.

During the civil rights era, there was a shift from government underwriting property ownership for the deserving to a paternalistic government designing social programmes as a social benefit (Soss et al., 2011). While the government once assisted people in acquiring their own property, it then shifted focus to providing people access to resources, including housing.

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<sup>25</sup>The organisation was called Aid to Needy Children Mothers Anonymous.

<sup>26</sup> Public Housing Authorities (PHA) and United States Housing Authority (USHA).

These were the conditions under which scholar Charles Reich concluded that government benefits are akin to property. There was a third shift, in the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting a new narrative depicting those in need of government programmes as undeserving, freeloaders, and leeches. Being needy, once considered a normal part of the human condition, was now constructed as unacceptable. Being needy, in and of itself made one undeserving (Katz, 2013). Only those who were not needy were deserving. As Desmond (2023) makes clear, this ideology persists.

Government programmes were redesigned with two tracks, one for the deserving and another for the undeserving. For the deserving, there are programmes such as mortgage interest deductions, 529 college savings plans, government-subsidised retirement benefits, and many more (Desmond, 2023). For the undeserving, there are ‘benefits’, but they come with onerous conditions. These include considerable administrative burdens (Herd & Moynihan, 2019), a time tax (Lowry, 2019), and being subject to constant state surveillance and punitive responses (Roberts, 2019; Vitale, 2021)—not to mention the threats of and at times actual incarceration (Rodriguez, 2023). While historical ‘man in the house rules’ included raids and hiding in the bushes, modern equivalents include public housing ‘inspections’, ‘recertification’, and e-surveillance. In short, contemporary government ‘benefits’ are as far as one can get from the ‘property’ originally envisioned in social programmes following the Great Depression. Ever changing social housing programmes, regulations, and eligibility criteria put a burden on women and children. Their experience navigating these systems is being studied critically and thoroughly. Feminist scholars like Dorothy Roberts, Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor, Michael Katz, Manning Marable, and many others have focused on these political shifts and their impacts on poor women. However, the *burden on men* is under-examined. And, in the case of African-descended men, they have become the burden. We can see this in the classic report, *The Negro Family*, where Moynihan’s depiction of the ‘absent’ Black male led to the pathologising of African-descended men. This is continued by further voyeuristic depictions of

them as freeloaders, thugs, deadbeat dads, super predators, drifters, and gang members. This project addresses this gap by focusing on Black men.

### **### 2.3.8 Housing Black Men**

Low-income African-descended men rely on doubled up housing situations more than any other demographic group. In a 2022 Pew Research Center report entitled *The Demographics of Multigenerational Households*, Cohn et al. explain that, although men and women are equally likely to reside in multigenerational households, men are more likely to do so if they are younger than 40. Cohn et al.'s racial analysis shows that Asian (24%), Black (26%), and Hispanic (26%) people are more likely than those who are white (13%) to live in a multigenerational family household. And, among young adults (18- to 34-year-olds), men living with parents is the dominant living arrangement (Fry, 2016). Given that men are more likely to live in multigenerational households, especially men under 40, as well as African-descended Americans being more likely to live in multigenerational households, my research participants fit in the larger trends.

In her research on 'doubling up', Hope Harvey (et al., 2021) expands the discussion from multigenerational households to all manner of shared living. Her typology of 'doubling up' includes multigenerational, extended family, and non-kin living arrangements. This is more illustrative of what I find among the networks of my research participants. Harvey (2021) also makes the distinction between guests and hosts. She found that 'hosts' receive support such as companionship, money, and childcare. In her description of 'guests', Harvey distinguishes between the benefits and burdens of doubling up. In terms of benefits, she notes that the guests may give and receive childcare, they may be able to save money, and of course they are housed in the arrangement. In being housed, there are extended benefits such as residency status, which may open other opportunities such as voting or eligibility for municipally governed programmes. The burdens may include caring responsibilities, a loss of autonomy, and a sense

of or actual subordinate status. In many cases, this subordinate status can be connected to whether this housing situation is permanent or temporary.

Harvey (2021) writes, ‘those who do transition between household types experience more transitions on average than do hosts’. Harvey’s emphasis on the transitory nature of the guests in double up circumstances emphasises the point I wish to make about why ‘transience’ is an appropriate description of the experiences of my research participants and not other terms such as the vast expanse of ‘homelessness’, ‘hidden poor’, etc. Harvey’s research is focused on mothers and families with children; my research complements her explorations by focusing on (Black) men. Combined, a reading of Cohn et al., Fry, and Harvey works together to illustrate the experiences of low-income housing-transient African-descended men found in this project.

## **## 2.4 Transience Chapter**

The concept of *transience* is explored within and between many academic disciplines. There are discussions about *transience* in geology literature. ‘Transience is a matter of perspective. One of the great advantages of a geological perspective is the ability to perceive landscapes over a much broader range of time spans than people commonly employ. . . . Perspective can also result from physical location’ (Wohl, 2015). In the demography literature, Coulter et al. say, ‘Viewing moves as discrete transitions between dwellings overlooks the relational residential itinerancy and transience being generated by demographic shifts, while neglecting how the diverse meanings of residential immobility are being shaped by economic and technological change’ (2016). *Transience* is also addressed in criminology and legal studies (Goffman, 2014; Keene et al., 2018; Harding et al., 2019), housing studies (Batterham, 2019; Keene et al., 2018; Dieleman, 2001), gender and sexuality studies (Tapley, 2003, 2009, 2012, 2014), and public health research (Grieb, et al., 2013; Keene et al., 2018).



In his study of *the relationship between transience and homeless (service-using) populations*, David Pollio (1997) defines transience 'as consisting of four related dimensions: migration, duration, intention, and involvement'. For the purposes of Pollio's study, the first of these, the concept of *migration*, refers to the population of transcultural or transnational migrants. Those who traverse national borders. For the purposes of my research, I will be focused on intra-community transience, or a sort of localised migrational wandering. The second is *duration*; Pollio is concerned with how much time the transient person has spent in a community. A temporal analysis is central to my research, but I am more concerned with how many local housing transitions a person has experienced within a period of time and the compounding impacts of many housing transitions over time. The third concept Pollio refers to is *intention* (to move or to stay). As Pollio's focus is primarily transnational and inter-state travel, his analysis of intention is related to the individual's intention to relocate or to travel for travel's sake (1997). The transience my research is concerned with is that of intra-community housing transience. The last concept is *involvement*; the interactions and community connections an individual develops are important in Pollio's analysis of transience. My research does in fact focus on community ties. I use a social network framework for the analyses. The transients I refer to are members of the community with strong and long-standing social ties (relatives, friends, romantic partners, and community members).

### **### 2.4.1 Transience, At-risk-ness, and Homelessness**

The literature on homelessness is extensive, but there is no definitive boundary between housing transience and homelessness. I refer to homelessness as rough sleeping or shelter homeless. However, by many definitions, a housing-transient individual *is* homeless. In many cases, they would qualify for the same services as a rough sleeper or shelter-homeless person. The literature on at-risk-for-homelessness differentiates between rough-sleeping

homelessness/shelter homelessness, and those who are in danger of becoming rough sleepers and shelter homeless.

The literature on *at-risk-for-homelessness* is rich in content and defines the parameters for homeless risk factors and broader societal causes. In Batterham's exploration of *at-risk-ness*, she shares these examples, 'being "at-risk of homelessness" can mean someone soon to be without accommodation—including someone with rent arrears . . . or facing eviction . . . or someone living in housing that falls below the general community standard' (2019). In the context of policy and government sponsored programmes, *at-risk-for-homelessness* also includes people leaving institutions (prison, shelters, halfway houses) (Harding et al., 2019); it can also refer to people experiencing domestic violence (people who need to leave an unstable housing situation) (Bufkin & Bray, 1998). The term *at-risk* is often defined within policy and programmatic measures for homelessness prevention efforts. Homeless prevention literature is very often focused on future measures and actions to take. Rather than defining the individuals for what they are at-risk of becoming—unhoused, homeless, at-risk broadly—I would like to focus on what they *are doing* and examine some of the reasons for transient behaviour. The term *at-risk* encompasses a broader group of housing unstable and un-/under-housed population as compared to *housing transience*, which is more specific.

In the U.S., government-enforced laws have played, and continue to play, a major role in the social lives of marginalised people. Government-enforced laws impact (limit or enhance) forward mobility or stability. Take the example by Rothstein (2017); it is in fact government intervention that creates mechanisms for homeownership, which builds wealth for the white middle class. This is an example of how laws cause an effect. At the same time, the same entities prevented the social mobility of Black (and Indigenous) communities through the

passage of racially segregating housing laws and policies such as redlining.<sup>27</sup> Laws, policies, and programmes have a direct impact on housing experiences. While these examples tend to focus on homeownership, I want to argue that housing policies, programme design, and eligibility requirements *prolong housing transitions* of individuals who are experiencing housing insecurity—I refer to this as housing transience.

In *On the Run*, Alice Goffman (2014) writes extensively about Black men, law enforcement, and transience. I took three key things from her research. First, *transience* becomes a sort of coping mechanism, forced upon the subjects by the limitations of their own agency by laws and law enforcement. Second, among *transients* (highly mobile figures), there is the use of community and networks to cope with precarity. They rely on their networks of relatives, friends, romantic partners, and community members to help meet and maintain basic needs. Third, housing transience is an understanding of the multiple functions of the ‘home’ (Goffman, 2014). Highly mobile people understand there is a plurality in the *uses* of ‘home’. These uses include 1) the legal permanent address, 2) where one receives correspondence and postal service, 3) where one stores belongings, and 4) where one sleeps.<sup>28</sup>

Grieb et al. (2013) define a *transient* as someone who has experienced two or more prolonged periods of housing transition in six months. For a person who is housing-insecure, each transition creates further insecurity. For example, if a transient person is storing their belongings in someone’s basement, and that host person loses their house, the transient person must find another person who can store their belongings. If they cannot find someone or some place by the deadline, they may decide to live without those belongings (either in the short term or long term). So if the things that are stored are a bed and a chair, these are things that need to

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<sup>27</sup> The discriminatory practice in which potential customers are refused services (such as a loan or insurance) because they live in an area deemed to be a poor financial risk or classified as ‘hazardous’ to investment (Rothstein, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> And there are affective uses of the home too, where memories, connections, and trauma are made and kept (Gurney, 1997).

be acquired again once they have a place to live. Once someone has a housing plan, if any aspect of that plan changes, changes need to be made to multiple aspects of the plan—which results in each change destabilising the person even further. Transience begets transience.

In this context, transience is that invisible space and time just before being thrust into shelter homelessness and/or rough sleeping. Transience is when under-housed and housing unstable individuals are pulling on resources throughout their networks to meet their basic needs. These resources may include making contact with local shelters, but before their network is exhausted and materially depleted. Transience is related to consecutive interruptions in essential social mechanisms (employment, housing, food security, education). Housing transience is the process of relying on other resources (family and community members, QUANGO and non-profit organisations) to meet basic needs and treading water just to stay or get afloat—or to avoid rough sleeping.

### **### 2.4.2 Contact**

In Dorothy Smith's *The Conceptual Practices of Power*, she lays out that sociology is an upper class and male dominated discipline. She critiques traditional methodological approaches to producing sociological knowledge. She points out that social life and institutions have historically excluded and marginalised women. She suggests a need to shift our methodological approaches. I will share more on this in the methodology chapter. In this section, I'd like to focus on the methodological approach of contact in conducting sociological research.

The notion of contact is of critical importance in sociology. Contact is the site of critical methodological interventions. For example, monitoring and evaluation plans for non-profit service providers may be developed to count the number of unique clients or the number of visitors per day or at a location; these are contacts. Just the same, an abolitionist logic critiques

the method of contact with an institution because it may trigger observation or services that can be counted or observed—this can lead to punishment rather than support.

In this section, I am using contact in the context of housing to refer to fixed sheltering locations. For the purposes of this project, I refer to *contact* as contact with institutions during periods of housing insecurity. This has been a methodological approach that many institutions and researchers have used and continue to employ as the basis for developing social policy. However, this reliance on *contacts* as a methodological approach neglects the social and cultural strategies that transients employ to meet their housing needs *between* contact with institutions. That is, what do people do between periods of contact with institutions?

**TABLE 1**

**Implicit Theorization of the Prevailing Typology of Homelessness**

Frequency	Duration	
	Short	Long
High	Episodic	... <sup>a</sup>
Low	Transient	Chronic

<sup>a</sup>Not described in the typology.

**Figure 3 Table 1 - Implicit Theorization of the Prevailing Typology of Homelessness**

The literature on homelessness has transience in its typology of homelessness. I find Kuhn and Culhane (1998) a good place to start on homelessness and transience. They've created *the* typology on temporal homelessness—that is, frequency and duration of shelter use. They've conducted quantitative research to develop this typology. Kuhn and Culhane hypothesised that there are three categories of 'homelessness'—transient, episodic, and chronic. They tested their typology using administrative data on public shelter

entrance, use, and exit records in New York City (1988–1995) and Philadelphia (1991–1995). In Kuhn and Culhane's (1998) typology, transient or transitionally homeless (shelter users) refers to an individual who experiences some life shock; while in transition, they require the use of a shelter. For our purposes, shelter use is the point of contact. Episodic refers to someone who uses public shelters more than once over a period of time and whose use is for a medium duration of time. Kuhn and Culhane point out that someone who uses shelters episodically will at some point stop using shelters altogether. Both transitional and episodic homeless shelter users tend to have non-acute mental health or substance use disorders, making them less likely

to become chronic shelter users or even shelter dependent. Additionally, transient and episodic shelter users are more likely to get into long-term or stable housing programmes (SROs, public housing, etc.). At the end of the spectrum on their typology, Kuhn and Culhane put chronic shelter users. This refers to those who use shelters more frequently and who spend various amounts of time in shelters.

McAllister et al. (2011) critique the Kuhn and Culhane typology as incomplete. They identify a fourth category, which is long-term and long duration of shelter use. They found that even in the same datasets used by Kuhn and Culhane, there is somewhere near 4% that can be classified within this fourth category. While McAllister et al. don't name this fourth category, I'll use the term 'shelter dependent' to differentiate long-term use and long duration from chronic use, which refers to long-term use and shorter duration.

This quantitative data analysis is so dependent on public shelter use contact that the data becomes unreliable. Again, what do people do between shelter uses? McAllister et al. (2011) also find the data has validity issues in terms of the classification of 30-day periods. They note that these validity issues include the fact that this data doesn't indicate whether or not people are sheltered when they are not registered in a public shelter. Are we making an assumption that when people are not in public shelters, they are rough sleeping? Are they housed through relational networks? Are they travelling? Or perhaps they stay in paid accommodations (long-stay hotels, boarding houses, etc.). This missing data is where this research is methodologically located.

Kim and Garcia (2019) investigated family shelter exits and returns in Salt Lake County, Utah. They found that there were:

1. Structural factors, such as subsidised housing programme enrollment during a period of homelessness;
2. Prior income, education, and employability factors; and
3. Variations in prior residence and exit destination of homeless families, that factored into whether or not they returned to the shelter system.

However, Salt Lake City is decidedly not New York or Philadelphia. Kim and Garcia focused on family homelessness and not individuals. And these studies took place more than a decade apart with major events like September 11, 2001, and the Great Recession of 2008 having taken place. Kim and Garcia's analysis contextualises shelter use (frequency and duration) within a larger landscape of government-subsidised housing programmes and continuums of care. This serves as a useful foundation for my methodological approach and my critique of this definition of transience—that is, frequency and duration of contact in proximity to a fixed point. The reliance on frequency and duration is useful but incomplete.

Methodologically, Kim and Garcia are measuring the number of contacts, and time between contacts or even distance between contacts creates an incomplete picture of what happens between contacts. Also missing in Kim and Garcia's work are two critical shelter features: 1) the shelter's police themselves and 2) the carceral practices (i.e., the culture) of the shelters. As previously mentioned, MAAP and Urban Strategies Council's Anne Janks taught me to critique the shelter system itself because their policies often drive people away. None of this context is considered in the quantitative approach to the use of contact to analyse transience. This is one of the major reasons why I focused on designing a case study. The literature on transience has greatly influenced my methodological approach. Rather than remaining fixed (i.e., working at a shelter), my research is in motion with the transient Black men themselves. Together, as researcher and participant, we interrogate the factors involved in each transition, ethnographically.

## **Conclusion**

The criminology literature is rife with questions and concerns regarding housing. Herbert et al. (2015) led the discourse on questions about reentry and recidivism. In Goffman's 2014 book, *On the Run*, she uses ethnography to illustrate the housing challenges of criminally involved Black men. Goffman illustrates the reliance of criminally involved Black men on

romantic partner cohabitation and relatives during periods of housing transition. Her research participants were highly transient. At any given point in their experiences, they would be living between multiple households. In *Ain't No Makin' It* (2009), sociologist Jay MacLeod conducted ethnographic research with participants in and around the public housing projects in Boston, Massachusetts. He saw them go in and out of documented and undocumented tenancy status while living within and between multiple households; throughout that experience, these participants navigated their proximity to employment and prison.

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 ensured that drug use was criminalised rather than treated medically. In 1988, Congress passed the second Anti-Drug Abuse Act of the 1980s. This second one included the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP), which authorised the disbursement of grants to PHAs to develop and implement programmes to reduce drug use and drug-related crimes in public housing (United States, n.d.). Meanwhile, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act doubled down on Reagan's War on Drugs. The act of 1988 heavily increased sentences for the manufacturing, distribution, and use of illegal drugs. The housing agencies, such as public housing authorities, were encouraged to be compliant and complicit in law enforcement surveillance.

Public housing authorities around the country, including CHA,<sup>29</sup> adopted eviction policies for drug possession, use, and distribution. Many of these new regulations, including those of the CHA, developed zero tolerance policies for anyone convicted of criminal activity.<sup>30</sup> The Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) adopted a policy under the 'Termination of Tenancy by Owner' section that reads, 'The owner [owners? Private? Section 8? Public?] may terminate the tenancy during the term of the lease if any member of the household, a guest or another person under a resident's control commits any of the following types of criminal activity: . . . Any drug-related

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<sup>29</sup> See the information for applicants section of the CHA website retrieved at <https://cambridge-housing.org/applicants/>.

<sup>30</sup> For example, on the CHA website, it says "Disability does not include current use or current addiction to illegal drugs." (<https://cambridge-housing.org/faqs/>).



criminal activity on or near the premises'. In 1999, an amicus brief was filed on behalf of four elderly residents of OHA in the case of *Rucker v. HUD* (535 US 125 (2002)). Their lawyers argued that their eviction was unlawful. Tenants should not be evicted solely on the basis of drug activity involvement of other household members. They lost their case and the eviction stood, showing one of the ways that government-subsidised housing programmes are entangled with the criminal legal system and local law enforcement.

In *The End of Policing*, Alex Vitale (2021) explains that decades of neoliberal austerity measures have meant a decline in the quality of life for the poorest. Local governments have come to rely on armed police to isolate and corner crime and disorder. The police maintain the lines of demarcation; they enforce the margins as hard and strict borders. Naturally, *where* the poor live, the houses and communities they inhabit are of geographic importance to the criminal justice system. The police deploy and employ innovative surveillance techniques within these neighbourhoods.

What I have found at the intersection of housing and policing is deeply punitive. We punish the poor. We designate struggling people undeserving of public resources, and all the while it is more and more difficult for them to have access to a decent and consistent living wage. This is especially true for those in public housing, where the response to precarity is to punish people. In the CHA, for example, if a tenant misses three consecutive rent payments, instead of assistance, an eviction is triggered. Punitive rules from CHA, such as regulations and eligibility requirements, punish people for being poor rather than addressing their needs or interests.

In the U.S., housing transience is the result of the under-valuation of vulnerable people's time and the over-valuation of material things, in the context of which repeated interruptions in essential mechanisms destabilise already vulnerable individuals. Housing transience is the result of perpetual housing instability resulting from unanticipated changes in living

arrangements and a social system that favours the assets of landlords over the sheltering needs of low-income and vulnerable and marginalised individuals. And as anti-homelessness laws are passed and austerity policies continue to under-fund public housing, section 8, and municipal-level housing programmes such as SROs and shelters, where are housing transients expected to go? An abolitionist logic applies here. If we are not funding housing programmes and services, what is the government funding? Gilmore (2022) points to ever more prisons.

## # 3 Methodology

### ### 3.0.1 Introduction

In 2020, the university shut down all in-person fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowing what I know about my target research participants, I understood that a digital ethnography would significantly skew the data away from the hyper-invisible Black male population that I sought to involve. My original project was designed as an alternative enumeration of the census, which was scheduled to take place in 2020. Being that I was unable to conduct fieldwork during the 2020 census, I decided to focus my attention on the housing transience element of the research.

### ### 3.0.2 Reflexive Analysis

I come from a low-income, female-headed, single-parent, African-Caribbean immigrant family. My family immigrated to the United States when I was just a child. At some point our paperwork expired, after a lawyer stole my mother's money without renewing our visas, leaving us stranded and undocumented. Luckily, my mother was tenacious and literate. After about a decade, we were able to regain documented status. A lot of my experiences and fear of law enforcement were established during this era of undocumentedness. After spells of homelessness and transience, we landed in several basement apartments in Cambridge, before settling into public housing. I grew up in the Newtowne Court public housing projects in The Port neighbourhood of Cambridge, Massachusetts. I was surrounded by immigrants and other low-income families. These experiences and my social location have made the logic of the contemporary poor visible to me. Now, I find myself in university classrooms attempting to explain what appear to be anomalies in the logic of the poor, when these things are clear to me because of my lived experience. My father was back in Haiti, the country where I was born. My

mother worked two and sometimes three jobs as a certified nurse's aide, despite being a paediatric nurse back home. Her income working at nursing homes and as a travelling aide paid the bills. In 2005, when I was applying for federal financial aid, I saw my mother's income for the first time, she earned \$32,000 annually. This qualified me for the federal Pell Grant. I come from a low-income background. I grew up in public housing. And I grew up being very fearful of police and other carceral structures. That is how I came to this work.

I am often asked, *why study men?* That is, why study men and *not* women? I am not a Black man. However, as a Black cis-woman, my life has been entangled with the lives of Black men. I struggle with racism along with Black men. I see my gendered treatment as distinct from Black men, but I also see their treatment at the intersection of race and gender as quite distinct from my own. From my social location, because of my race, gender, and class, I can see certain treatment of Black men that is not visible to others. And, from my entanglements with many Black men due to our proximity, I know first hand that how they are treated knocks on to me. This project is designed with my social location in mind and with a consideration for the impacts of the intersection of gender, race, and class on the men who have participated in this study.

### **### 3.0.3 Research Design**

To my knowledge, no research to date has investigated housing transience as a phenomenon via in-depth narratives of African-descended men. Of the range of literature on housing, transience, and African-descended men I have explored, none simply asks Black men *where they live* and *where they have lived*, to contribute spatio-temporal data to an academic archive and toward policy design.

In this project, I seek to find answers to the question *where do Black men live?* To do this, I used two methodological approaches: 1) service-based ethnography and 2) participatory action research (PAR). In this methodology chapter, I will detail my rationale for these two approaches. In addition to this overarching question, I have four sub-questions: 1) What are the

experiences of housing-transient Black men? 2) Do residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity among already housing-transient Black men? 3) What are the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks that house these men?<sup>31</sup> And 4) Who should and does shoulder the burden of payment for this housing insecurity? In this chapter on methodology I will describe my reasoning for approaching these questions as I have.

To begin, it is important to lay out my aims and objectives for this project. They are:

1. To uncover how and why transient Black men live where they do.
2. To show that housing policy design is gendered as well as classed and racialised.
3. To show that housing insecurity and housing transience among low-income African-descended men are politically protracted.
4. To show that housing insecurity, as experienced by African-descended men, puts an inordinate burden on the women in their networks.
5. To show that the burdens are ultimately shared by everyone in the community.
6. To reveal the ways in which housing insecurity among transient Black men is addressed through punitive and carceral systems rather than being addressed at the roots.

Using these methods, I collected the following types of data. The first comes from survey responses. These responses mostly provide demographic information. The second data type encompasses narrative accounts and timelines of events. As the events in this case study were housing transitions, this includes information about the members of the participants' networks. The third type includes various documents and documentation as well as documents with policy language and compliance descriptions. Throughout the process, I kept several notebooks with notes detailing my own observations. These researcher notes are the fourth data type. And lastly, as a member of the participatory action research group, I have access to the PAR meeting notes and correspondences to and between members. These meeting minutes and correspondences make up the bulk of the fifth data type.

In analysing the data from these various sources, I have employed survey content analysis, latent thematic analysis (or what I refer to as keyword thematic analysis), narratives

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<sup>31</sup> How is this gendered? How is this racialised?

analysis and analysis of narrative, document analysis, and content analysis.

To understand the implications and applications of the data analysis, I applied the tenets of counter-storytelling and standpoint epistemology from critical race theory (CRT) in the analysis of both my survey and narrative data. Second, I used the concept of *transience* alongside standpoint epistemology to analyse the narrative data. Third, I used CRT's description of intersectionality. And finally, I used my fundamental framework of abolition to conduct the content analysis of PAR meeting minutes, narratives, and other correspondences to answer my research questions.

### #### 3.0.3.1 Gaps in Research

As mentioned in the literature review, quantitative methods of studying housing insecurity tend to focus on contact as the method of data collection. That is, studies such as Kuhn and Culhane (1998), McAllister et al. (2011), and Colburn and Aldern (2022) used pre-existing datasets such as Single Client Information Management System (SCIMS), census, and continuum of care data. The method most often utilised in qualitative research concerning Black men is ethnography, a method I endorse and take up myself. Ethnography is a multimodal approach to conducting research. Take Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner* (1967), Elijah Anderson's *Code of the Street* (1999), Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk* (1999), or Alice Goffman's *On the Run* (2014) as examples. All of these ethnographies include some interviews and observations. All of these ethnographies describe the housing circumstances of their Black male subjects, illustrating the advantages of this method in the study of this population. However, none consider the impacts of local housing programmes and policies on the housing circumstances of these men. And all four ethnographies thoughtfully consider the proximity of their subjects to police and carceral systems, but none hold a framework that meaningfully considers the harmful impacts of these systems on the housing circumstances of the men. And lastly, while each of these publications are meaningful contemplations of the experiences of their participants, the

analysis is largely conducted by the researchers alone. The analytical process does not necessarily involve the subjects. All of this leaves gaps in the methods and the data.

A data gap refers to the absence of certain data in a study. The gap might be due to the absence of certain demographic groups, under-analysis of existing data, misclassification of paradata (the additional and unanticipated data that accumulates while collecting data), and so on. I begin to fill these gaps, holding the narratives of these men centrally while using the logic of abolition and learning about the housing policies in the locality.

Housing studies research has under-examined African-descended men as a demographic group. For instance, Ezennia and Hoskara (2019) call out the general neglect of key features such as housing sustainability over economic concerns, which account for a preference for quantitative approaches in housing studies (and affordability) versus qualitative approaches that prioritise narratives and encounters. The gaps in the qualitative data collected on housing transience among African-descended men result in a critical knowledge gap. This knowledge gap has a severe impact in the policymaking arena: at best the data that exists is incomplete; at worst, it results in a negative impact on housing-transient individuals. What exists is a practical-knowledge gap, whereby the actual behaviours of the study subjects differ greatly from what is acknowledged by ‘experts’ and ‘professionals’. Actual knowledge of how these African-descended men meet their housing needs is missing from the academic literature. This research project takes up the task of being in motion with housing-transient men in their aim to meet their housing goals.

### **### 3.0.4 Conceptual Frameworks**

The frameworks underpinning the methodological approach of this project are standpoint epistemology, housing transience, prison industrial complex abolition, and critical race theory’s tenets of counter-storytelling and intersectionality. In this section, I present a brief definition of each concept and explain its influence on the project. There are times when these concepts

influenced my data collection process or my use of tools in the field, my methods of analysis or my reading of analysed data. I held all these concepts together to develop the project.

#### **#### 3.0.4.1 Standpoint Epistemology**

As explained in the 'contact' section of the literature review, standpoint theory derives from feminist politics. It describes the process for considering and analysing lived experience. Epistemology refers to the process of *how* we come to know what is known about the world. Feminist standpoint epistemology originated with Marxist feminist philosopher Nancy Hartsock. She explained that in a capitalist society, different groups have differential access to spaces and materials, which generates different experiences and knowledge (1983). Nancy Hartsock, Sandra Harding, and other standpoint theorists primarily looked at gender and class in their analyses (2019). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins merged standpoint with intersectionality to expand the realm of possibilities.

Intersectionality is a framework of analysis that can be operationalised to understand how identity categories, both social and political, converge in an individual's identity and experiences to create advantage and disadvantage in various locations. To advance standpoint epistemology, Hill Collins began with her own intersectional categories of gender, race, and class. With this addition of race, she invited people of all marginalised backgrounds to take up standpoint epistemology. In inviting more categories and experiences, she illustrated that standpoint isn't individual points on a metaphorical graph or a point system of pluses and minuses—instead, she explained that all of this exists in a matrix (Hill Collins, 1990). And in her description of the matrix of domination, she used social location to describe one's proximity to power (or vulnerability).

One's social location is actually a function of multiple axes, including such features as age, ability, sexual orientation, place of origin, and religious affiliation, among myriad others. In order



to understand *social location*, it is important to understand how it differs from *identity*. Identity can be defined as ‘a set of behavioural or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group’. In other words, identity is *who you are*; social location codes *where you are* in relation to power and vulnerability, and where you are in relation to others. Hill Collins explained that various identity categories shift and change in various contexts in relation to power.

I applied Hill Collins’ description of feminist standpoint epistemology to low-income housing-transient African-descended men, which has influenced my understanding of my research participants. I brought in standpoint epistemology, intersectionality, and social location to this project to explain the feminist origins of my thinking. I apply these frameworks to Black men as a population. In using Black feminist thought to examine the social experiences of comrades like Black men, I follow in the footsteps of critical Black feminist pillars like bell hooks.

Sociologist Dorothy Smith (1990) advanced standpoint epistemology in the discipline of sociology. She critiqued classic sociological methods of data collection, analysis, and the notion of objectivity. She argued that subjectivity—perceptions and opinions that emerge from a subject’s viewpoint—is valuable. And she affirmed that there is no such thing as a view from nowhere, that sociology and sociologists should not necessarily value a bird’s eye view, but that a grounded perspective, from a location that acknowledges its proximity to and/or from a location is of utility in sociology. In that, she affirmed previous and simultaneous methodological thinking including Indigenous methodologies and third-world epistemologies. I want to highlight her critique of sociological research that is focused on public life and institutions. She wrote that women’s lives were excluded and invisible to the sociological imagination. They were not visible to classic sociologists, who were mostly men. Her critique centred on the notion that the lives of women were not visible because of their interiority and seeming lack of contact with institutions. In making her critiques, Smith brought me to my take on marginalised Black men, and to

following low-income African-descended men. Through their prolonged periods of housing insecurity and transitions, they are largely invisible to structures and institutions. They are not necessarily making contact with institutions. This may be intentional. This can make them an invisible subject. Standpoint epistemology allows me, someone to whom they are visible from my social location, to share what I can see from where I stand.

Smith also suggested that we should shift our perspective onto the subjects themselves. Sociology needs to acknowledge the research subjects as knowledge holders and producers. Smith focused feminist standpoint theory on methodologies. She stated that people at the margins produce and translate knowledge and that sociological research needs to design inquiries that examine the knowledge that is produced on the margins. My research takes up the task of shifting methodological approaches and affirming these African-descended men as knowledge holders.

#### **#### 3.0.4.2 (Housing) Transience**

As described in the literature review, the concept of transience accounts for spatial (or geographic) location. The concept of transience informed my data collection and analysis process greatly. As I have explained, the subjects were visible to me because of my social location, but opaque or even invisible to others. The invisibilising factor is the fact that they are in motion, i.e., transience. As the census literature described, government entities have a hard time reaching transient populations (De la Puente, 1995). The census struggles with transients methodologically: homeowners are better counted compared with renters, renters are better counted than shelter users, and shelter users are better counted than rough sleepers, and then there are those who still remain uncounted. My examination of *contact* as a method has made me weary of data focused on transient populations making regular contact with social services. My research participants preferred to make contact with their networks before they would make contact with institutions like shelters. Oftentimes, they saw shelters as a last resort. For me, this

makes the data collected through contact with those institutions incomplete and unreliable. This is a gap my research begins to fill.

The concept of transience informed my decision to be in motion with my research participants—that is, to employ ethnography. My objective in selecting this method was to experience what happens between encounters with various social service agencies like shelters. From my lived experience, I could expect to see undocumented tenancies in public housing, transience within section 8 units, and other government-subsidies-programme units. I also expected to see these men outside of these programmes and in the private rental market and in homes owned or rented by members of their networks. Being in motion allowed me to experience all of this first hand.

One of my research questions asks about *who* made up these networks. By *who* I meant, *what were the intersectional categories and the relational ties of these network members* to these transient men. To be in certain confidential locations, I needed to be able to justify my being there with them. I knew from lived experience that if I made myself useful, I would be put to work. If we were doing the work together, we could be in motion together. I could go where they went. I could see what and *who* they saw. Being in motion put me in direct proximity to their networks.

In that way, my standpoint influenced the methodological design too. The standpoints of these men also influenced the design. Being transients in motion, I came into contact with people I knew and people I didn't. I experienced the city from their perspectives. I could see how they were navigating different systems and structures. So, transience then serves as a primary justification for my methodological intervention, service-based episodic ethnography, and participant observation.

### **#### 3.0.4.3 Critical Race Theory: Intersectionality and Counter-Storytelling**

Critical race theory (CRT) began as a legal studies framework for critically examining the

legal construction of race, examining race in socio-legal contexts, and critiquing liberalism in racial reform within critical legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998; Crenshaw, 2011). The term CRT was influenced by Matsuda's text, *Looking to the Bottom* (1987), where she juxtaposed a critical race analysis influenced by Du Bois with the elitist critical legal studies.

It is often said that there are five fundamental tenets of CRT: 1) race is socially constructed and normalised to the point of fixedness; 2) interest convergence—for there to be any change in the status of politically marginalised groups, the change has to be beneficial to the advantaged political group; 3) critique of liberalism, meaning a rejection of race neutrality in law and legal systems; 4) intersectionality—there are many identity categories and they intersect in social and political spaces to influence our lived experiences; and 5) counter-storytelling or the inclusion of counter-accounts of our social realities is an important tool in countering the myths of liberalism and racism (Crenshaw, 2011; Capers, 2014). In this project, I use standpoint epistemology, CRT's intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling as frameworks to gather and analyse my data.

The roots of intersectionality are in legal studies (Crenshaw, 2011). In its analysis of policy impacts, this project returns there. Frank Rudy Cooper's (2012) description of *multi-dimensional intersectionality* outlined examples of analysis of policy and governmental programmes with a critical lens that can hold multiple truths and standpoints at once. The data chapters are examples of multi-dimensional intersectionality as a critical tool for engaging with the narrative data. I used intersectionality to interpret the intersections of gender, race, and class among my research participants, to examine when and where they came into contact with social policy and the prison industrial complex. I also used intersectionality to examine their network members. In the analysis, I looked primarily at municipally governed housing programmes (public housing, section 8, and inclusionary). I examined how gender (race and class) figure in policy design and de facto practices. I asked, what are the eligibility criteria and

reported use (and non-use) of a housing programme (along gendered lines)? In many ways, I explored the cumulative decelerating effects of housing policy on low-income and housing-transient African-descended men. I kept in mind that intersectional locations and identities evolve over time.

I was inspired by a 2011 article entitled 'Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory: Looking Back to Move Forward'. In it, Crenshaw described the social activism that laid the groundwork for CRT's prominence; she used counter-storytelling to do so. Counter-storytelling is a tool that uses narrative to centre and uplift marginalised voices, experiences, and perspectives. It challenges one-dimensional and demeaning characterisations in society and institutions. Counter-storytelling highlights the importance of stories and narrative analysis in law and legal discourse. In this project, I collected and co-constructed narratives of housing experiences from African-descended men themselves to counter the narratives of the deadbeat, super-predator, and violent Black male in the context of housing.

Combined, these tenets have informed my project in the following ways: standpoint epistemology has informed my data collection and narrative construction process. Intersectionality is a theory that undergirds this entire project, the location of my research participants at the intersection of race, gender, and class. In my analysis of the PAR data, I use the concept of interest convergence as it figures in the process of constructing a winnable campaign. My objective in collecting the narratives of these men themselves is toward a counter-narrative with the objective to dispel myths about African-descended men.

#### **#### 3.0.4.4 Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) Abolition**

Abolition is the lens through which I viewed the entire research project. I didn't plan to include it in this project, but these low-income Black men could not seem to tell their stories without mentioning the police and other policing structures. I realised I couldn't complete this

thesis without a framework that adequately considers these structures. And this is perhaps the greatest contribution of this project, the employment of an abolitionist framework.

I previously explained that abolition examines the harmful impacts of the justice system, prisons, policing, and courts, as punitive and surveillance-driven structures (Gilmore, 2022). Holding this central premise, I see my research participants as vulnerable subjects (such as formerly incarcerated people, undocumented or unhoused people, etc.). Abolition as a framework illuminates the *rationale* of these subjects, not as vulnerable subjects but as agents. Abolition makes sense of when, where, and to whom these populations are visible and invisible. In the stories of my research participants, they explicitly or implicitly described the systems they navigate. There are times they steer toward or swerve to avoid these systems. Notably, sociologist Susie Scott's description of the sociology of nothing helped me make sense of this phenomenon.

Scott (2018) looked at emptiness, silences, and invisibility to make sense of what these absences and omissions *do* in society. While in motion with these men, I could see where we didn't or wouldn't go, to avoid detection and visibility from certain structures. I saw where instead they did go and who they saw, even when a simpler path was present. In what they didn't do, I could start to see that there was a harmful system looming overhead, which affected how they were navigating geographies. Outside of the framework of abolition, I could not make sense of their actions and logic. An abolitionist logic helped make sense of traversing back alleys versus main roads, contact with one agency versus another, and of calling this person instead of that person. Again, abolition began to figure through absences.

Abolition also figured in the data. When I spoke with people, they would word something one way versus other simpler ways. Whenever police turned up in the narratives, it was a precipitating incident that led to a housing transition or a period of transience for my participants (See Allen ## 7.1 and Orion ## 7.15). When prison was involved, things became more complex to navigate (See Damien ## 7.4 and Jamal Appendix ## 7.10). They were navigating systems

that put them in harm's way whenever they were visible to the wrong figures and institutions. Several of my research participants were either in jail during our work together, ended up in jail during the project, or had been in jail before working together. They were made all the more precarious as a result. But not all had direct prison involvement.<sup>32</sup> The ones who had not been in jail were navigating the world so as to prevent themselves from ending up there. In that way, abolition as a framework figured in the absences and omissions again. Abolition became the lens through which I could make sense of all of the seemingly illogical actions and events in my experience as a researcher in motion, as well as in the data that I gathered in the end.

### ### 3.0.5 Fieldwork

The first iteration of the design of this research project was constructed in the fall of 2019, before any signs of a pandemic or the latest uprisings of the BLM era. It was set to take place in Boston, Massachusetts. Being from Cambridge, I thought Boston would yield more participants and give me a distance from the research participants that could pass for objectivity. I had also aimed to have this project housed within an organisation with established policies and procedures for engaging in this work. I had reached out to a contact at Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD).<sup>33</sup> I had confirmed that I would do an internship at their Housing Division during the summer of 2020. The internship would be within the homeless outreach team and would involve coordinating a series of housing surgeries around Boston. But two things happened. First, the City of Boston created a new Department of Housing Stability,<sup>34</sup> and ABCD began to restructure their housing services. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the world. Goldsmiths postponed all in-person research. Knowing that my research

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<sup>32</sup> Although everyone had a relative or a friend in prison or jail.

<sup>33</sup> Action for Boston Community Development's website is [https://bostonabcd.org/service\\_categories/housing/](https://bostonabcd.org/service_categories/housing/). Appendix ## 7.34 is the internship confirmation letter at ABCD.

<sup>34</sup> For more information on the City of Boston's Office of Housing Stability, see their website: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/housing/office-housing-stability>.

participants, low-income Black men, were notoriously hard to find, I thought it made sense to postpone my fieldwork to the following year. Meanwhile, in 2020, George Floyd was murdered. The BLM uprisings took place. I joined a group of local activists who founded The Black Response (TBR). And I was propelled into activism in my home city of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In January 2021, TBR was approached by local housing organisations to weigh in on a critical discussion about a proposed zoning petition, the Missing Middle. As TBR's housing policy researcher, I was asked to review the zoning petition and to write our response to it. My response to the zoning petition, entitled ““Missing middle” fails for housing affordability”<sup>35</sup> was published. It received praise from many opponents of the zoning petition. And just like that, I was thrust into fieldwork. TBR developed a working group to examine the intersection of housing and policing. The working group evolved into my PAR group and eventually became the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC).<sup>36</sup> The fieldwork evolved to be something entirely different from the original project design. As circumstances shifted, new questions emerged and my approaches evolved.

### **#### 3.0.5.1 Service-based Ethnography & Participant Observation**

The key means of data collection among the target population was service-based ethnography with participant observation. What I mean by service-based ethnography is that as a researcher, I placed myself into locations that form part of the daily lives of my research participants (Smith, 2019). Observation allowed me to witness and describe phenomena using my own senses (Erlandson et al., 1993). I took up this approach to be in service to my research participants and to avoid recreating the extractive history of research among marginalised

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<sup>35</sup> Published in the *Cambridge Day* online newspaper. Found at <https://www.cambridgeday.com/2021/02/15/black-response-cambridge-on-upzoning-petition-missing-middle-fails-for-housing-affordability/>.

<sup>36</sup> For more information, see [www.cambridgehousingjustice.com](http://www.cambridgehousingjustice.com).



populations. Undertaking this research allowed me to serve the community while studying it. I served as a community responder. I designed the community responder position to support my research participants with defining and meeting a housing goal. This would typically fall within action research, being that it was a study being carried out in the course of an occupation. However, the organisation I worked in sought to develop the role of community responders. Therefore, I thought this was more of a *study of service* rather than the *action of service*. In any case, this position allowed for an ethnographic process that included in-depth episodic interviews and participant observation to take place during the process of collecting documentation to be submitted for the housing application process (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998).

For this project, I conducted my first round of in-person service-based ethnographic fieldwork from May 2021 to November 2021. During that time, I was physically on location in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with my research participants. I took a break from fieldwork from mid-September through November 2021. I returned for a second round of fieldwork in November 2021 and concluded data collection among my research participants in May 2022. I have remained in touch with research participants throughout the writing process.

### **#### 3.0.5.2 Target Demographic**

The target demographic population for participants of the deconstructed housing surgery portion of this project were low-income African-descended men 18–64 years old. For the purposes of this project, low-income is defined as less than 60% AMI in Cambridge, which is \$95,000 (MIT Media Lab).<sup>37</sup> The ideal research participants were those earning \$57,000 or less (at the time of housing insecurity).

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<sup>37</sup> This data was acquired from Data USA.  
Found at <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/cambridge-ma/>.

For the purpose of this project, Black or African-descent includes African-Americans as well as recent and first/second-generation African migrants from the African continent, Caribbean migrants, and third culture kids.<sup>38</sup> I defined men as those who self disclosed 'male' as their biological sex and did not describe themselves as trans or non-binary. It is possible for there to have been trans identifying participants, however this information was not disclosed to me. The research participants must have had at least one past legally verifiable residence in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ideally in their adult life. Because the research participants had to be connected to residential programmes in Cambridge, they needed to have ties to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The research participants were those who have experienced (and/or continue to experience) housing-related hardship. I anticipated the following types of hardships: poor tenant-landlord relationships, no current identification, poor credit history, eviction records, liens or rent arrears, large gaps in employment and housing histories, as well as a lack of knowledge of and challenges navigating eligibility requirements for social housing programmes. As a community responder, I was meant to find resources to address each of these and other housing problems.

### **#### 3.0.5.3 Recruiting Research Participants**

I launched the outreach for participants via email (see Appendix ## 7.28). After sending out the initial email to my contacts, I received several messages from friends asking if I needed support with sharing the message out to a wider audience. I decided to ask them to wait. I had one or two people send out the message at a time. I managed to slow down the responses to a manageable capacity.

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<sup>38</sup> Coined by sociologist Ruth Useem, the term 'third culture kid' refers to a child who grows up in a culture different from the culture their parents grew up in.

My two original sources of research participants came from these two methods: outreach to friends and talking to strangers. From there, it snowballed. I met with 41 men, 25 of whom consented to participate in the project.

#### #### 3.0.5.4 Service-based Ethnography

Each research participant completed a demographic survey (see Appendix ## 7.27). The survey was administered on printed paper. The survey was sometimes self-administered, at other times, it was researcher administered.<sup>39</sup> There were times when the respondent began to administer the survey, but when the researcher reviewed the document to verify whether all of the questions were answered, the researcher would administer the missing questions in the survey. The data gathered were the survey responses as well as the notes they made on the survey paper.

Additionally, I conducted semi-structured interviews. I created a list of questions that I asked each participant. As relevant topics came up in different interviews, I updated the list. As much as possible I went back to each participant to ask them the new questions. The primary objective of the interviews was to develop a coherent timeline for the narrative toward the answer to the question: *where have you lived?* So, these interviews were conducted episodically. The term episodic ethnography comes from Craig Gurney (1997), where he describes that an episode is part of a whole story. In collecting stories in episodes, this process allows participants time to recover in between each affective episode.

Many of my research participants refused to be recorded. In those cases I did not have transcripts or recordings of the interviews. Being that we were in motion most of the time, the data I gathered were largely short notes and keywords. As a result, I needed help from the men

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<sup>39</sup> The process was random. Sometimes, the participant would ask to see my folder and begin to complete the forms in the folder on their own. Other times, they insisted I read everything to them.

to construct the data into a usable format, narratives. Combined, these methods yielded data in the form of narratives and researcher notes (taken in both the documents in each participant's folder as well as in my researcher notebook).

### **#### 3.0.5.5 Participatory Action Research**

A type of 'action' research (meaning it takes place within an activity), participatory action research (PAR) is a framework for conducting research with research participants and not simply on or about them. Additionally, PAR actively acknowledges and attempts interventions in systems that create disparities. This is done while, collectively, researchers and participants are learning about structural forces that create inequalities (Akom, 2009). For this project, my PAR group was called the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC). From January 2021 to December 2023, I served as a coordinating committee member of the CHJC. The CHJC met fortnightly to discuss Cambridge housing policy and develop a progressive platform to address housing injustice in the city. We had representatives from various organisations throughout the city as well as community members concerned about housing issues in Cambridge from a progressive or leftist perspective. In our discussions, CHJC members pointed to the links between policing and housing in Cambridge. While I saw how abolition figured in the project through the ways my research participants navigated the PIC, it was the process of learning with the CHJC that allowed me to seriously consider the use of abolition as a conceptual framework for the entire project.

We had presentations from city councillors and state representatives, as well as administrators from other organisations who came to present on various housing issues. When the meetings were available to the public over Zoom, I invited my research participants to attend. Throughout my fieldwork, the PAR group served three main purposes: 1) it is where I presented updates and challenges that research participants were facing concerning housing;

2) this group connected me to resources that I used to support the research participants; and 3) it is where I came to learn about housing policy and programmes in the city. In the first data chapter, I'll explain one more function of the CHJC, which was to campaign to make changes to housing policy.

CHJC is my PAR group, not because they are a group of low-income African-descended men—the majority are not Black men—but because they are a group of community members concerned with the poor housing stock and options for low-income African-descended men and others in our community. They formed the group because they wanted to do something about this and other housing problems concerning the working class. As a PAR group, through discussions and meeting notes, they were also grappling with the question *where do Black men live?* The CHJC created the group to learn more about these problems and to develop campaigns to address the problems head on. In that way, they are impacted by the issue indirectly; I will address this point directly in the *Burden on Community* chapter. I learned from their process and gathered quotes from the meeting notes as responses to research questions.

#### **#### 3.0.5.6 Saturation**

My research participants employed interesting and innovative ways to meet their housing needs (e.g., the use of dating apps, sleeping in their cars, Airbnbs, and many more). I dive into the ways they meet their housing needs in my data chapters. However, after my fieldwork, I do not believe I reached saturation. Saturation refers to the process of collecting data until no more variances exist in the new data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). There were more people, stories, innovations and policies that sprung up from each encounter. I felt as though there were still more stories beyond the ones I gathered.

My inability to support certain precarious populations suggests to me that there are those with even greater needs than those I have reached. In the future, my research design needs to

be amended to try to reach and support these populations. To reach saturation, more stories need to be collected. More experiences need to be further probed. Trust needs further cultivation. In looking at those I have not reached, I recognize that I didn't reach saturation with this research design and with the resources I had.

### **### 3.0.6 Data and Data Analysis**

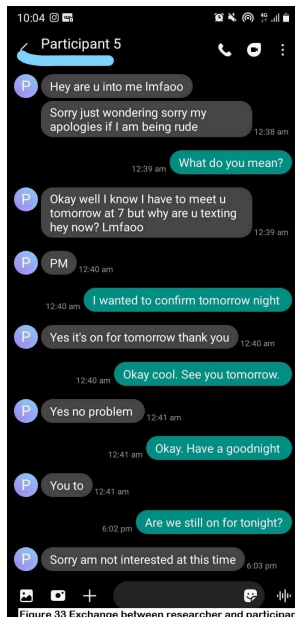
#### **#### 3.0.6.1 Summary of Participants**

During my fieldwork, I worked as a community responder to 41 African-descended men. I received consent forms from 25 participants. During the formal interviews, we went over the aims and approaches of the project. They received the information sheet, and they signed the consent forms, completed the demographic survey (Appendix ## 7.29), and constructed the preliminary timeline of their housing transitions. While some research participants sought me out to participate in the project and signed the consent forms right away, several participants stated outright discomfort with academic research but signed the consent forms after receiving support through the project. This is evidenced in the varying dates on the consent forms—some signed as late as March 2023.

According to my diary, I had over 65 semi-formal episodic in-person or electronic interviews with 41 potential participants. This excludes all phone conversations. This doesn't include the encounters that were not noted in my diary because they happened by accident or there was some emergency; these things happened very frequently during fieldwork. And this doesn't include our first encounters. By the end of the data collection period, 25 participants signed consent forms. The choice of 20–25 participants for in-depth interviews is within the range proposed by Bryman (2012).

### ##### 3.0.6.1.1 The Missing Participants

I encountered 41 men in the field, but only 25 submitted consent forms. What happened to the other 16?



**Incarceration:** Two participants went to prison before they returned the signed forms. I learned about their incarceration from phone calls with their female partners. One was already in jail. I never received his consent form. The documents and articles I sent were intercepted, and he never received them. He suggested as much during a phone discussion. So, three were incarcerated.

**First contact only:** There was one man who lived as an undocumented tenant of his mother's public housing apartment. However, instead of participating in the project to help meet his housing needs, he called and cancelled our official meeting because he thought I might have been romantically interested in him. I asked him to put his withdrawal in writing. He sent a text. He did not actually want to participate in the project.

One of my research participants introduced me to his coworker when I went to drop off some paperwork to him. He told the coworker that I could help with housing stuff because I was helping him. We had a brief conversation outside during his cigarette break. We scheduled a time to meet again, but he didn't turn up. A friend had thrown a party at a bar for me to meet potential research participants. I went for a walk with a man. We talked extensively about his housing needs. We exchanged contact details, but he ignored my messages to follow up.

Participant #13, as he was labelled in my phone contacts, was a friend of a female friend who received my solicitation email. She forwarded the email to him, and he reached out to me. But we both neglected to follow through on his project while I was in the field. Since leaving the

field, he has been in touch and we have reconnected with a plan to help him purchase a home. He didn't sign a consent form.

I met with two men who liked the idea of the project. They asked for suggestions on what to do. I got their paperwork together, printed out documents for them, and then they decided not to participate formally with the project. They did not sign the consent forms.

There was a man that I met at a fried chicken restaurant one night. Cambridge being small, it turns out he was a friend of a friend. We had gone to the same high school, but he was a few years older than me. We got to chatting while waiting for our food. I told him about my project. He told me about his housing situation. We made a plan to meet up, but we had to cancel because our mutual friend had a police-related housing crisis the night we were going to meet up. We didn't get to the signing of papers. Neither of us followed up.

I met a group of three young men. They all agreed to be interviewed and to participate. Two of them were able to find the time before I left, Orion and Lamonte. I didn't meet with the third one. I left the field before we could find a date and time that worked. This third man was mistrustful of Zoom and didn't feel comfortable discussing his situation on the internet because he has a history of foster care and youth incarceration. I was in touch with some people who were able to support his housing needs nonetheless. But I was informed that he was returned to juvenile detention after the housing option didn't work out. In total, seven had first contact only.

### **Misfits**

One man, participant #11, was keen to participate; his friend whom I had interviewed suggested he reach out to me because his situation fit the themes that we had discussed. We spoke on several occasions, but I thought he was not a good fit. He had left the United States and was living in South America in an Airbnb. He had been living there for years. We had a few conversations before I thought this was outside of the scope of the case study and decided not to pursue it.



I met a man at The Democracy Center after an event. We got to chatting in the kitchen over leftover food. He told me about his housing issues. I told him about my project. He sounded interested but he didn't identify as Black or African-descended. I had racialised him as Black, but he didn't self identify that way. So, he didn't fit.

I had three conversations with another man. The first conversation was over the phone for three hours. We were connected through a friend of a friend. He is a formerly incarcerated person who now works with others from prisons. He wanted to know more about the project. He had participated in other research projects and thought he would advise me on how to do this project. During the second conversation he gave me suggestions on other researchers who were concerned with similar topics, mostly the topic of incarceration. In the last conversation, he told me that he couldn't connect me to the people he originally hoped to connect me with. We both realised that this was a misfit. I was looking for a research participant in him, not an advisor. He had worked as an advisor to similar projects and misunderstood the request from his friend. We parted without him signing the consent forms. Four men I met did not fit the research aims.

### **What I Couldn't Do**

There were two people whom I genuinely could not help through my project. One was a man who was undocumented and orphaned, and the shelter where he had been staying was closing down. He had no identification, no letter of reference from the shelter, and no formal income. I did not have the resources to support him. He recognised this too. He didn't come back and didn't return any of my calls when I tried to refer him to other services.

The other was a man who had two jobs, one hourly position and the other job was as an Uber driver in the gig economy—I actually met him in an Uber. He was excited to hear about my project. He was living in an unfinished basement apartment and was paying roughly \$600 per month. He said there was a bathroom and a kitchenette with a cooktop. He would have loved to

move out to something formal, but the options I presented him with did not work for him. He asked me why he should change his informal living situation to pay *more* than he was currently paying. None of the existing subsidised programmes made sense for him. He was a single, able-bodied man—he didn't qualify for public housing and he didn't have a housing emergency. Other programmes like the inclusionary housing programme and the Just-A-Start programme were too expensive. He could not afford to pay between \$1,100–\$2,500 in monthly rent. His income was insufficient because he had to pay child support.

There was one man I chose not to help. He was keen to participate in the project, but the initial conversation raised some red flags. First, he admitted to me that he was a perpetrator of domestic violence—he didn't express remorse. Then he began to insist that we meet in secluded spaces, like his bedroom in his shared apartment and in his car late at night. I feared for my own safety. I didn't continue to offer my services. I also got the impression that he wasn't telling the entire truth, and he would manoeuvre his way out of answering probing questions by becoming aggressive. Of my 41 participants, this was the only one in whose presence I was left feeling uneasy and unsafe.

### **What I Didn't Learn**

Before entering this field, I prepared myself for the known knowns (housing insecurity, couch surfing, shelter and rough sleeping homelessness, and so on). There were also some known unknowns (housing transience—those living between multiple households, the role of policy design and eligibility requirements on the gender of social-subsidised housing programmes, and so on). But there were of course, unknown unknowns. In describing and thinking about the men who didn't participate I have been exposed to some of these unknowns. I want to learn from the non-participants, *what didn't I learn?*

There are some commonalities, at least from my perspective, among non-participants: the most pronounced being the level of precariousness. For the undocumented, those with the lowest incomes, and those between stints in prison, my ability to provide support was limited.

This is partly by design—that is, the design of my research project. For example, the community members who allocated resources to my research participants had stipulations for the ways money could be allocated to precarious research participants. And in some instances, they also had clear guidelines for whom they did not find deserving. And this is also by the design of the eligibility requirements of the housing programmes that exist in the city (and the ones that I learned about in preparation for fieldwork). But of course the biggest limitation came in the design of punitive structures. Armed with meagre community support and knowledge of local housing programmes, *how much could I truly help people entangled in the carceral system?*

What could I do for someone with no documents? ‘Undocumented-ness’ was a phenomenon that was more complex and pervasive in Cambridge than I ever expected. There were two types of undocumented-ness that I came across. First were those without proof of legal status and permission to be in the United States. Without documentation, I could not find legal housing or suggest programmes for these folks. The second type were those without identification and with large gaps in housing and credit histories. I was prepared to support these populations. I had asked permission from funders to allocate funding to the acquisition of the identification paperwork. I had also designed the project so that I could connect community members with means (and available apartments) to participants with gaps in their housing histories (without identifying them as research participants). I could not support community members with no formal income stream, although I tried. I had to amend my plan to support participants working in the gig economy.

My takeaway is that this study is a small piece of a greater story. However, I do believe that I have touched a boundary, a periphery. I was able to capture stories of some of the most

marginalised Black men in this affluent city. My research does not illuminate the entire story of precarity here, but it does

... need to consent to the following activities:

	Activities	Initials
1	I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have received answers to my questions that are satisfactory.	
2	I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project after 31 December 2021. I agree to take part on this basis.	
3	I agree to the interview being audio recorded. I also understand that I may stop the audio recording at any point without any explanation needed.	X
5	I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals and disseminated in other research outputs.	
6	I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the Goldsmiths, University of London or regulatory	

contribute to the scholarship and archive of the housing experiences of low-income African-descended men, through my specific lens in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### ### 3.0.7 Co-Constructing Narratives

Going into this project, I knew I would work with narrative in some form, because of my commitment to counter-storytelling. However, the fact that my research participants refused to be recorded shifted the process by which I would come to use narrative. Only 2 out of 41 consented to audio recording. I was left with only two transcripts. This left me with very few options for the format of my data.

I was informed greatly by Brian Alleyne's *Narrative Networks* in the process of both constructing and analysing narrative data. I use Alleyne's (2014) definition of narrative to make sense of my data. He writes, narrative is 'a text that conveys a sequence of events with an obvious or implied causal connection among those events'. As I had two forms of data collection, which yielded two sets of data, the forms of narrative analysis were also very different. The PAR process, out of which I crafted the Burden on Community findings chapter, utilises the narrative analysis format. That is, it displays data through narrative form. Toward the construction of my narrative data, from the ethnographic process, I traced the life course of research participants by focusing primarily on the ways that housing transitions figured in their stories. There were five types of data that were used to construct participant narratives: 1) the timelines of housing histories of my research participants, 2) handwritten notes by the participants on the printed demographic surveys, 3) handwritten research notes in my notebook, 4) handwritten timelines co-constructed by both the participant and the researcher, and 5) the artefacts, such as SMS, emails, and verification materials and housing applications that we collected together during the process.

### **#### 3.0.7.1 Timelines**

The timelines were enormously useful tools. Timeline analysis enables researchers and participants to lay out information collected in a chronological arrangement according to the date in time when they occurred (Marshall, 2019). 'Timeline' may be defined as life events laid out in some visual sort of chronological arrangement; the events laid out hold some significance or meaning to the life-story (Kolar et al., 2015). Creation of timelines facilitated active engagement of participants through reflection on major life events and through visual aspects by drawing the events on paper (Chen, 2018). Ahmad, Chan, and Erikson (2015) have said the use of timelines encourages rapport building between researcher and participants. These tools also allow participants to become navigators of their own experiences. Furthermore, the timeline writing process involved in talking through the highs-and-lows of life-stories may provide positive closure for those with trauma in their past (Kolar et al., 2015). Most of my research participants didn't 'draw' out the timelines the way that I expected. Instead, they noted the month and the year when an event took place. Sometimes, they drew lines between an event, a date, or a note to show they were connected. They also drew lines when they recalled an event that they would account for in the margins. While I would have loved to share the images of these timelines, I worry they could be identifiable.

### **#### 3.0.7.2 Constructing Narratives from Timelines**

The timelines served as a base for constructing the narratives. After typing out what was written in the timelines, I wove in the details from other data. In my handwritten notes, I wrote out quotes from the participants. As they were themselves writing out the timeline, I was free to take extensive notes as they spoke. With this preliminary narrative, I used subsequent meetings to follow up on things that came up during the first iteration of the narrative. As they would say things or edit things, I would revise the narrative. I repeated this process as many times as they would let me. This was the construction process. The materials they used to apply for housing

programmes verified the narrative they told and the explanation for the choices they made. I used the episodic interviews in the ethnographic method to inform the narrative construction and the data analysis.

The first drafts of the narratives were quite boring to read. So, I sent each participant their own draft narrative. Their standpoints added textual features to the narratives; note the syntax and rhetoric (Alleyne, 2014) (see Quintin ## 7.18 and Grant ## 7.7). They would add in introductions or snappy transition words to make it sound more like them in real life. Several found the chunks of their stories too big or too small to illustrate meaning. There were some instances where the research participants selected a different section of their story to highlight. In those cases, I ended up with two or more narratives from the same participant (See Orion Appendix ## 7.15). There were some people who consented to receiving their narratives over email. Others preferred to have a printed copy to review. Some people preferred to review the printed copy together. Others preferred to watch me make the edits and then give them the printed copy of the version that we worked on together.

In a few cases, the people worried that their narratives would be recognisable. The details were too specific. I had conducted some interviews out of state, in Baltimore, Providence, Stamford, New York, and Philadelphia. I constructed some narratives out of those interviews. I let the Cambridge-based participants read through those narratives and choose some details to swap out. They swapped things like the geographic regions where they came from, their professions, and the number of siblings they had. I was able to complete this process with 12 of 25 research participants.

Notably, Carl disappeared for large swaths of time during the process. Jamal was in prison during the time we were working together. Eric was shot in the head before he could complete the process. There were people who conducted the interviews partially in English and in another language. I still shared the narratives with them, but I didn't have the capacity to

translate or have them translated back to the native languages. Those narratives are not as scrupulously co-constructed.

### **### 3.0.8 Analysis by Chapter**

After collecting my data, I needed to analyse it and extract meaning from it. In the next part of this methodology, I will describe the objective and data, name the methods, and describe the process of analysis for each upcoming findings chapter.

#### **#### 3.0.8.1 Chapter 1: Where Do Black Men Live?**

The objective of the first chapter is to display the data from the ethnographic process, providing a preliminary analysis of the data to make sense of the other chapters and the questions they answer. The research question that is answered in this chapter is the overarching question: *where do Black men live?* For this chapter, I used the survey data in table form. In addition to the survey data, I read through the narratives and coded them for themes. This process is a sort of latent content analysis; a process by which a researcher may interpret hidden meaning within a text (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The list of themes included parenthood/family, drugs/alcohol, long-term hotel/boarded house and many more (see partial keyword analysis table in Appendix ## 7.30). In addition to identifying the themes, I also identified the sentence(s) in the narratives where the theme or keyword is mentioned. From there, I began to identify the commonalities between participants. I created tables to identify which participant shared which experiences or themes, as well as the examples mentioned. Take the example of precipitating incidents (events before transitions and transience), these are core narrative features of the text (Alleyne, 2014). Some types of precipitating incidents include disputes, eviction, prison, school, or work. Other examples include the mentioning of housing programmes and policies. That is how I came to focus on the three policies: public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary housing.

Using a word bank developed from the relationships illustrated in the first chart (father, friend, roommate, etc.), I used the Python glob script that reads Word documents. I fed each of the 25 narratives, one for each participant. In some cases, where there were two or more narratives (Jamal, Orion, etc.), I combined the narratives into one document for that participant. In the end, I was left with an output for each participant. The output had the number of times each keyword from the word bank was mentioned in the narrative. I put the keyword data into an excel document and used the excel document to create graphs that help visualise the data described in the chapter.

I pulled eight themes that are present across the 25 narratives that came out of the keyword analysis. The terms were not consistent across the research participants, although once I was introduced to a theme three or more times, I took the term and asked the others about it. However, during my analysis, I read literature that helped me to settle into the use of certain terms that I use consistently in the data chapter. These eight themes that factor in the narratives are: 1) incidents precipitating housing transience, 2) fatherhood, 3) homeownership, 4) technology—as in working in the tech industry and the ways that technology figured in the project, 5) government entities and non-profit organisations—the ways that my research participants described their relationships to and uses of these institutions, 6) the prison industrial complex—which includes police and prisons, as well as 7) how the absences of the prison industrial complex influenced their lives and the decisions they made, and lastly 8) colleges and universities.

The formal and informal ways that these men meet their housing needs are pulled from their narratives (Appendices ## 7.1–7.26). In this section, I conduct a thematic analysis of the methods employed by the men to meet their housing needs. To do this, I use Pollio and Hoolachan's descriptions of the four uses of housing—that is, a place: 1) as a legal permanent address, 2) to receive correspondence, 3) to store belongings, and 4) to sleep. I look at how the men address these different housing needs in their narratives. I excavate approaches which



include the use of post office boxes for correspondences and the use of single room occupancy (SRO) units, basement apartments, and Airbnbs to sleep.

For the analysis, I bring up the frameworks of abolition and intersectionality to answer the overarching question, *where do Black men live?* And the secondary question, *what are the experiences of housing-transient Black men?* With these questions answered, I transition to the next chapter. In answering the overarching question right away, the reader is able to hold the experiences of the participants as I go on to answer the other three research questions.

### **#### 3.0.8.2 Chapter 2: Burden on Community**

In this chapter, I will answer the question: do residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity among already housing-transient Black men? The objective of this chapter is to narrate the impacts of housing transience among low-income Black men to the larger community. To illustrate these impacts, I use the data gathered primarily from the PAR process (meetings notes, discussion notes, email, and co-construction). This collection of narrative material, sequenced from the materials themselves, allows me to construct a master narrative to extract meaning from and project meaning onto (Alleyne, 2014). In this chapter, I use narrative analysis.

This chapter focuses on discussions among members of the participatory action research group, the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC). This chapter's data is taken from a series of discussions that took place to construct a winnable campaign. For this chapter, the data includes meeting notes, policy language, and other artefacts (powerpoint presentation language, emails from CHJC members, etc.). The data in this chapter is quite technical. The discussions, as they relate to housing-transient Black men, concerned the inclusionary zoning housing programme's eligibility requirements, as well as a campaign to change the eligibility criteria so as to take into account the housing needs of African-descended men. This level of

detail is necessary to make sense of the complex challenge and the ultimate burden on the larger community.

For this thesis, I try to anonymise all participants, including the members of the CHJC. In the development of this chapter, I shared a non-anonymised draft with the members of the CHJC in groups of twos and threes. They went into the document and read through it. They shared comments, notes, and verified my accounts and interpretations of events. These notes and suggestions informed the next iterations of the chapter. This was therefore a chapter that was co-constructed with the members of the CHJC.

The research question that this chapter seeks to answer is, *who should shoulder the burden of payment with regards to housing low-income Black men?* In their attempt to construct a winnable campaign, CHJC introduces us to three potential bearers of burden: the individuals, the developers/management companies, and the government. However, the process outlined in the chapter attempts to show the burden on the community. Missing from this analysis is the burden on people much closer to the research participants, their networks.

### **#### 3.0.8.3 Chapter 3: Burden on Networks**

The objective of this chapter is to answer the question, *what are the intersectional categories and the relational ties of the networks that house these men?* This chapter uses a version of network analysis to do this. Social network analysis aims to produce and analyse 'relational' data (Edwards, 2010). John Scott (1998) explained that social network analysis has been used in the studies of kinship structure, social mobility, deviant groups, and other areas. Historically a quantitative tool, mixed methods have been used by social scientists to generate 'networks' by mapping relational ties. I use Barry Wellman's (2018) process to draw connections between the men in the study, members of the social networks that they draw upon in securing housing, and the policies that govern that housing.

Network analysis illustrates social ties between agentic figures (Edwards, 2010). Goffman (2014) alludes to the use of network analysis by police to trace the potential locations of felons on the run and the use of community policing to keep track of social connections. This project used timelines as a tool for mapping relational ties and identity markers to develop a 'social network' of those who house the transient (Hawe et al., 2004).

I constructed network and narrative charts based on the narratives. I isolated nodes for relationships to members in their networks and drew connective lines, or edges, to different policies. These charts operated as visual trackers for the analysis of changes in housing circumstances in relation to their relationships. I also shared an anonymised draft of it with the research participants one at a time. Several of the research participants chose to share the document with their loved ones and cohabiting partners. They sent feedback, notes, and highlights from what they had read. Their notes were incorporated in the next iteration of the chapter.

#### **#### 3.0.8.4 Chapter 4: Burden on Men**

The fourth chapter is *The Burden on Men*. This engages with the data and theories presented in the previous chapters. The objective of this chapter is to discuss and present the burdens the men themselves bear. While the first findings chapter, *Where Do Black Men Live?*, engages to a limited extent with the research question, *what are the experiences of housing-transient Black men?*, this final discussion uses five types of burdens to present the burdens they bear. The burdens discussed are administrative burdens, rental cost-burdens, the burden of carcerality, the burden of alienation and the burden of invisibility.

I begin with the concept of administrative burden. I use the typology of administrative burdens, as described by Pamela Herd and Donald Moynihan, as well as Annie Lowrey's concept of the 'time tax' and my own understanding of 'real punitive burdens' to analyse the

burdens of government-subsidised housing programmes and the men's housing needs on the men themselves.

Given the subject of housing and the housing crisis, it was crucial that this chapter engage with the notion of rent burden. However, informed by the narrative data and researcher notes, I present how rent cost-burden figures in the housing challenges experienced by these men and how it contributes to the prolonging of their housing insecurity.

The third type of burden is the burden of carcerality, a term that I created. The objective of this section is to illustrate the burdens of navigating the surveillance state, which saddles these men with further burdens beyond their housing needs and social responsibilities. I use existing academic literature as well as the narrative data and researcher notes throughout this part of this chapter.

The fourth and final burden is alienation. After a brief literature review on alienation, looking primarily at Marxist descriptions of alienation, this part refers back to the data and discussion presented in the networks chapter to illustrate how these burdens cause alienation and estrangement. From the narratives, I look at the impacts of relational deterioration, the loss of leisure time, and the inability to self-actualize in a Maslowian frame.

This chapter ends with a summary of the arguments and findings of the project.

### **### 3.0.9 Concerns and Limitations**

The politics of the post-2020 BLM uprisings have guided my approach, methods, and methodology, which have shaped the outcomes and outputs of this project. This project takes a Black feminist radical abolitionist approach. Undoubtedly, other approaches guided by other politics and frameworks could be applied. Using the politics of abolition and Black feminism as frameworks has significantly impacted the analyses; other approaches and/or politics might have yielded significantly different results and interpretations.

While in theory this project can be replicated—that is, someone may choose to examine *where African-descended men live* using ethnography and participant observation—the major caveat to that possibility is the temporal one. This project took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The housing moratoria impacted the circumstances of these men, as well as the housing circumstances of the people who make up their networks. Any replication will take place under different public health, economic, and political conditions.

The geographic location is another consideration. In focusing on Cambridge, Massachusetts, and not a large city like Boston, I was able to have closer relationships to research participants. There were not many degrees of separation between myself and research participants. This allowed me to build trust with people relatively quickly.

#### **#### 3.0.9.1 The Limitations of Practice**

The project served some of the community's most marginalised members. In order to serve them, we needed to hold in confidentiality aspects of their needs that cannot be leaked or shared with external entities. Some people had questions and needs that can only be addressed in legal grey areas.<sup>40</sup> This is a limitation in the practice of my research. In certain instances, I cannot name the specifics of the requests or the solutions proposed because it would expose a grey zone, effectively a loophole that could be closed. And, as I explained in the literature review, the participants, and their networks, were experts in their social location. Their social locations included understanding the grey areas that allowed them to navigate the systems. Throughout this thesis, I have had to construct some boundaries around what I can and cannot describe in this work about my service. I need to draw these boundaries so that I can be clear about the scope and depth of the challenges of serving these populations without

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<sup>40</sup> For example, it is illegal to hire undocumented workers. It is perfectly legal to hire an LLC as a consultant. The LLC would submit their EIN number, not the individual workers' social security numbers. This means that we could hire an LLC that is owned by undocumented workers.

exposing them to dangers that come with unwanted visibility. This was a significant limitation on the data I presented, especially in the network analysis.

#### **#### 3.0.9.2 Not Statistically Representative**

This project and its data are not statistically representative. That is, 41 African-descended male research participants are not a great percentage of the demographics of the City of Cambridge. The Census Bureau placed the overall population of Cambridge at 117,090 (collected in 2020, released in 2021).<sup>41</sup> According to the same data source, roughly 10.6% of the population is Black (roughly 12,412). If roughly half are men, there are around 6,206 Black men in Cambridge. This means my research participants only make up 0.66% of the Black male population in Cambridge. However, given the range of income and housing security in Cambridge, I do think my research participants are representative of the least housing-secure Black men in Cambridge. So, this sample may be statistically representative of the target group, low-income African-descended men.

#### **### 3.0.10 Conclusion**

The overarching research question of this project is *where do Black men live?* I sought to answer that question using two methodological approaches, service-based ethnography and participatory action research. The service-based ethnography allowed me to collect narrative data directly from the men themselves; whereas the PAR process allowed me to learn the details of the policies and collect data from concerned community members.

In this Methodology section, I have described the project's aims, questions, methods, data, data analysis, and conceptual frameworks. The six elements of research design are

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/factsandmaps/demographicfaq>

described by Maxwell in *Qualitative Research Design* (2013).<sup>42</sup> In making clear my aims, I was able to formulate research questions, and select research methods that would yield the data to answer those questions. Both the conceptual frameworks and methods of analysis provided the epistemological framework to make sense of the data and helped in answering the overarching question, *where do Black men live?*

I explained how standpoint epistemology influenced data collection, as well as methods of analysis and data displays. I have described how specific tenets of critical race theory, i.e., intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling, factored in my reading of the policies and their influences on the lives of my research participants. And significantly, I have noted that abolition served as the overarching epistemological framework, providing links between gaps in the data and allowing me to make sense of important details that might otherwise look insignificant.

In the part on the methods of analysis, I outline all four of the findings chapters. To be clear, I explained that in Chapter 1: *Where Do Black Men Live?*, I answer the overarching question and the title of both the chapter and this thesis. In Chapter 2: *The Burden on Community*, I engage with two research questions, 1) Do residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity among already housing-transient Black men? And 2) Who should shoulder the burden of payment with regards to the housing insecurity of low-income African-descended men? In Chapter 3: *The Burden on Networks*, I seek to answer the research question, *what are the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks that house transient Black men?* In answering this question, I engage with the question, *who shoulders the burden of payment?* And in Chapter 4: *The Burden on Men*, I

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<sup>42</sup> Please note that Maxwell's actual diagram uses the following terms: research questions, methods, conceptual frameworks, goals, and validity. I make some substitutions: for goals, I use aims and objectives, and for validity, I use methods of analysis. I also include the type of data gathered as an element. This leaves me with six elements.

answer the question, *what are the experiences of housing-transient Black men?* In doing that, I engage with the question, *who shoulders the burden of payment?*

My research methods affirm my reflexive analysis. I am not an African-descended man, but from my standpoint, my social location, they are visible to me. My sociological imagination was spurred by their visibility to me and their invisibility to others, individuals and individuals within institutions, who have different social locations. I acknowledge that these men are experts in their own experience. That is why I am working with their narratives. In sharing their stories with me, and co-constructing narratives, they make it possible for me to use their own accounts as the data. I can learn from their narratives. I can uplift their experiences and share their stories. In the Findings section, I will display what this data and process allowed me to do.



# # 4 The Findings

## Introduction to Data Chapters

As described in the methodology, the overarching question this research project seeks to answer is *where do Black men live?* However, these data chapters seek to arrive at answers to this question by way of the fifth research question, *who should shoulder the burden of payment with regard to the housing insecurity of these low-income African-descended men?* I confess, this question was not part of the original design of this project. Instead, this question has emerged in the process of conducting the fieldwork and during data analysis. Whenever I asked the overarching question, whether it was to government and programme employees, community members, networks of these men, or the men themselves, the immediate question that followed was *who should shoulder the burden of payment?* That is, who should pay?

Here in the Findings section of the thesis, I present four chapters that illustrate my analysis of the research data. These chapters all cover a descriptive analysis of the case study. I will highlight how the three municipal housing programmes and policies (public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary zoning housing) figure in each chapter.

Throughout this project, the narratives of these men consistently mention three government-subsidised housing programmes. This project focuses on the ways that three municipally administered housing programmes figure in the housing experiences of my research participants. These programmes are public housing, section 8, and inclusionary housing. Both public housing and section 8 are administered by the local public housing authority, Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA). The inclusionary housing programme is administered by the City of Cambridge Development Department (CDD). As previously mentioned, the reason why I came to focus on these three programmes is because they are entangled in policy and administration.

In these chapters, I present data and analysis in various forms. Throughout, I will use quotes from participant narratives, meeting notes (such as from CHJC and CHJC coordinating committee meetings), as well as policy language. In order to properly differentiate between the narration, the narratives, the meeting quotes, and policy language, I use four different fonts across all four findings chapters. The narration is generally in [Arial]. Housing policy is in Open Sans. Meeting notes and correspondences between CHJC members are depicted using Times New Roman. And, for quotes from the narratives of my research participants, I use Courier New.

In these data chapters, I want readers to pay particular attention to the gaps the data fills. By shifting the perspective to the men, I am able to see a multitude of practical information that this perspective awards.

Chapter 1: *Where Do Black Men Live?* is a presentation of data. The data that is used comes largely from the ethnographic data collection process. The data includes survey responses, narratives, and researcher notes. The question this chapter seeks to answer is the overarching question, which is also the title of the chapter. In this chapter, we see exactly how the three housing programmes figure in the housing experiences of these men. Here, we can start to see a typology of formal and informal housing approaches begin to take shape.

In Chapter 2: *The Burden on Community*, I trace the intricacies and challenges of a participatory process to design a campaign to address the affordable housing crisis in the city via the zoning code and the municipally developed housing programmes. This chapter uses meeting notes and policy language to describe the challenges of constructing a winnable campaign that centres low-income African-descended men. It also illustrates the challenges that the members of the CHJC face when trying to construct a campaign for a programme that can meaningfully address the housing needs of these men within the contemporary social and political climate. The CHJC members present three potential options of *who should shoulder the*

*burden of payment*: 1) the individual, 2) the government, and 3) the development and management companies. In this chapter, we also come to see that in taking up this objective, to construct a campaign to implement a project that will meet the housing needs of low-income African-descended men, they too are burdened by the absence of effective policies and programmes.

In Chapter 3: *The Burden on Networks*, there is a fourth option presented in response to the question, *who should shoulder the burden of payment?* This chapter illustrates that the networks of these men shoulder the burden. This chapter presents the data for the claim that the networks of these men are made up predominantly of women. The burden of payment is felt in the risk they take to support these men and in strains on their relationships. In looking at the networks of these men, through their narratives, we can see how the networks figure in the typology of formal and informal housing approaches.

Chapter 4: *The Burden on Men* illustrates the burden on the men to shoulder their own housing needs. Toward the overarching question, this chapter employs several methods of analysis and lays out the results throughout. This chapter counters the myth that these men are not accountable; instead it shows just how much of the burden the men themselves shoulder absent not just ineffective policies and programmes but also despite their harmful entanglements with burdensome and punitive institutions.

The chapters are ordered so that the first data chapter answers the overarching research question and from there Chapters 2 and 3 don't involve the low-income African-descended men directly. I have made the decision to answer the overarching question in such a way that the other research questions can then come into focus for the reader informed by the presentation of data. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are ordered so that we begin our analysis by zooming out and then slowly zooming in closer on the men. For example, Chapter 2 looks at the burdens on the wider municipality via the community group. Chapter 3 zooms in on the networks of the research participants. And Chapter 4 finally zooms in on the men themselves. The rationale for this order

is that it allows for an analysis that answers the research questions using the data from the two methods of data collection, service-based ethnography and participatory action research. As described in the methodology, the PAR approach allows for qualitative data on the larger community, beyond the men who are the subject of the project. Meanwhile, the service-based ethnography presents narrative data that is later quantified and presented in Chapter 1 and for my analysis in both Chapters 3 (networks) and 4 (men).

Combined, these four chapters offer practical considerations and approaches toward answers to the overarching research question, *where do Black men live?*

## ## 4.1 Where Do Black Men Live? Chapter

### ### 4.1.1 Introduction

The housing crisis in Cambridge can be examined from multiple angles; I am focusing on its impact on housing-transient Black men. The crisis effectively excludes them from the private rental markets, limiting them to informal housing options. By informal, I mean unregistered, invisible, or illegal, and through relational ties within their networks. Juxtapose that approach with formal means, by which I mean documented or legal approaches to meeting their housing needs. For formal housing, they rely on non-corporate landlords (such as non-profits, SROs, cooperatives, etc.) and government landlords (public housing, section 8, and inclusionary housing). As we are experiencing a housing quantity and affordability crisis, and a decline in Black homeownership here (and everywhere), there is a *diminishing supply of the types* of housing available to these men. I argue that the policies that govern supply, directly and indirectly, are to blame. In short, low-income African-descended men are severely disadvantaged in all markets in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Black men experience sociopolitical banishment.

The overarching question this research seeks to answer is *where do Black men live?* In this chapter, I set about answering this question using the data gathered through my ethnographic process. I seek to present the finding that the specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income African-descended men must be empirically examined in its own right. At the intersection of gender and race, discrimination may be manifested, applied, and experienced differently by African-descended women as compared with African-descended men. That is a distinction I wish to make throughout this chapter. I hope to convey that collapsing African-descended men with other Black people or other men ignores the specificity of their social location.

After this introduction and excluding the conclusion, this chapter has three substantive components. First, I will introduce the men and detail important demographic information that influences their housing circumstances. Second, I will answer the question of where they live by going through their survey responses and contextualising these responses in narratives. I breakdown their living arrangements, both formal and informal. I look at the multiple uses of a home (as legal permanent address, for postal correspondence, for storage of belongings, and for sleeping). Third, I explore how eight factors figure in their narratives and contribute to their circumstances. The eight factors I have identified in the narratives are 1) incidents precipitating transience, 2) fatherhood, 3) homeownership, 4) technology, 5) government entities and non-profit organisations, 6) colleges and universities, 7) the prison industrial complex (PIC), and 8) absences of the PIC. Finally, I conclude with a rationale for the analysis on burdens, and I transition to the burden on communities.

### **### 4.1.2 Who Are the Men?**

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, as part of the process, all of the research participants completed a demographic survey. All of the men identified as African-descended or Black and as male. Although I was open to working with trans-men, none of my research participants identified as trans. The prerequisites for participation were that participants identify their race as African-descended or Black, their gender as 'man', and their age as over 18 years. All 25 research participants in this study meet these criteria. In this section, *who are the men*, I will outline the ages of these participants, their levels of educational attainment, and their employment circumstances.

#### **#### 4.1.2.1 Age**

There was some variation in the ages of participants, although all were between 19 and 54 years of age. There were some who told stories about their childhoods and how they came to be housing-insecure in the present moment (in 2021–2022): these participants were under 20 years old (Orion and Lamonte). There were those who were in their 20s (Allen, Benji, Carl, Felix, Grant, Patrick, Nasir, Wesley, and Vince). There were those in their 30s (Damien, Eric, Hakeem, Marcus, Jamal, Rashaad, Sam, Trey, Ulrick, and Zavion). There were those in their 40s (Khalil and Isaac). And the oldest were in their 50s (Quintin and Zaire).

#### **#### 4.1.2.2 Education**

Educational attainment has been indicative of the future trajectories of African-descended male populations (Mincy, 2006). In terms of education, all participants had at least a high school diploma, although this was not a requirement for participation in the project. Orion and Lamonte were the only two with only a high school diploma. Eighteen participants responded that they had some university education, but no degree. This is important to mention because all of these men were navigating hardships with student loan lenders alongside their housing insecurities and other social problems. Four participants indicated that they had completed an undergraduate university degree.<sup>43</sup> There were two participants with graduate degrees; both had master's degrees.

#### **#### 4.1.2.3 Employment**

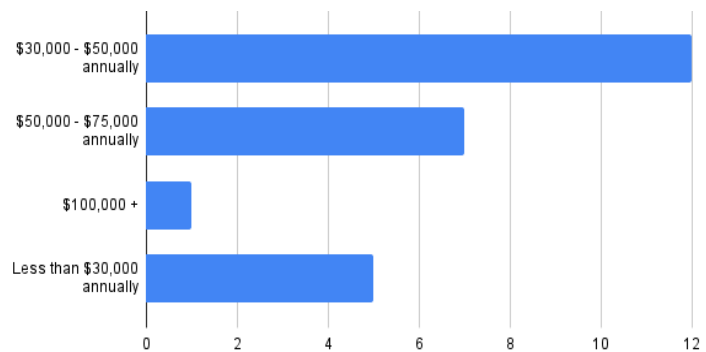
Employment status, profession, and income level are very important factors in discussions about housing, both in the public and private markets. Proof of verified income is prerequisite for access to housing (Rosen & Garboden, 2022). Twenty-three research

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<sup>43</sup> For those with university degrees, Grant, Trey, Xavion, Felix, Marcus and Zaire, they have definitely fared better than those without. See their narratives in the appendix.

participants indicated that they were employed at the time of the survey. That meant that there were two participants who were unemployed. One unemployed participant viewed their situation as unemployment, even though they worked for compensation. This was Jamal, who at the time of this research project was incarcerated. But even in jail, he worked as a cook in the kitchen in the institution where he was incarcerated. It is worth noting that Jamal has a university degree and was gainfully employed prior to his incarceration. The other participant who declared his unemployment status was Isaac. He was unemployed and received unemployment benefits at the time of the project. In Isaac's case, he had used the unemployment benefits to retrain for a new career, which prolonged his period of unemployment. This is significant because all of these men have experienced housing insecurity despite being employed and employable.

The professions represented among the research participants ranged from very low-skilled jobs such as retail employee, security guard, and driver; to medium-skilled jobs such as custodian, cook, and valet; all the way to highly skilled jobs such as master barber,



**Figure 5 Count of Salaries**

behavioural analyst, and information technology (IT) specialist. These highly skilled jobs require specialised training, certification, or a degree. Medium-skilled jobs may pay a living wage but don't require any specialised knowledge or certification. Low-skilled jobs pay low wages and require little previous training. Most of my research participants mentioned supplementing their income with gig jobs such as Uber driving and Amazon delivery. This goes to show that these men are working people. And, in most cases, they were working more than 40 hours a week, if the gig work is included, and still experienced housing insecurity.

The poverty line in Massachusetts is set at \$14,580. All of my research participants cleared the poverty line. The Massachusetts median family income was \$112,543, and the



national median income was \$85,028. The annual incomes of the research participants ranged from less than \$30,000 per annum all the way to over \$100,000. Nearly half of the participants, 12 of 25, earned between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per annum. This is just below 50% of the AMI of \$51,950 per annum.<sup>44</sup> There seems to be a gap between government housing programmes for people earning above the deeply affordable threshold of 25% AMI (such as public housing and section 8 vouchers) but below the 50% AMI threshold for programmes like inclusionary zoning.<sup>45</sup> In the next chapter, I explore the implications of the AMI in housing policy.

### ### 4.1.3 Where Do These Black Men Live?

Answering the research question isn't as straightforward as asking the participants *where do you live?* In preliminary discussions with prospective research participants, the question *where do you live* elicited a range of different types of responses. Some respondents just gave an address but didn't offer information about whether or not they slept at that location at night. Some people named the people they 'stayed' with or the relationship they had to the household member who invited them to 'stay'. For example, several people just said that they 'stayed with a friend'. The location of where they lived seemed to be wherever a certain type of person was situated. That person seemed to be a sort of anchor. An anchor home is a relationship or a location that someone always has access to, to meet some housing need. I describe this further in the *Burden on Networks* chapter. There were participants who always stayed with their mom or their romantic partner. Network members who served as anchors had

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<sup>44</sup>This is a debatable figure. It differs in each source. This figure comes from the Cambridge Community Development Department's informational pamphlet on 'Housing Program Income Limits' published June 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/incomelimits/hudincomeguidelines.pdf>.

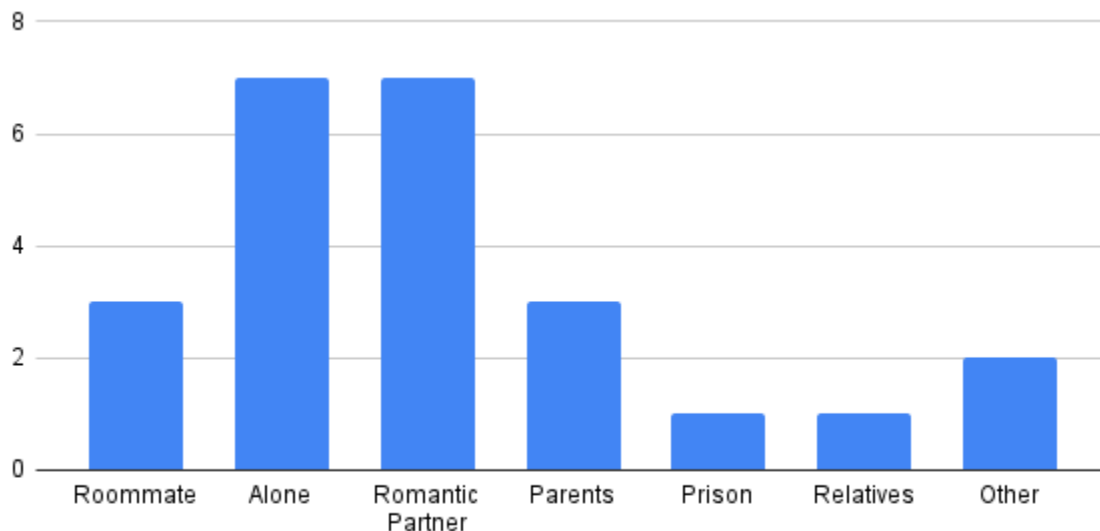
<sup>45</sup> As described in the literature review chapter, inclusionary zoning programmes require developers to sell or rent some percentage of new residential units to below market tenants. In Cambridge, inclusionary zoning is set at 20% of new builds with nine or more units for tenants who earn between 50%–80% AMI.

different relational ties, from parents to relatives or romantic partners. I say all of that to note, the question of *where do Black men live* invites a number of interpretations.

To do this work, I found it was important to think about what it means to *live* somewhere. For this, homelessness literature is useful. Take lists by Pollio (1997) and Hoolachan (2016), of the uses of 'home/house' or typology of what it means to live somewhere: 1) legal permanent address, 2) postal address, 3) storage for belongings, and 4) a place to sleep. In coding the narrative data, I looked for each of these four types of housing uses. Informed by Kuhn and Culhane (1998), I also considered the duration of time someone had access to or use of each type of housing. In this process, I was forced to make a distinction between what it meant to *live* someplace versus to *stay* someplace. For the purposes of my analysis, there was a temporal distinction between living and staying. To live, access was long-term in duration and possibly frequent in use, if not exactly permanent. Whereas, to stay was generally referred to as short in terms of duration and possibly infrequent in use. Although, there seemed to be exceptions, namely in anchor homes. In these anchor homes, the duration of access to use was long-term, but actual use was varied depending on the use. The less onerous uses, like legal permanent address, postal address, and storage for belongings tended to be long and consistent in duration of use—but with infrequent contact with the actual housing—transient. However, the use of an anchor home as a consistent place to sleep, with frequent contact, seemed to draw down access to that resource at a higher rate. This situation seems to accelerate the transience, or change in the means of meeting this need.

In learning all of this during my exploratory phase, I decided to include a multiple choice survey question that read, 'What is your current housing situation?' This question was a proxy for the *where do you live* question, toward the response of relational ties. The housing situation question considered the relationship between the participants and the people they lived with.

#### #### 4.1.3.1 Current Housing Situation



**Figure 6 Count of Current Housing Situation**

The above table outlines participant responses to the 'current housing situation' question in the demographic survey. Three of 25 respondents reported living with roommates, seven lived alone, seven lived with romantic partners, three lived with parents, one was in jail when he responded to the survey, one lived with relatives, and two selected 'other'. Both of the men who selected 'other' were 'staying' with the families of platonic friends. This is important because the great majority of the respondents, 17 of 25, did not live alone. It shows how interdependent the living situations of these men are on others.

The answer to 'where do you live' was not as straightforward as what they selected in the survey. Through interviews, I was able to probe into these selections and contextualise their survey responses. In the narratives and the co-construction process, I came to understand how these men defined what it means to live someplace and if their responses reflected whether living referred to any or any combination of the four uses of the house/home. Finally, through participant observation, during the ethnographic process, I saw firsthand the places where they

'stayed' and if they were 'staying' between multiple places. I was also able to work with many of these research participants toward a housing goal. Those housing goals themselves indicated

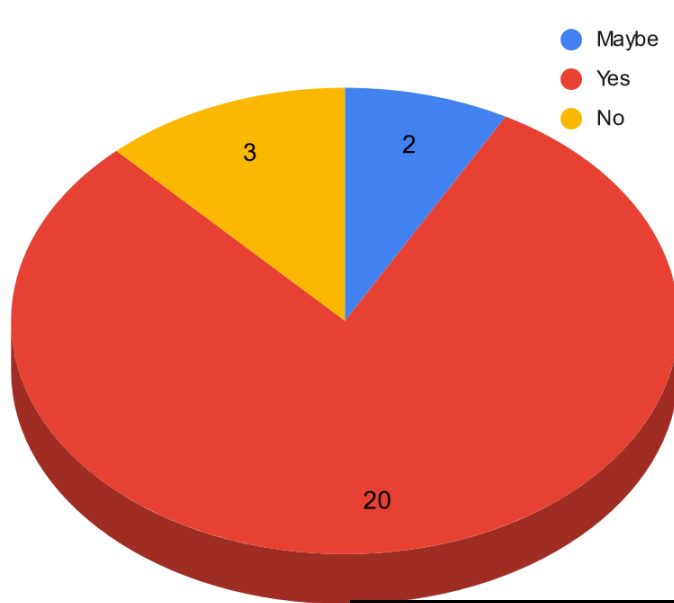


Figure 7 Pie of Housing Transience

some insights into their housing circumstances. More on this in the networks chapter.

#### #### 4.1.3.2 Housing Transience

An important framework for this project is the concept of *housing transience* (described in the literature review). For the purposes of this project, housing transience refers to the series of resilient coping mechanisms employed by these

men to meet their housing needs. In the survey, there was the following question: 'Have you ever been housing transient?' The short definition I offered in the survey was *not having a stable*

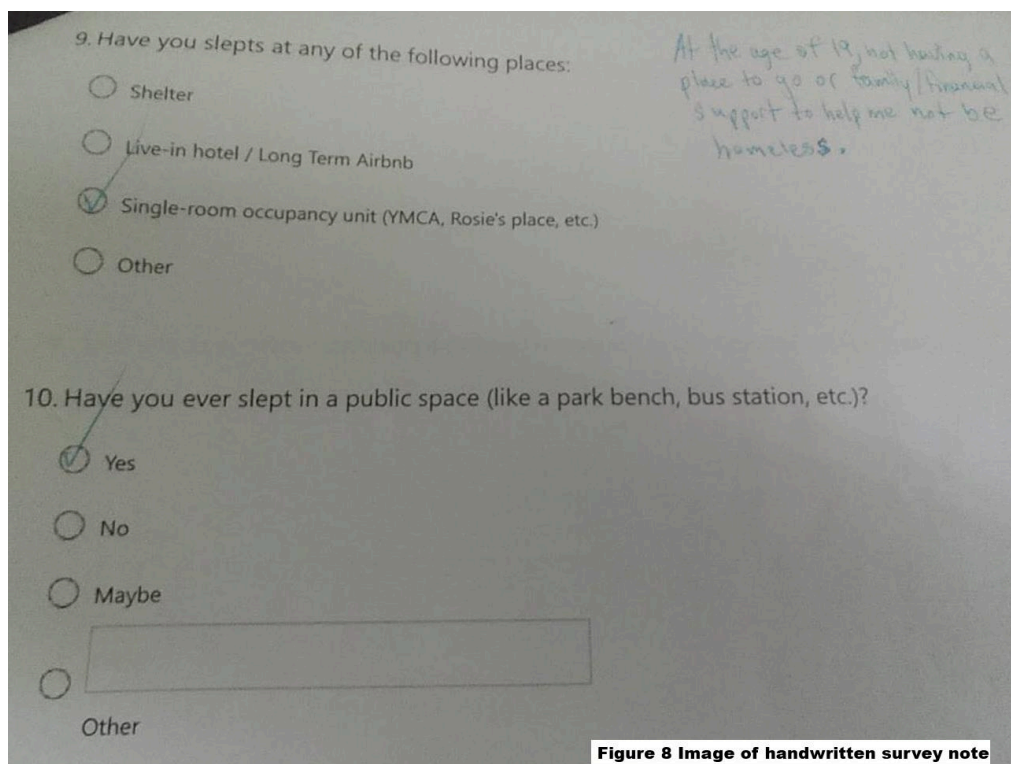


Figure 8 Image of handwritten survey note

and legal tenancy for two weeks or more. Of the 25 participants, 20 selected that this definition reflected an experience

that they had had or were experiencing (at the time of completing the survey).

Additionally, to contextualise housing transience further, another question I used as a proxy and verification, read, 'Have you ever slept in a public space (like a park bench, bus station, etc.)?' Twelve of 25 respondents selected no, 11 selected yes, and one selected maybe. As these responses were taken on paper, the responses sometimes had notes, sometimes it was my notes or other times it was the participants' notes to contextualise their answers. In these notes I started to see some discrepancies, specifically around how people interpreted or defined 'sleeping in public spaces'. For example, some people offered that they had slept in a public space, in their car. Others said no, but that they had slept in their cars. So, does a car count as a public space? In fact, sleeping in cars came up so often, I began to probe further during my interviews. The need to contextualise responses with follow-up questions during interviews rendered the count of their responses in the survey invalid.

On transience, there was a survey question that read, 'Do you use multiple addresses and locations as your legal permanent address, where you receive mail, where you store your belongings, and where you sleep?' Of the 24 responses to that question, 17 selected 'yes,' five selected 'no', and one selected 'maybe'. It was this question that shifted how I described the project, I began to describe the project as an analysis of accounts of Black men who lived between multiple households. In living between multiple households, it became clear that to fend for themselves, these men were in constant motion between these multiple locations that served their housing needs. They were transients.

Transience renders them invisible to certain systems and structures, such as the Census Bureau. But being in motion also means that they must evade the visibility of the PIC, entities like police and other surveillance mechanisms, while meeting their basic need to shelter. Through these survey responses, I could see that housing transience is an especially vulnerable state. However, in navigating the PIC, they forced me to acknowledge that there are differences

between formal legal mechanisms and informal and illegal mechanisms for meeting their housing needs.

#### **#### 4.1.3.3 Formal and Informal Housing**

From my ethnographic fieldwork and the narrative construction process, I ended up with data that I have analysed in this section of the chapter. These men seemed to have employed both formal and informal strategies to meet their housing needs. In this section, I look at some of the formal and informal strategies mentioned in their narratives.

#### **#### 4.1.3.4 Formal Housing Strategies**

I found several examples of formal and legal housing strategies: some men lived as documented tenants of the inclusionary programme (like Grant) or public housing (like Vince), or as legal short-term tenants in a section 8 voucher-subsidised unit (like Quintin and Benji). I also found some unexpected examples of formal housing use outside of government programmes. In this next section, I will explore how these men met their housing needs (permanent address, postal service, storage, and sleeping) outside of government programmes.

##### **##### 4.1.3.4.1 Post Office Boxes**

Take the use of post office (PO) boxes as an example. To acquire a PO box, one must sign a legally binding contract with the United States Postal Service (USPS). It is precisely because of the legal nature of this agreement that I consider the use of PO boxes as formal. In coding for different types of housing, I looked for how these research participants were meeting each of their housing needs. Having a PO box addresses the housing need concerned with correspondence and postal service. This is how I happened upon the use of PO boxes as a finding when looking into how correspondence, mail, and postal service figured in the narratives. Post offices were not very commonly mentioned among the participants. However, Zaire and

Xavion both mentioned the use of PO boxes. I saw two key points in their narratives, the first was the point of acquisition and the second was the point of termination. I have excerpted each point from both participants.

In his narrative, Zaire said,

This time it was a sheriff's eviction. During that time, I was able to stay with a friend in a basement apartment near school. The eldest nephew left at that time too. **Everyone else was left scrambling.** Eventually they were able to find places to stay with friends. This is about when I got a PO Box...

It has been over twenty years, but only last year did I actually give up my PO Box. When I finished paying off my mortgage.

And Xavion said this,

I left but I had no plan. I had no money. I had nothing. But I wanted to stay in the city. So, right away I got a PO box. I needed to make sure I got mail in Cambridge. I got a friend to agree to let me get packages at her house. That was clutch because whenever I did get a package, I would get to hang out there and eat a big dinner and pretend like things were normal...

Yo, I finally got my own place. I got a lease under my own name--- just me, the whole apartment, a studio apartment. It's mine, all mine. I kept the PO box. But now, I could vote, the bills were under my name, I qualified for other programs that I didn't qualify for before because I didn't have the right ID or proper proof of address. I'm good now.

The acquisition of PO boxes seemed to be precipitated by some housing event. For Zaire, it was his family experiencing their second eviction. For Xavion, it was being thrust into rough sleeping homelessness. Both Zaire and Xavion kept their PO boxes for many years. A PO box requires either monthly or annual payments—it has a cost. Is there something about the stability of the address that makes it a worthwhile investment? Otherwise, why keep the PO box for so long?

Xavion described getting his apartment in terms of what he was able to gain by having an address: he could vote now and be qualified for social programmes and other benefits. So this

suggests that for a period of years, Xavion didn't have the right to vote, even with his PO box. I see this as a potential loss of the right to vote. But neither Xavion nor Zaire talk about any losses associated with relying on a PO box. For Zaire, this was likely because he was very quickly able to secure long-term documented tenancy after the event that precipitated his PO box acquisition.

Of course there was also the decision to terminate the postal service contract. For Xavion it was getting his apartment, and for Zaire it was paying off his mortgage. There is something about feeling secure in their housing circumstances that allowed them to feel able to terminate the stability of the PO box contract.

#### ##### 4.1.3.4.2 Single Room Occupancy Units

In examining the narrative data in search of where these men slept, I came across single room occupancy (SRO) units. Felix, Xavion, and Hakeem mentioned living in SROs. In this section, I will focus on Xavion and Hakeem because they describe the experience in more depth than Felix. Here is how Xavion described the experience—he said,

Yeah, I got into an SRO. It saved my life to live there. I had a place to sleep every night. Yeah, there was that. And there was direction and motivation. In living there, there were lots of different types of people. I mean, I always kept my head down and kept to myself..

I also found that there were people who lived in the SRO alongside me who were in real need. Their needs were far greater than my needs. You know, people with mental health disorders, addiction, **people who were desperate**. So I would share what I had. You know, in terms of food and things. If I had extra. I would leave food in the shared spaces for people who had need.

And Hakeem described the experience as,

I applied to an SRO. It was down the street from my son's house, where he lived with his mother. That way, at least I would get to see him regularly. After a while, I got in. So I moved there. After I moved there, I saw my son more often but it felt terrible to be there for me.



I mean, it is basically **a dorm room for creepy adults**. Yeah, I was down the street from my son, but I still couldn't provide my son with a home. I had some very low points when I was living there. This was by far the worst I felt and vowed to have my son live with me as much as possible.

I left the SRO, I couldn't do it anymore.

Although the SRO met the need, a place to sleep, both Xavion and Hakeem described the experience as less than ideal. However, Xavion said that it saved his life.<sup>46</sup> He also described the SRO as a place for desperate people. In our conversations, Xavion referred to himself as one of those desperate people. Both Hakeem and Xavion used language that suggested they *resigned* themselves to living in the SRO. While Hakeem described living there as something akin to giving up, it sounds like both were motivated by unsuccessful attempts to find other options for themselves.

Just as Eric Klinenberg describes in *Going Solo* (2013), the experience of living in an SRO was very much a lonely one both for Xavion and Hakeem. Resigned to social isolation, Hakeem spent many months living in the SRO. Meanwhile, Xavion lived in his SRO for many years. Neither of them mentioned making friends or long-term contacts within the SRO.

#### **##### 4.1.3.4.3 Basement Apartments**

Four participants mentioned basement apartments. In this section, I will focus on both Eric and Carl's descriptions of living in basement apartments. In his narrative, Eric said,

In early 2008, through a church friend of my girlfriend's mother, I found a room in a semi finished basement. I was able to rent it out for \$600 a month. There were three bedrooms down in the basement, there were two others living down there; both rooms were occupied by recent Caribbean older women immigrants who didn't speak English. The family who owned the house was also Caribbean immigrants, but they had been in the country for over a decade.

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<sup>46</sup> Xavion was probably referring to the health outcomes of rough sleepers. See Onapa et al., 2022.

First of all, the house was a 10 minute bus ride to work or a 30 minute walk. The basement had a full bathroom with a nice shower. There was a little kitchenette, with a microwave, a sink, and a hot cooktop. There was a little living room area.

In contrast, Carl said,

The house has an unfinished basement where there are three 'bedrooms' that the landlord rents out on Airbnb. Right now, I'm the only tenant. People come and stay for different lengths of time. No, there is no 'kitchen'. There used to be hot plates but there was an incident with a former Airbnb person, the cooker stopped working and they had not been fixed or replaced. There is a sink, but it is an industrial sink. Like a big laundry sink. It's kind of dirty. There is a small refrigerator. There is a shared bathroom with a shower and everything. I don't really use the kitchen area, I mostly eat out.

They describe living in basement apartments in completely different conditions. The first distinction I made between the narratives was how they accessed the basement apartments. Eric found his basement flat through his community network. His landlord was a contact connected to the mother of his romantic partner at the time. Carl found his basement room through the online platform Airbnb. His landlord is a homeowner in Cambridge.<sup>47</sup> Access and contact matters for a number of reasons. The first being accountability. Eric having a relational tie meant that he had to treat the space and his landlord respectfully; they were accountable to their mutual network contact. Carl, however, was in a situation with very little accountability. Carl explained that he started his tenure on the Airbnb website. After several months, he was approached by the Airbnb host to go off-site, meaning that he would pay the host directly instead of paying through the website. Going off-site meant that they lost the structure of accountability. It also meant that this situation went from formal to informal.

The conditions of the places were very different. Eric described the place as nice. It had

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<sup>47</sup> A quick search through Tomslee's data gave me the information to find the place. I found the listing on Airbnb. I even asked another research participant to stay there.

all of the amenities needed for him to reside there comfortably, and this included shared meals with his roommates. Eric said that he made friends with his roommates and was introduced to new cultures through the experience. In contrast, Carl described the place as nearly inhospitable. It didn't have everything he needed and the exclusion of proper amenities like a working kitchen had additional costs he had to contend with.

Although a basement apartment met the need for a place to sleep, it didn't meet all of the housing needs. For example, Eric did not have a formal lease. Eric thinks this was because the apartment was not a legal apartment. For example, he used the front door of the house to get to the basement. However, he does remember receiving some postal service at that location. But his legal permanent address remained his mother's home address, on the other side of the state. Carl was off-site with his Airbnb host. There was no formal lease agreement after going off-site. Carl did not receive his postal service there. But the basement space was legally documented and zoned for residential use.<sup>48</sup>

Another thing to consider in this comparison is relations. Racially, Eric's landlord was a Black woman and a homeowner. His roommates were also African-descended but of different cultural backgrounds to his own. Carl's host was not specified by Carl, but the other participant who stayed there confirmed that this host was a white male. The Airbnb he operated out of the basement had guests from diverse cultural backgrounds. I bring this up because Eric befriends both his landlord and his roommates. Whereas Carl does not describe his relationship with either his Airbnb host or the Airbnb guests favourably. The situation is described transactionally by Carl. The relational conditions of basement apartments vary greatly.

#### **##### 4.1.3.4.4 Online Boarding Platforms, Live-in Hotels, and Boarding Houses**

Carl was not the only one who relied on a long-term Airbnb. I was astounded to find that 12 of 25 research participants had stayed, long-term, at an Airbnb (or another online home

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<sup>48</sup> I return to this in the Networks chapter.

sharing platform), live-in hotel, or boarding house. By long-term or long-stay, I mean a week or more (five to seven consecutive days) or long-term reliance on it for short stays (over a period of months or years). I arrived at this data by a combination of survey data (responses and notes), observations (interviews that took place at Airbnbs), narrative mentions, and follow-up discussions. I consider these arrangements formal when legally registered for commercial residential use (like hotels) or registered on some public platform (for example, I found registered Airbnb data on the Tomslee website<sup>49</sup>).

#### #### 4.1.3.5 Informal Housing Strategies

Airbnbs are at the intersection of formal and informal housing. My research participants often used Airbnbs and other platforms formally but later transitioned to using them informally. As previously mentioned, Carl's Airbnb host asked him to go off-site. Allen also mentioned his use of Airbnbs. He mentioned two other informal uses in his narrative.

Allen said,

One of my co-workers told me about Airbnbs. I moved into an Airbnb with him. **We shared a room for months.** I was able to get a second retail job. I made enough money to afford my own Airbnb room. **My friend found a place for me. It was under his account.** I paid my friend.

The two forms of informal use that Allen mentioned are 1) *couch surfing*<sup>50</sup> at an Airbnb and 2) using a friend's Airbnb account. Both of these uses of Airbnb added a layer of prolonged invisibility to Allen's housing transience. This is especially hard to conceptualise if his friend, with whom he was staying, had gone off-site. This would mean that his friend was not visible to Airbnb; he was never visible to Airbnb. There is a protection afforded, an insurance, that comes

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<sup>49</sup> <http://tomslee.net/category/airbnb-data->: this website uses an open access software called Github. On his website, he wrote: 'My code is on github (<https://github.com/tomslee/airbnb-data-collection>) for anyone who wants to continue and the bulk of the data I have collected will remain at <http://tomslee.net/airbnb-data-collection-get-the-data>. It could be much better, but it's there'.

<sup>50</sup> Couch surfing means to stay temporarily in a series of other people's homes, typically by sleeping on their sofas.

with using and being visible to the site. Benji also mentioned that he stayed at his friend's Airbnb for a period of months too.

This reminds me of Hope Harvey's (2022) description of hosts and guests (described in the literature review). In these cases, the 'host', may be someone with a formal registration through Airbnb or someone who has gone off-site with Airbnb. They, the person who made the initial booking, become a 'host' to a 'guest'. Like the case with Benji, who was a guest, invisible to Airbnb and perhaps even the Airbnb host. Offsite, both Benji and his friend are invisible and undocumented tenants of an Airbnb registered property. There are benefits to both the new host and their guest: the obvious is a place to sleep in the short term. However, Allen described contributing to the cost of the property for his friend. The host gets money too, just as Harvey describes. But along with the gains, there are also losses. This period of being housed in an Airbnb might create a gap in their housing histories. This is the case for people like Quintin, who didn't have a legal permanent address anchor home (at the time). This gap in their housing history would make them lose preference for certain municipally governed housing programmes. Additionally, the gap creates a challenge for acquiring access to government-subsidised programmes such as the inclusionary programme, which requires the administrative burden of residential proof over a period of years.<sup>51</sup> See more on administrative burdens in the *Burden on Men* chapter.

#### ##### 4.1.3.5.1 CouchSurfing

In general, I tend to describe the project of *where do Black men live* as an exploration of people living between multiple households. This phenomenon is popularly known as *couch surfing*. Both Wesley and Felix describe this phenomenon in their narratives. And they both describe the experience of couch surfing within a university. Wesley says,

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<sup>51</sup> According to the City of Cambridge Development Department website, '...you do not have to be a Cambridge resident to apply to the Rental Applicant Pool, but **Cambridge residents do receive preference**'. See <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/housing/forapplicants/rentalapplicantpool/rentalfaq>.

So, some of my school friends would let me **stay in their dorms**.

I feel super grateful to my friends for this hook up. But because you don't have key card access, you have to wait for other people to do everything. You have to leave when they leave and return only after they return. It is annoying for everyone involved.

In Felix's narrative, he describes his experience as a couch surfer like this,

I fucking stormed out. I had to leave. I left.

I stayed at a hotel for about a week. I slept in my car for a few days. I just needed to get away. Luckily, around that time, **some friends of mine who were still in the dorms invited me over**, so I went back to school and stayed with them for a few weeks. I went to **visit some relatives**. I applied and got accepted to one of those rooming houses, yeah an SRO. I stayed a few months.

They both seem to describe the experience of couch surfing much like a movie montage. They are in motion and the people around them seem to blend together. I asked as many questions as I could to help them think through the names and relations of people who helped them during this time, but they didn't seem to have very many details in their memories about this transient period. I have no doubt that if I had a better account of the many people who helped them, it would illustrate larger networks, but that period was blurry in their memories. This is part of the burden the men carried by being precarious couch surfers.

In Wesley's case, he relied on multiple school friends because his family was not based in the area. In Felix's case, he bounced around from friends to relatives, as well as staying in his car and staying at Airbnbs.

Sleeping in cars was an informal housing type that was frequently used by a number of my research participants. Although many research participants mentioned cars, five of the 25 mentioned *sleeping* in cars. They are Felix, Lamonte, Orion, Sam, and Ulrick.

Ulrick for example said,

I moved into a live-in hotel, outside of the city.

*Researcher: How did you find this hotel?*

I found it online. I stayed there for over a month while searching for a place. **Before that, I also slept in my car.**

Lamonte in his narrative said,

I left and went to my dad's, he was like I got you a job working for my friend. I'm like, no, I don't want to do that. I'm still weighing my options. So I left.

I just slept in my car that night.

I started doing that. I started sleeping in my car. It was easier and closer to everyone.

Sam wrote in his narrative,

This was around the time when Uber would give you a car if you worked for them. I mean it was hard. You had to drive a ton of miles before you could actually earn any money for yourself. You had to first earn the right to keep the car. But it was all too complicated with everything happening with my friends. Too many people were dying and shit, I just decided to drive. I would drive for Uber. I let them take me wherever they were going. I would even sleep in the car. I actually got to see some interesting places that way to be honest.

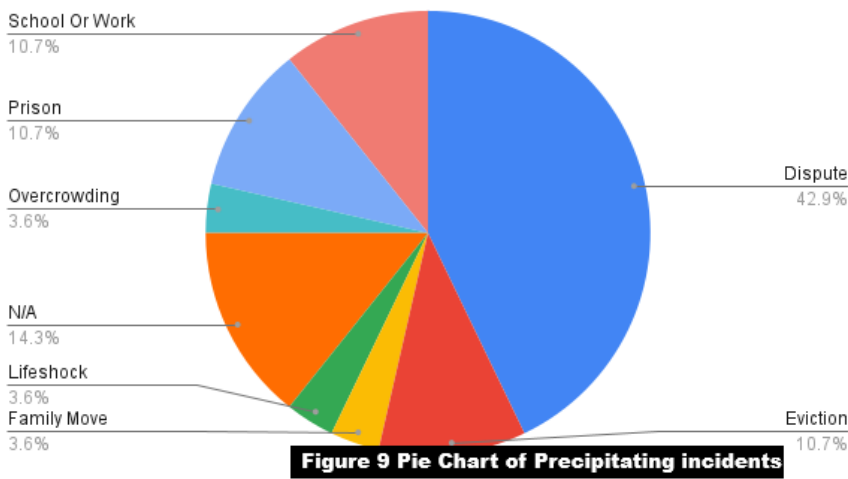
Sleeping in the car was a temporary experience. By temporary, I mean it fulfils one function, a location to sleep. None of the research participants describe sleeping in cars as a prolonged and singular experience. That is, none of my research participants relied on cars as their long-term primary residence. This is perhaps a limitation in my research, as this is depicted in contemporary films like *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* and is known to be a common phenomenon (Hertzson, 2022). In this case study, the men who slept in cars tended to only do so for stints that were short in duration and low to moderate in frequency.

Finally, Quintin, Carl, and Xavion explicitly mention rough sleeping. And they mention it in a way that is quite different to those people who slept in cars. The mentions of rough sleeping clearly connect this study to the homelessness literature. However, I don't consider my research

participants *homeless* and neither do they.

In the next section, I will dig into the narrative accounts of these men to illustrate how they figure themselves, both within and without the figure of the Black male criminal super-predator. I will do this by examining some common factors in their narratives and how they figure, both in the men’s perceptions of themselves as well as in the burdens they carry. I have identified eight recurring factors and will address them one by one.

### #### 4.1.3.6 Precipitating Incidents and How They Figure

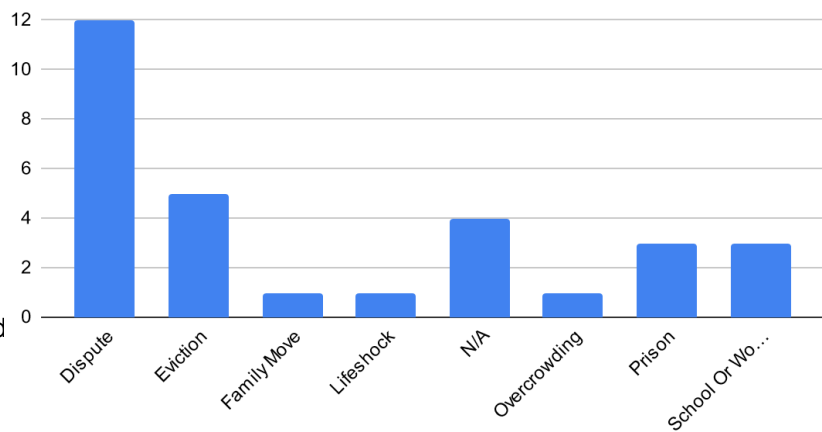


**Figure 9 Pie Chart of Precipitating Incidents**

In *Homelessness Is a Housing Problem*, authors Colburn and Aldern examine precipitating events. They note that precipitating events can lead to a spell of homelessness. They distinguish these events, like job loss, from root causes, such as low supply of affordable

housing.<sup>52</sup> In this section, I will look at some of the precipitating incidents that resulted in transience. It is important to note that 84% of the research participants named some sort of precipitating incident.

To do this analysis, I created a typology of precipitating incidents. It includes dispute, eviction, family move, prison,



**Figure 10 Bar Chart of Precipitating Incident Types**

<sup>52</sup> Prior to reading this book—that is, d using the term ‘inciting incident’.



work or school opportunity, life shock, and overcrowding. The precipitating incidents typology is not all encompassing—that is, it does not mean that the real incident didn't have a number of combinations of factors that resulted in the precipitating incidents. The data comes from the narratives. I have isolated the incidents that preceded a period of transience.

The precipitating incident most reported was dispute: 12 of the 25 participants mentioned a dispute ahead of the period of transience. The ones who mentioned disputes were Allen, Felix, Hakeem, Isaac, Jamal, Lamonte, Orion, Patrick, Quintin, Sam, Wesley, and Xavion. Some examples include Isaac, who had a dispute with his mother. Felix who had a dispute with both of his parents. Allen who had a dispute with his father. And Xavion who had a dispute with an uncle. Note that they had these disputes while they were living with core network members. Take Felix's case, for example. After undergrad, Felix went on a journey to find himself. As part of that journey, he needed to reveal something deeply traumatic to his parents. This event, where he was disclosing both the personal trauma he had experienced and where the journey was taking him, led to a misalignment between him and his parents while he was living there. This incident led to Felix feeling unable to reside there. Felix said,

There was an inciting incident. That's an interesting way to put it...  
I confessed that I was sexually molested as a child. I didn't want to go into it because the person who did it is still part of the family you know... Anyway, I just said this to make my point... I wanted the family to support me, but instead... it became a thing.

We got into this big argument. I fucking stormed out. I had to leave. I left.

The disputes involved members of their networks and oftentimes members of their core networks. In many cases, it was those who provided anchor homes. The network members mentioned in disputes were relatives, parents, fathers, mothers, and even an uncle. Of the 12 who mentioned disputes as their precipitating incident, four mentioned the dispute was between their mother and themselves. In many cases, there is a socio-temporal transition that takes

place, when the parent-child relationship transitions to adult-adult. When the parent and adult-child live together, the relationship becomes more similar to how Hope Harvey describes the host-guest dynamic. She explains that being a guest involves a loss or a lack of autonomy. This can lead to clashes and transition.

In his narrative, Xavion says,

I would call it a *clash of masculinity*. You know, I was a teenager, I couldn't have my uncle disrespecting me. It was just after I had graduated from high school. I was going out with my friends a lot. We were getting drunk and staying out all night. You know the summer between high school and college. I was testing my limits and celebrating my achievement. My uncle did not see it that way. He saw me acting like my parents. He thought I was going to end up like that. So he threatened to send me back there. I couldn't have that you know. I had plans. I was serious. But nothing I could say would convince him. So, he kicked me out. Or I might have left. I left.

Isaac said,

I kept on thinking about the stuff with my mother.

One night, there was an incident...

Mom got mad at me because I wasn't contributing very much to the household financially, despite having a job. We had a bunch of mini-fights. One night, we got into a huge argument. During the argument, I brought up the fact that her ex-husband used to beat me. The fight escalated. She threatened to call the police and then she called the police.

Another precipitating incident type is the family moving. When his family moved out of state, Carl decided to stay because he was still enrolled in university. When they left, he had no anchor, and this thrust him into an extended period of transience. Carl said,

My family got evicted from our apartment in Boston. Everyone decided to move out of state, everyone--- including my parents. I had just started university, so I decided to stay.

Eviction figured pretty prominently within the narratives as a factor that results in transience.

Five of the participants mentioned eviction, including Benji, Carl, Eric, Jamal, and Zaire. We saw

from Carl's story above that the eviction was destabilising, and begot his transience. Benji and his family experienced eviction too, and like Carl, it was from a Boston apartment. Benji said,

It got wild actually, the whole family got kicked out. Yeah, we was evicted. But not through the police or anything like that. They just kicked us out. No details given. I think we violated the fire code, too many people and all.

Zaire and his family were evicted, but this time from a Cambridge apartment. He said,

Just as I was leaving for university, my father lost his job. This was right after rent control. They [the rent] had gone way up. My mom's job alone couldn't do it [pay the rent]. So we got evicted. But my parents told me not to worry. They told me to go off to school and focus on my school work. So I did. I went to school. Made friends. Went to stay with them and their families during the holidays.

Prison was another factor that resulted in transience. Quintin, Jamal, Sam, and Damien all mentioned it.

I'll never forget when Quintin said,

Being in jail is like a time machine, when you get out you have to explore to learn about the times. Things had changed over that year. Things were crazy! My wife ended up moving to a new apartment.

That particular time, Quintin was able to stay with his wife, but later he went back to prison and his wife moved on to a new partner. Each time Quintin was in jail, he had to think about where he was going to go when he got out. Over time, he had fewer and fewer options. His grandmother passed, his wife moved on, and so on.

Damien said,

When I was in jail people were not as supportive as before. I think they thought that this was going to define me, you know. I did some real reflecting in there. I had the time. I lost a lot of people.

By the time I got out, I went back to living with my grandmother. But everyone was there. Too many people were there.

Overcrowding was something that came up repeatedly. It seemed that many people in the family had the same anchor homes. This led to overcrowding, as we see with Wesley, Benji, and of course Damien.

What we see is that particular issues pushed these people into couch surfing, or sleeping in cars, or staying in hotels. While of course homelessness is a housing problem, we can see that any analysis of at-risk-ness for homelessness needs to consider the precipitating events, social networks, and the options people have at the time of crisis.

#### #### 4.1.3.7 Fatherhood and How It Figures

At the start of this project, I was adamant about not writing about fatherhood—I was writing about housing. But then I came across some interesting literature on Black fatherhood. I was particularly struck by the work of social-work scholars Ronald Mincy (2006; Mincy et al., 2014) and Amanda Geller (2013; Geller & Curtis, 2018). I was moved to reconsider my position on fatherhood as a central factor in the housing stories of African-descended men. In the field, I was moved by *how fatherhood figured* in the stories of these men. There were four men who mentioned being fathers in their narratives. They were Hakeem, Allen, Sam, and Eric. Hakeem sought me out when he learned about the project through another participant. When we met, he forwarded me an email that he had written to his son explaining his choices over the years. He described the email to me as an explanation of each housing transition in his life and how these transitions impacted his relationship to his son. Hakeem posited something that blew me away. He asked, ‘What if that section 8 voucher came with a voucher for me [too]?’ He was clear that he didn’t actually want the voucher now that he was settled, but if the voucher had come with a companion voucher for him as a father, he would have tried to find a secure housing situation in Cambridge right away and would not have had to miss so much of his son’s life.

By the time I was meeting with Allen, he had worked through a lot of the emotional issues that came up in his narrative. But in his narrative, he brought up the challenges he faced when he realised that he was father to a child and that he was not present in his child's life. When he reconnected with his baby's mother, whom he later married, Allen operated as an anchor father. His housing goals were entirely directed at helping his family come to Cambridge and get settled in the area. His role as father was a major motivator for him in his housing story.

Sam mentioned that he had a child with his ex-partner with whom he had been living. Unlike Hakeem and Allen's stories, Sam's story did not centre around his son. Instead, Sam's story centred around the places where he had lived and who he had lived with over the years. It wasn't until after he had settled into his new job and new apartment that he named his next goal as getting partial custody of his son. He wanted to be settled first, before pursuing custody of his child.<sup>53</sup>

Eric, on the other hand, had been settled for years when I met him. In our many conversations, he told me the ludicrous stories of the custody battles with his baby's mother. The cases of others and incidents he witnessed at the courthouse made for interesting dinner party stories. But Eric was singularly clear on his aim to be present in his daughter's life and to have a good working relationship with his baby's mother, despite not being in a romantic relationship with her. He mentioned that she, his baby's mother, did not grow up with her biological father and that her parents struggled to have a good co-parenting relationship. She thought that her father didn't want to be in her life growing up and assumed that Eric would be the same. After Eric reconciled and the half-half custody came through, she admitted to being

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<sup>53</sup> For example, according to the Massachusetts Government website, **'If the parents aren't married — The mother has sole legal and physical custody of her child until a court orders otherwise'**. Found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-out-who-can-file-for-child-custody>.

In a report entitled, Juvenile Court Department Guidelines for Court Investigations and Reports (2020), parties involved in child custody need to submit the following information, 'Addresses of the parties, including the child, unless in foster care, and any putative father(s)' (a putative father is a man whose biological relationship to a child is alleged but has not been established).

grateful to him for his insistence on being a part of his daughter's life. She thought that their daughter would be lucky to have both a mother and father in her life. Sure enough, during my time with Eric, I saw him with his daughter at cookouts, dinner parties, and camping trips. One of his primary motivations for working with me was that he wanted to move back to Cambridge to give her access to a better school district.

Fatherhood figured in the everyday lives of these men, as well as in their housing stories. While Mincy and Geller write about custody and parenthood, the stories of these men revealed a practical-knowledge gap among policymakers. Those who make and inform family social policy clearly lack the practical knowledge of the experiences of men in these circumstances—knowledge that is necessary for effective policy design. Those who make and inform social policy are legislators and their constituents, as well as those who implement policy. The custody battles, court processes, and heaps of paperwork constitute significant administrative burdens on these men as fathers, and they account for some absences. This is again illustrative of a mismatch of aims. Whereas Moynihan (1965) and others, including family studies scholars, point to the advantages that come with a two-parent family, housing policymakers design means-tested programmes that serve as administrative burdens, burdens that make constructing two-parent families among low-income people highly challenging. And conservative policymakers construct eligibility requirements designed to be burdensome and to prevent people from securing social entitlements. For instance, there is no straightforward process for reconciling custody issues. And policymakers tie custody directly to housing. Moreover, these same policymakers continue to support initiatives and policies that result in ever-increasing private market costs, making government subsidies burdensome, in short supply, and under-maintained. In Morean terms,<sup>54</sup> policymakers actually create under-housed, absent fathers and then punish them for being unhoused, absent fathers.

This is accomplished through a web of policies that combine to actually discourage

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<sup>54</sup> By 'Morean', I refer to Sir Thomas More, specifically his publication *Utopia* (1516).

two-parent families among this population. As we see with Hakeem, Quintin, Eric, and Sam, this web of policies not only blocked their access to housing, but effectively prevented them from access to their children. While in my research just four of the 25 Black men mentioned fatherhood in their narratives, several of the men I met with who ultimately didn't complete the process also mentioned that they were fathers. There is a lot to be learned about how fatherhood figures in housing narratives for policymaking.

#### **#### 4.1.3.8 Homeownership and How It Figures**

As the project progressed, I began to see, as illustrated in the last chapter, that homeownership matters and is an important factor when examining *where Black men live*. In the last chapter, I showed that Black homeowners supplement the private market by allowing Black men from all walks of life access to documented and undocumented tenancies. Here, I look at homeownership among my research participants. There were three homeowners who took part in the project: Grant, Zaire, and Hakeem.

Grant and his wife, let's call her Habibatou, purchased a house outside the City of Cambridge. They had first sought to purchase through the inclusionary homebuyers programme in Cambridge, but the regulations deterred them and ultimately led them to move out of Cambridge entirely. At the time, Grant had secured a corporate job earning over \$60,000 per year. His wife had a job earning over \$90,000 working in the biotech industry. Together, they decided to seek homeownership through the traditional mortgage route. When they went to secure a mortgage, they encountered steering by the big banks in the area. The mortgage personnel sought to steer them toward low-income neighbourhoods in Boston, such as Mattapan and Dorchester. However, Grant and his wife had decided that they wanted to be either in Cambridge, near their family and friends, or someplace remote with lots of space and greenery, so Boston was out of the question. They decided to look for smaller banks and were ultimately successful in purchasing a home about an hour and a half away from Cambridge.

Zaire had made a friend during his time at university. This friend, an older white man, was his roommate for many years, but he was more than just a roommate. His friend, let's call him Alex, 1) taught him about homeownership, 2) taught him how to perform home maintenance both physical and administrative, 3) helped Zaire save for his downpayment by offering him low-cost housing for many years, and 4) walked Zaire through the home purchasing process from start to finish. Zaire had lived in his own house for so long that he had finished paying off his mortgage entirely and owned his house outright when I met him.

When I met Hakeem, he was a homeowner in Cambridge. Hakeem had been a meticulous records keeper throughout his entire adult life. He gives credit to his African immigrant parents for this skill. This record keeping allowed him to have all of the necessary paperwork to gain access to the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) programme. NACA is a non-profit organisation with a programme designed to help low-to-moderate income people purchase homes. At the time when Hakeem purchased his condominium in Cambridge, the neighbourhood where he purchased was still considered low-income, although that has changed significantly.

As for Eric, after his first rental apartment in Cambridge fell through, I suggested he take a look at the NACA programme. He did and liked it. He reached out to them, and with his salaried income and his female romantic partner's salaried income, the two of them qualified for the programme. However, unlike Hakeem, Eric was not as meticulous a records keeper. This is likely due to the many years of transience, when he didn't know where his postal service was being delivered. Part of the work we were doing together was gathering the paperwork he needed to submit to complete the application process.

Homeownership was something that my research participants aspired to. Unfortunately for many of them, they didn't have access to the kinds of resources that allowed Zaire, Hakeem, and Grant to successfully purchase their plot in the American dream. As we can see with Zaire, he had a lot of help. A secure and long-term member of his network gave him a direct path and



encouraged him to purchase. He was able to save for a down payment, he learned about the process and how to maintain his home, and he had someone to help him through the entire purchase. In order for Zaire to be successful, he needed to complete all of these steps, be a willing learner, and maintain a secure job, which he did. Hakeem was able to get support through NACA and credits them for the opportunity to purchase; if it wasn't for their programme, he would never have been able to purchase a home in Cambridge and secure his family ties with his son and his son's mother. The non-profit was what helped Hakeem. Hakeem also maintained a stable income, sought better opportunities for himself, and kept meticulous paper records to be able to qualify. Not everyone had the opportunities and skills that Hakeem had. Grant was a particularly interesting case; unlike Zaire and Hakeem, who never lived as documented tenants of public housing or received section 8 themselves, Grant was a tenant of the inclusionary programme. When he began his tenancy, both he and his wife worked at non-profits earning very low wages, so they qualified at the low end of the spectrum. They sought better paying opportunities for themselves while they lived in their inclusionary unit. Grant was able to double his income and his wife was able to triple hers, which moved them to the highest end of the inclusionary programme eligibility. If they had been living in a market-rate apartment, the rapid rent increases would have prevented them from saving enough for a down payment to purchase their own house. The municipal-level inclusionary programme served as a ladder programme, allowing Grant and his wife to climb into the middle class.

#### **#### 4.1.3.9 Technology and How It Figures**

It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic changed human interaction with technology forever. While technologies to communicate over the internet had existed for decades (i.e., voice over internet phones and Skype), our collective reliance on it and sheer amount of use skyrocketed during the pandemic. This got me thinking about how technology

figured, both in my uses of technology as a researcher and in the narratives of my research participants.

In the methodology chapter, I outlined my tools, which included an audio recorder, a smartphone, and a laptop. These are hardware that I took to the field. The smartphone and laptop had software that I relied on significantly. For example, my research participants communicated with me over text messaging (sms) and email. I did not spend a lot of time talking to them over the phone, except when we were trying to find each other in a public space.

I should mention that I observed a range of politics and heard a great many thoughts about technology from my research participants. Some of the participants had an aversion to technology. Allen shared misinformation with me about 5G. Khalil actively crossed out the section of the consent form to show his discontent with audio consent. Isaac didn't feel comfortable when I took out my phone to Google something he had mentioned. Other people felt perfectly comfortable with technology. For example, after each interview at Xavion's apartment, he used his own printer and scanner to make copies of my handwritten notes. Eric actually allowed me to audio record his interviews, and we conducted several follow ups over Zoom. During my interview with Nasir, he fact checked himself by checking his phone and sending me links. Orion picked up his phone and called his mother during our interview.

As part of my fieldwork, I spent a lot of time either helping people collect or acquire the proper identification to apply for various programmes. There were some participants who wanted to have a digital copy of their documents, like their birth certificates, social security cards, and passports. There were those who were vehemently against putting any information online; they preferred hard copies of their documents that could be stored with a person or on themselves. Already, we can see that technology figured in quite a few ways. After fieldwork, the process for co-constructing the narrative often involved technology as well.

Technology figured in a number of the experiences of these men too. First, everyone had smartphones. This is perhaps the biggest difference between research among low-income

populations now compared to any previous era. Everyone has access to a phone to communicate. Don't get me wrong, there were people who had short periods of not being able to pay their phone bills, but many of my research participants used low-cost and prepaid providers like T-Mobile and MetroPCS. I liken this explosion in mobile phone communication access to the cheap and widespread transportation that Barry Wellman describes (2001).<sup>55</sup> The impacts are incalculable.

I imagine that having access to a means to communicate with members of one's networks at great distances has meant that people can access the benefits of a social network (i.e., a place to stay, the networks of those networks, knowledge about resources) from greater distances. Second, the uses of technology described in the narratives varied. For example, Allen explained that he was made aware of the existence of his daughter while scrolling through social media. Jamal used dating applications (including Plenty of Fish, Adam to Adam, Grindr, and Tinder) to secure a place to sleep some nights. And third, there were the Airbnbs. The use of Airbnbs was a phenomenon I did not expect to find. Once I stumbled upon it, I sought out more Black men who were using it because it was so unexpected, and snowball sampling also exposed me to a great number of participants using Airbnbs. Airbnbs (and other homestay platforms) are overrepresented in my data as compared to other ways of meeting housing needs.

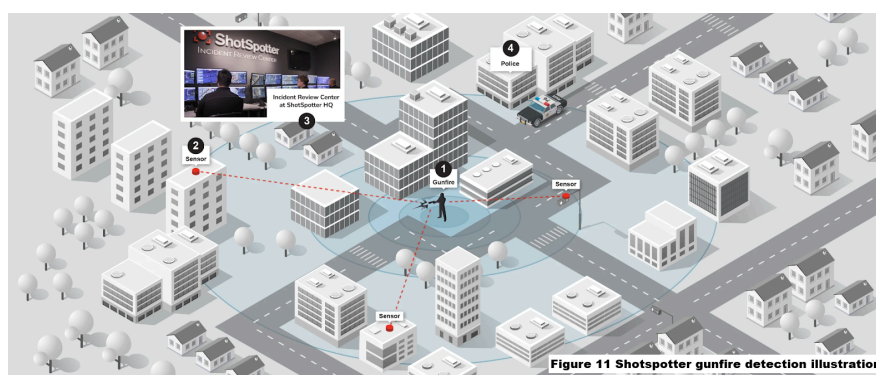
The greater Boston area is teeming with technology and biotechnology companies, especially in Cambridge's Technology Square. Of course there is an underrepresentation of Black tech workers (John & Carnoy, 2017). In my project, I found a number of my research participants were either working directly in tech or were working toward careers in technology. Of the 25 participants, six mentioned working or training to work in technology; they were Eric, Nasir, Wesley, Isaac, Xavion, and Hakeem. To be clear, I don't mean people who work *with*

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<sup>55</sup> See previous chapter for more information on Barry Wellman's description of social networks and the impacts of cheap transportation on social networks.

technology like trucks or computers, I mean those who are working *in* information technology (IT), data, web development, etc. Both Eric and Nasir work in information technology. Eric mentioned that he had done a series of programmes, beginning with the Americorps VISTA and City Year programmes. Nasir worked as a web developer and software engineer.

Of the six research participants involved in technology, only Xavion completed a university degree. His degree was in artificial intelligence (AI). At the time of the research, both Isaac and Wesley were doing online bootcamps. These programmes are free of charge, and they range in duration from two weeks to four months. Wesley’s programme offered a paid work placement upon completion of the digital classwork. Nasir had completed some four of these bootcamps. He mentioned that there was one with a stipend and that he was still living with his mother while in the bootcamps. Isaac lived with his mother and survived off of unemployment benefits. He mentioned attending tech industry mixers and job fairs while he was completing the bootcamp programme. It is undeniable that the tech industry is one of the best paying industries in the world. The fact that they don’t require a university degree has made it very attractive to my research participants. The apprenticeship and bootcamp programmes developed by industry leaders are a pathway for low-income and marginalised community members, like these low-income Black men, to gain a toehold into the industry.



- 1 Gun is fired**  
When a gun is fired, the sound of a muzzle blast radiates outward.
- 2 Gunshot is Detected and Located**  
Acoustic sensors are triggered by the impulsive sound. The sound is classified as a gunshot through a process of machine classification. Sound triangulation determines the precise location.
- 3 Gunshot is Reviewed**  
The data is relayed to the ShotSpotter Incident Review Center where analysts quickly audit the data and publish confirmed gunshots to police.
- 4 Police Respond**  
Alerts are sent to dispatch centers and patrol officers' smartphones and MDTs for immediate response. The entire process takes less than 60 seconds.

<sup>56</sup> Technology figures in one more way that I cannot neglect: surveillance and social exclusion. In follow-up conversation with Quintin and in some

<sup>56</sup> This image was sourced from the ShotSpotter website (<https://www.soundthinking.com/>) in July 2023.

correspondence with Jamal, they both mentioned the hyper-surveillance in public housing. Historically, the police patrol of public housing was something to navigate; now there are the police cameras that effectively point at every door, monitoring the comings and goings in and out of each doorway. In addition to the cameras, there is ShotSpotter (now SoundThinking),<sup>57</sup> audio surveillance devices scattered throughout the neighbourhoods that surround public housing projects in Cambridge. While the technology claims to be tuned to a certain frequency to be able to distinguish various sounds from gunshots, the company also claims to be predictive, which many activists and analysts understand to mean that they are listening to conversations (in search of keywords) to deploy police to certain sites before a shot is fired.<sup>58</sup>

Lastly, many of the research participants and members of their networks lamented the process of recertification. This process involved collecting a number of different kinds of verification paperwork and submitting them. These processes are being digitised now. Any missing or misread document, as well as any document with an administrative error, can mean a penalty, delays, and other administrative burdens for tenants.

#### **#### 4.1.3.10 Government Entities and Non-Profit Organisations and How They Figure**

I will begin with two types of institutions, government entities and non-profit organisations. For example, there is the Cambridge Development Department, which administers the inclusionary programme and is an institution. It will be included in this section when the narrative or the survey data includes the inclusionary programme. Non-profits are also institutions. There are many types of non-profits—some of them are service providers such as food pantries and mutual aid organisations. There are also non-profits that provide shelter, for example single room occupancies (SROs), and overnight shelters are often run by non-profits.

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<sup>57</sup> See <https://www.soundthinking.com/law-enforcement/gunshot-detection-technology/>.

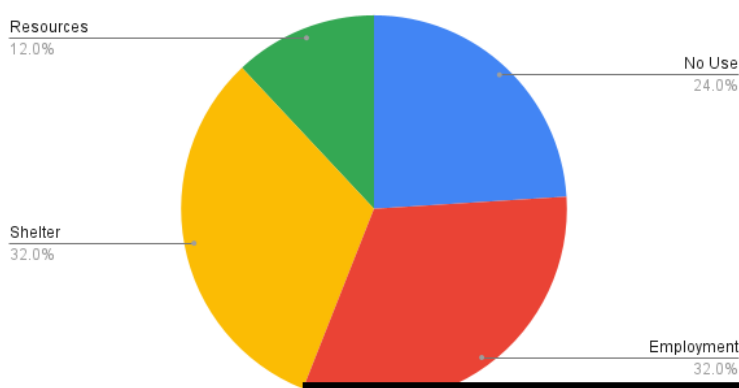
<sup>58</sup> See Surveillance Technology Oversight Project - <https://www.stopspying.org/shotspotter>.

Sheltering programmes like public housing authorities may be either a city department or a non-profit organisation. For example, Cambridge Housing Authority is a non-profit, whereas Boston Housing Authority is a city department. In addition to looking at which institutions figure, I will be looking at how these subjects *utilise* these institutions.

I recall being floored when **Lamonte** said, 'So the thing about my mom is that, her and her friends eat information'. He meant that figuratively of course, but it was also literal in a brilliant way. His mother ate from the food pantries that members in her networks told her about. But the fact of the matter is that Lamonte himself was not making contact with those institutions, even though he benefited directly from his mother's contacts with them. It is just as true to say that Lamonte himself eats the information his mother gathers.

Isaac became a member of a small neighbourhood association, a non-profit. It was a young men's association, and they supported each other with accessing employment and other opportunities. Unlike a gang, this group was a legally recognised non-profit. However, there were no member forms to complete, so there is no documentation of Isaac's membership in this group. He said, 'There is a community house where a lot of local young men hang out. I know too many people who have stayed there. I have a good relationship with the man who runs it, so I went there for help'. Isaac stayed in this community house when he was experiencing housing insecurity. He lived there for several months rent-free.

**Felix** says, 'While I was living there [at his parent's house], I decided to go back to school. I worked on my application and got



accepted. I needed discipline. I went to the library everyday and

went to the gym'. The library is an institution. It isn't clear whether this is a public library or a (public or private) university library. However, it was clear that he had a library card and regular access to this library. This means that there is potentially a way to track his contact with and use of the library throughout that time.

While these three anecdotes expose some interesting uses of institutions, I was interested in how institutions figured throughout the larger data. I created a table with six columns (participant, institution mention, main user, use-institution, service provided, and name). For the use-institution column, there appeared to be four use categories: no use, shelter, employment, and resources. No use meant that they didn't mention either a city department or a non-profit. Shelter meant they resided within a non-profit as a shelter, either temporarily, like a homeless-shelter, or long-term, like an SRO. Employment referred to whether they were using the city department or non-profit for employment. Resources referred to the use of the services provided. Among my research participants, six reported no use of the institutions (Allen, Benji, Carl, Khalil, Patrick, and Rashaad).

I thought it was interesting that only three accessed the actual services of these institutions (Felix, Lamonte, and Zaire). Interestingly, Lamonte and Zaire were not the primary users of these institutions; that was their mothers. Eight of these men mentioned shelter as the primary use of these institutions. For example, Hakeem lived in an SRO; this and many local SROs are managed by the local housing authority. Cambridge Housing Authority is a non-profit organisation. As a tenant of this SRO, Hakeem was in direct *contact* with this service provider for his housing. He coordinated the enrolment process entirely on his own. He also said he felt ashamed by his tenure there. He said, 'I mean, it is basically a dorm room for creepy adults'. He didn't advertise his use of the SRO among his networks.

Another use of these institutions was employment. For example, Damien got a job at a non-profit years after his release from prison. He said, 'Anyway, yeah, I was still

working as a driver for this non-profit. It was good. I started listening to podcasts and audiobooks while I was driving'. He himself never sought the support services of non-profit service providers, but received employment from a local non-profit.

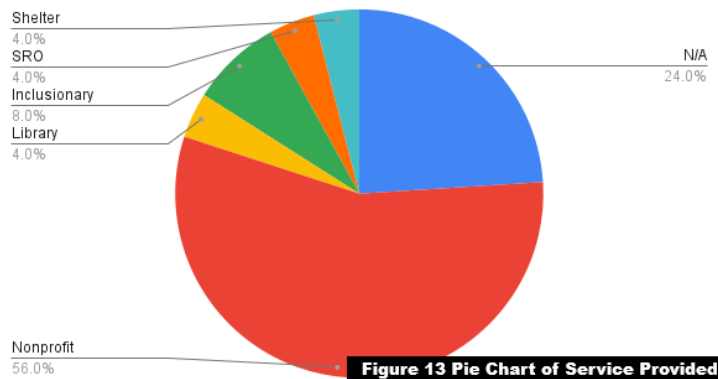


Figure 13 Pie Chart of Service Provided

At first glance, it looks like a majority of these men are in contact with institutions (city departments and non-profits). So contact with the institutions they use might be a good way to keep track of *where Black men*

*live*. However, when we break down the institutions that they are using, these tend not to be included in the continuums of care, public safety, and public health data that are used to generate estimates of homelessness and housing insecurity.

Those who reside as documented tenants of the inclusionary programme are not 'homeless' at all. Those who live long-term in SROs are certainly making contact with the administrators of those programmes, whether they are administered through a city department or a non-profit. These tend to be quasi-non-governmental programmes that are partially funded through the government (municipal, county, state, and federal). This means that those contacts are visible in the data. Whereas, the other 'uses' that are mentioned in these narratives are not necessarily visible or relevant to those who analyse data on homelessness or at-risk-ness for homelessness. For example, Felix used the library for resources. He used the library to apply for graduate school programmes. We know that unhoused community members also use the public library networks. They use them as cooling/warming centres, and they use library resources to apply for services. More recently, the city has placed a social worker at the public library.<sup>59</sup> The

<sup>59</sup> Message from the social worker at the Cambridge Public Library:



social worker position opens access to free or reduced counselling services as well as other community resources. The social worker has confirmed that they are collecting data from the people they serve at the library. It is unclear what kinds of information they collect and who they share the data with. I don't know if my participants would show up as unhoused in this data.

Of course there are many other institutions, other than non-profits and city departments.

#### #### 4.1.3.11 Colleges and Universities and How They Figure

Colleges and universities figured prominently in the narratives of these men. In fact, only Benji and Sam omitted them. Of the 25 participants, 20 mention the words 'college' or 'university' or named a school in their narratives. Upon closer inspection, I could see that colleges and universities figured in a number of curious ways, all leading back to their present housing circumstances.

It is worth briefly mentioning that Orion mentioned college when referring to the fact that his father had a university degree. I have made a number of mentions of Wesley's transience within the university where he was enrolled. In this next section, I would like to focus on Isaac, Vince, Rashaad, and Ulrick's mentions of universities in their narratives.

I'll begin with Isaac, in the narrative it says,

When I turned 18, **I enrolled in university, but I was a commuter.** I never lived in the university dorms... I mean, shit happens, I'm a Black man in America. **I didn't graduate from college.** It

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I collect very minimal client information at the library. The data that we do collect, which is on our referral form on the library's website (when it's not summer) only includes name (folks are free to use whatever name they want), email if they have one, phone number if they have one, and what they want to discuss. No other demographic information is collected. And only myself and the social work interns that work with me during the school year have access to it.

The library is really big on privacy and anonymity of its users, so I keep as little personal information on our patrons as possible.

When we run our stats the most data I have are around patron needs and how many people we are seeing.

Hope this helps.

got expensive. Mom wanted rent. I had bills to pay, I had to get a job,...

The way Isaac tells it, it is as though he associates not completing his degree with the experience of being a commuter student. The fact that his mother needed rent money from him meant that he needed to work, and this took away from the time he needed to study. The kind of job he could get didn't pay well, meaning that he needed to work more hours to make enough to make ends meet. Although he had gotten a financial aid package, much like Wesley, it didn't cover his tuition. To go to university, Isaac took out student loans.

In Zaire's narrative, he acknowledged how paying for university figured in his experience. He said,

*Researcher: How did you pay for school?*

Yeah, it was a different time. **I got financial aid. I got the pell grant.** I was poor, you know. **I made up the difference with a few small student loans.** That's how I was able to afford living on campus. In the four years I was in college, my parents moved three times. School became the constant, not home.

Poor financial packages came up several times in the narratives among the participants under 40 years old. The loans seem to make up the majority of the financial aid package, not the gap. For many of the research participants, there was still a gap between grants and loans which meant that they had to work a lot, to afford to attend school and meet their basic needs.

For example, Carl said,

I found that **I needed to take on more and more shifts at work. I needed to pay rent,** the train pass, food, and I needed to save up for tuition. I didn't get enough financial aid and I didn't have anyone willing to **cosign a loan for me.**

Having and not having a cosigner was the difference between attending and graduating and not graduating. Loans were a theme that was very common throughout the stories. For example, in his narrative, Vince wrote,

As I said, as soon as September came, I was out. I went to Vermont for school. **I lived in the dorms that year**, only came home for Christmas. **I took out crazy loans to pay for it all**, but it was worth it.

While Zaire went on to graduate, both Carl and Vince ended up dropping out of university. A very common story. Vince wrote,

Considering what I was really doing at school, how bad my grades were, and how much it cost, **I decided to drop out**. Moved back home, to the projects, permanently.

In his narrative, Allen said,

I was in bad shape at that time. I moved into a basement apartment with two roommates. I didn't really know them. **I dropped out of school at that time**.

Allen, Carl, Eric, all dropped out. The reasons they dropped ranged from poor grades (like Wesley), unable to pay (like Eric and Carl), family life (like Nasir and Isaac), life shocks (like Damien and Vince), and fathering a child (like Hakeem). Khalil never told me. In fact, seven research participants completed their undergraduate degree. Coincidentally, the only one of these who didn't have a homeowner as a relative was Zaire. But he was helped throughout his undergraduate years by a homeowner.

Shifting gears, I'd like to call attention to Rashaad. He was the only of my research participants to mention that they went to a for-profit university. In fact, his primary motivation for taking part in my study was the fact that he needed help sorting out his paperwork because he was now interested in completing his degree. Rashaad said,

Here's what happened, though. **I went to [UNIVERSITY]. A for-profit university**. I wasn't the best student, but I love art and computers. So, I thought if I studied something that involved art and computers, I would do pretty well... It didn't matter because **I took out loans**, just like everybody else, and lived in the dorms.

I can't help but think that university education in this case operates as what scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) calls *predatory inclusion*. Consider this, these young men pretty much all decide to attend university. However, their financial aid packages do not meet their needs. They have to supplement by working outside of the university. They have to split their attention between study, work, transportation, and social life. When they inevitably fail, they are left with thousands of dollars in student loans along with the mess of the life shocks.

Around this time the Biden administration was battling the Supreme Court over student loan forgiveness. One argument against relieving loan-burdened adults of these loans is the fact that these loan servicing companies purchased contracts to receive interests for years, so student loan forgiveness would deny these companies the profits from the interest accrual and this could significantly harm the student loan servicing sector (Soederberg, 2014; Leonhardt, 2022). If not premeditated, this is still exploitative. Doesn't this work against the interest of the student loan programme? As Desmond points out, Black families have some of the lowest take-up rates for government programmes such as college savings accounts like 529 accounts, which means Black students and their families have to make the choice to either gamble, go into student debt to attend university, or not attend at all. This seems punitive.

In thinking about the punitive nature of predatory inclusion, I began to look at how police and university figured in the narratives. I looked at Jamal, Damien, and Quintin. Jamal is a university graduate. His mother purchased a home well outside of the city where he got his first job after completing his degree. Despite having a degree and full-time employment, he was couch surfing. He said,

I spent some time in jail. When I got out. I had a record. Try getting a job with a record. On top of that, my mom was heated at me. She didn't let me stay there.

Despite having a university degree, he still found it hard to find a job with a criminal record.

Damien had not completed a university degree, and he said, 'Even though I had done

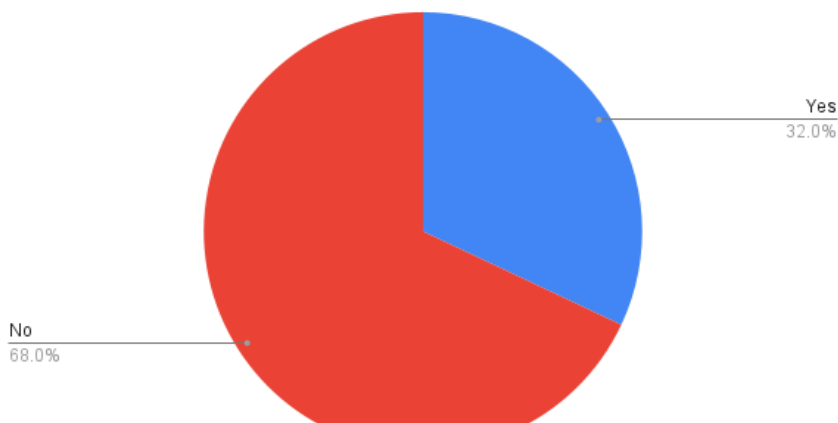
some years in college, I could only do gig work'. He went on to say that it was fine, but it was clear that the criminal record was having an impact on his job prospects.

Quintin had not attended university as a student. In his narrative he said,

I got locked up. For selling drugs, marijuana mostly, but also pills to the college students. It was the pills really.

Quintin went to jail for selling drugs to college students. In May 2009, the news broke out that Justin Cosby, a friend of mine from high school, was killed while selling drugs at Harvard University (NBC News, 2009). I hold these stories together. Combined, they illustrate predatory inclusion on the part of exorbitant university tuitions and predatory loans, social death, and exclusion if you end up in prison, with or without a university degree, and death if you're a body out of place.

#### #### 4.1.3.12 The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and How It Figures



**Figure 14 Pie chart of use of prison industrial complex**

In talking about African-descended men in the United States in 2023, it would be a gross oversight to neglect how police, prisons, and jails figure in their housing narratives.

In this section, I look at how the PIC figures in the narratives. Of the 20 participants, eight of them mention either police, prison, or jail in their narrative. I will look at how police and other PIC institutions figure in these stories. I'll take a brief detour into how domestic violence figures. Also in this section, I take a look at some of the ways that the absence of the PIC figures in

these stories. With some context, I will examine Felix, Xavion, and Grant's cases. I end this section with a brief analysis of how this data fits with the conceptual framework of abolition. In Allen's narrative,<sup>60</sup> the police were called on him one night when he was scaling the wall to his home, where he resided with his parents. The way that Allen told it, the fact that his father had to deal with the police, in the middle of the night no less, played a major role in the precipitating incident that thrust him into transience.

In Orion's case, he mentioned the police in his narrative about the time when he started getting in trouble in high school. He said:

Okay, so in high school. I started hanging out and started smoking weed. This was also when I was diagnosed with ADHD and was prescribed medication. I started getting in trouble and having run-ins with the police. I was getting suspended from school a lot.

Orion named this period as the precipitating incident, when he was thrust into transience. His mother was concerned that she might lose her housing if he was getting in trouble with the police because she had a section 8 voucher.

In Orion's second narrative, another case was mentioned which I found compelling. A person he knew was arrested, and that person was the romantic partner of an inclusionary tenant. They were arrested because they had marijuana delivered from another state. He said:

So when the box came, someone snitched. Obviously it was someone who knows this shit. Snitches! They called the police. When he came to get the box, this dude got arrested for WEED, weed my nigga, WEED. This shit is legal.

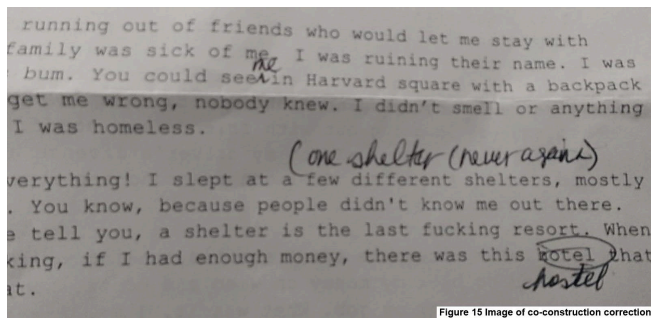
Both of the accounts from Orion are important because they illustrate how Orion and the people he knows are navigating the surveillance of government-subsidised housing programmes. The

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<sup>60</sup> My dad thought I was being reckless. I got in trouble, they took my keys away. I went out anyway. I would get back in through the window. We lived on the second floor. I figured out how to scale the wall and I left my window cracked, so I would be able to open it. My brother never snitched. But one day a neighbor must have seen me, thought I was breaking in or something. They called the police. My dad had to deal with the police in the middle of the night. He knew it was me. We got into a huge fight. My dad kicked me out.

choice to have Orion leave, without a place to go, was made so his mother wouldn't lose her inclusionary unit and her section 8 voucher. These are the choices a mother is having to make, her housing or her son. In this case, she chose her housing. But Orion had options, his grandmother's public housing unit or even his father's private rental apartment. If Orion didn't have these options, it is unclear whether she would have made the same choice.

For Quintin,<sup>61</sup> the costs of the rental unit which he shared with his romantic partner and the costs associated with a newborn baby were mounting when he chose to sell drugs, pills, and



marijuana to university students, which landed him in jail. His partner and child were thrust into the transition sheltering system, where they eventually landed a section 8 voucher. Arrest begets arrest, and Quintin

went on to cycle in and out of prison for the same thing.

Jamal's case was interesting. His mother had been his anchor. She owned her own property. But when he got arrested and spent time in jail, he was thrust into transience. He said:

Long story short, I was at the wrong place, at the wrong time and I ended up getting arrested. I spent some time in jail. When I got out. I had a record. Try getting a job with a record. On top of that, my mom was heated at me. She didn't let me stay there.

This experience of being arrested left Jamal living between multiple households, later for a stint in a shelter and a long-stay hostel, and using hook up apps for a place to sleep at night before ending up in jail again. For Jamal, his arrest resulted in his losing access to his anchor home as well as other solid network members. As he drained his social resources, he was left with fewer and fewer options for places to stay, he did eventually end up making contact with a shelter. In

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<sup>61</sup>I got locked up. For selling drugs marijuana mostly, but also pills to the college students. It was the pills really. I spent over a year in jail. I miss the birth of my first child.

one of his edits of the narrative, he wrote 'one shelter (never again)'.

Damien spent time in jail. Like Jamal, he simply explained what happened as being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In some ways he was referring to being in the location that landed him in jail, but he was also talking about being in the wrong mental space while he was out in public. He explained this to me in a recent conversation, well after we had completed work on the draft of the narrative. But Damien spent several years working but not earning enough to accomplish his goals. The arrest record held him back. The way Damien tells the story, it sounds more like he was holding himself back because of the arrest, not just that the arrest was preventing him direct access to the job opportunities that would allow him to earn enough money to work toward his goals. Of course both Damien and I know that the arrest record was holding him back. But once he had taken ownership of his story and decided to seek opportunities despite the record, he found great job opportunities. He said:

I have turned a new leaf. It's been seven years since I got out. It's poetic cause now there is no part of my body that has ever been in jail. Just the memories of who I was. I'm ready to keep climbing, keep making moves. Time to get out of my grandmother's house and build my own space.

### **'Absences' of the Prison Industrial Complex and How They Figure**

In Susie Scott's 'A Sociology of Nothing', she describes the impacts and the imprints of omissions, absences, emptiness, and of non-things. She calls this approach the sociology of nothing. I was profoundly moved by her description about what is possible to see when you focus on the invisible. Because the conceptual framework of this project is PIC abolition, it makes sense to look into how the absences of the PIC figured in the narratives of these men. I wanted to look at the use of policing in the narratives through its absences.

In Wesley's story, he mentioned being housing transient on the college campus, staying with friends. As an enrolled student, he had the necessary identification card to prove that he belonged, despite not actually being a boarder on the campus. Had he not had that



identification, I wonder if his story would have included a fear of navigating campus security or the police, for instance if there was an incident when he didn't have his ID. We must consider this sort of absence. The fear of what *could* happen tends to influence the ways in which we police ourselves as African-descended people. We prevent ourselves from being bodies out of place.

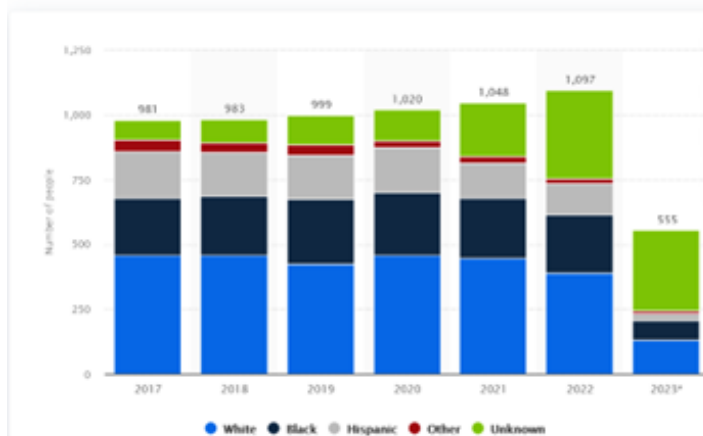
Rather than speculating further about what could have happened to Wesley, I will look at the stories of Marcus, Felix, and Quintin to examine these absences and the PIC.

Marcus' story was different from the rest. In his narrative, he said:

For a while I was relying on Uber and stuff as my primary income. I'm an activist. I needed the flexibility. So, if the police murdered another person, I needed to focus on that, you know.

The way that police figured in his narrative was not the active role that police and other PIC

Number of people shot to death by the police in the United States from 2017 to 2023, by race



**Figure 16 Number of people shot to death by police by race**

institutions played in his life directly, although he encountered them at protests and feared approaches like cointelpro. Marcus was directly addressing the harms of policing and other harmful institutions through his activism. This figured in his housing story: his employment options were limited to the gig economy because he needed the flexibility to do his activism, which was called upon very often.

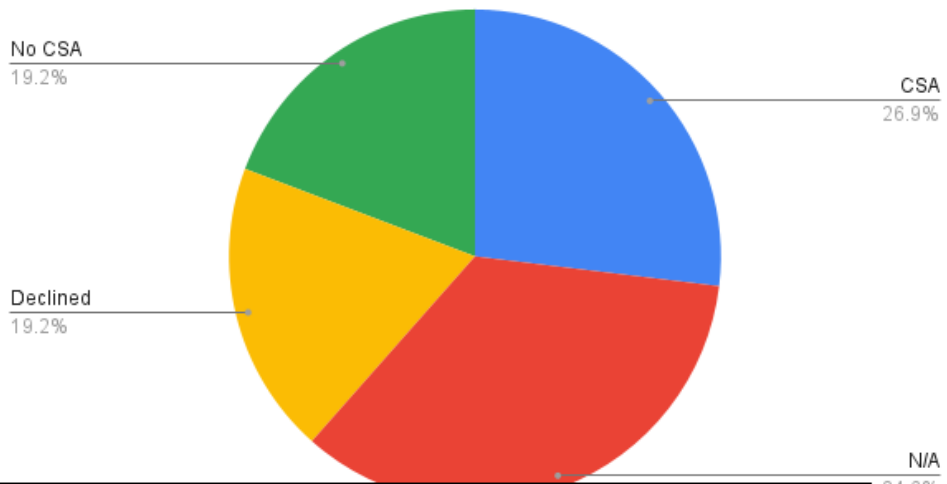
According to the Statista website,<sup>62</sup> the police murdered over one thousand people in 2021, at

<sup>62</sup> Stats on police murders by race retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/585152/people-shot-to-death-by-us-police-by-race/>.

the time of the interview.

In the extended interview and in several subsequent conversations, Felix mentioned that as a youth, he got into a bit of trouble and ended up on probation. The trouble was that he and his friends entered a vacant and abandoned property. They were caught by the police and charged with breaking and entering as minors. After this incident, his father was incredibly critical of his life choices. A middle class and Christian family with two parents who had graduate degrees, they worried for Felix and his future. They thought he was headed down a carceral path. It was the fear that he would never be able to escape the grasp of the carceral state that fueled their response to Felix during his turbulent adolescent years.

Later, in our subsequent conversations, Felix described the harm of being subjected to childhood sexual violence by a family member as a factor in his rebellion and disruptive behaviour during those years. His parents didn't yet



**Figure 17 Pie chart of mentions of childhood sexual violence**

know about the sexual abuse, and they couldn't see what he was going through then. As an adult, when Felix brought up the sexual abuse, just after undergrad, it led to a massive fight. This, in turn, led to him storming out and becoming transient. This context was missing from his narrative. We both decided to omit it from the narrative at the time because it was so far from the subject of housing transience. According to Felix, his involvement in the criminal justice system was a reaction to the trauma of the experience of childhood sexual violence. With his

permission, I've decided that it is important to mention now. I see mentions of violence in texts about low-income African-descended men,<sup>63</sup> and I see sexual violence in various texts (Curry, 2021). But I haven't come across any research that looks at childhood sexual violence and punitive system entanglements regarding racialised boys. After this interview, I began to ask my research participants about childhood sexual violence (see figure 17).<sup>64</sup>

Quintin was in and out of jail throughout his entire adulthood. When he tells his life story, it is organised by his stints in jail. He articulates very clearly that incarceration was limiting and how it operated to limit his options in life. Something Quintin said has always stood out to me—that 'prison is like a time machine'. Time seems to have stood still for him in prison, but advances were being made and people's lives went on while he stayed seemingly still. He has had to relearn many things about the world and how to live in it without the context of his own experience, which would allow for slow and integrated progress. He talks about missing the births and birthdays of his children and the passing of his grandmother. Prison stole these temporal milestones and network-building opportunities from him.

### ### 4.1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented data to answer the overarching research question. So, *where do Black men live?* By live, I mean how these men meet their housing needs (permanent

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<sup>63</sup> Rios, V. M. (2011). *Punished: Policing the lives of Black and Latino boys*. NYU Press.

<sup>64</sup> For the childhood sexual violence chart: CSA meant that they expressed that they had experienced childhood sexual violence. In many cases, they also shared the stories as well as the perpetrator. No CSA meant that the person explicitly said that they had not experienced any CSA. Declined here is that they declined to answer the question. Sometimes they gave a reason and sometimes they said they didn't feel comfortable. N/A means I didn't ask the question. I didn't always feel comfortable asking the question.

Here are some comments about CSA from my notes:

Orion: He said, he has not directly experienced sexual violence. But other friends/family have experienced that. Friends have experienced suicidal ideation because of CSA/V. There was an incident in the project in W.C. a while back. Everyone heard about it.

Rashaad: I didn't feel comfortable bringing it up because his wife was listening in on the conversations.

Trey: But hears about it all the time through his work.

address, postal service, storage, and sleeping). Since they are effectively excluded from the private rental markets, they are limited to many informal housing options—meaning, many of these men are unregistered, invisible, or illegal residents. When they are ‘formally’ housed, they rely on non-corporate landlords such as individuals and programmes such as non-profits—SROs, cooperatives, etc. When they access government programmes (i.e. public housing, section 8, and inclusionary housing), they rarely do so in a legal or documented fashion. Low-income African-descended men are severely disadvantaged in all markets in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In this chapter, we focused on the low-income housing-transient men themselves. We have come to learn that these men live where they do with support from people, programmes, and governments—whether it is Grant who got help from his mother when he applied for the inclusionary programme or Zaire who got help from his friend toward purchasing a home. The networks of these men make a difference in them living where they do. Governments make a difference too. Jamal is incarcerated. He is where he is by state intervention. What this chapter makes incredibly clear is that the specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income urban African-descended men needs to be empirically examined. In isolating these men and their experiences, I have come to see that collapsing their experiences with other Black people, other men, or other low-income people ignores the specifics of the intersection at which they are socially located.

In this presentation of data, we came to learn from the men *where* it is that they live and *how* they come to live where they do. In the next findings chapter, I turn to the burning question, *who should shoulder the burden of payment with regard to the housing needs of these low-income Black men?*

## **## 4.2 The Burden on Community**

### **### 4.2.1 Introduction**

When we look at housing transience and insecurity, we tend to look at the burdens on the people experiencing housing insecurity and even on their families and friends. We don't often think of how the larger community, by trying to find solutions, shares in the burdens. In this chapter, I will zoom out beyond my research participants to explore a slice of the wider Cambridge community and how they are grappling with this issue. It is not just the housing-transient men or their networks who bear the burden of this problem; in a sense, it is the entire community. The Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC) is a case in point. This chapter traces CHJC's efforts to find a solution to this housing dilemma by focusing on the participatory action research (PAR) process. I will present the complex intricacies of the PAR process to illustrate the burden on the community.

This chapter focuses on a series of discussions that took place as we (CHJC) worked to select and construct a winnable campaign that addresses the housing needs of low-income Black men. This discussion takes place amidst challenges regarding how to advocate for this population given the political circumstances. There are potentially a wide range of ways that one could address the housing needs of this population. In this chapter, I will focus on the solutions that the CHJC came up with and why each was judged untenable.

In this chapter I lay out each of the two options and how the CHJC proposed that their costs be covered. The two options are:

1. A campaign to widen the range of eligibility for inclusionary zoning
2. A campaign to develop a municipal voucher programme

Each option entertained by the CHJC of course entailed a cost. The cost issue turned out to be the most complex element of the discussion. I detail the process CHJC members undertook in

an effort to answer the primary question of this chapter. The question is, *who should shoulder the burden of payment with regard to housing these low-income housing-transient men?*

I begin with a brief background, including how I came to do this research with the CHJC, its formation, and the site where this portion of the research takes place. Next I offer some notes to help us keep track of the various types of data presented in this chapter, followed by the narrative presentation of the data itself drawn from CHJC meeting notes. The data presentation is followed by an analysis that focuses on the concepts of social construction and bureaucratic structure and that connects the threads of this chapter to the overall objectives of the thesis.

In this chapter, I will use political scientist Terry M. Moe's description of *the politics of bureaucratic structure* and Anne Schneider's *social construction theory* to describe the social dynamics at play in participatory democratic policy design. The primary element of analysis in this chapter is when and how the social construction of my research participants figure in discussions among the CHJC members toward the development of a campaign. Moe (1989) writes, 'the more fundamental questions have to do with how interest groups decide what kinds of structures they want politicians to provide'. I will illustrate *how* social constructions figure in CHJC's decision about the structures and interventions for the campaign.

### **### 4.2.2 Background**

During fieldwork—from January 2021—and throughout the writing process up to August 2023, I both catalysed and participated in weekly meetings with a Cambridge-wide grassroots group called the CHJC. In this chapter, I document the discussions, debates, and campaign planning that took place during a period of my time as a member of that group. I introduced the group to my thesis project, as mentioned in the methodology chapter. Throughout my time as a member of the CHJC, we worked on the task of constructing a winnable campaign that would address the housing needs of housing-transient low-income African-descended men. I end the

chapter with how all of this connects to abolition, and an analysis of what this means for my research participants.

In this process with the CHJC, the persistent question that arises concerns the cost of each of the options discussed; *who should shoulder the burden of payment with regard to the housing insecurity of these low-income African-descended men?* We are presented with four possibilities for answering this cost question: the individual, the community (the members of CHJC), the municipal government, and the development and management corporations. This chapter serves as an opportunity for the reader to join the CHJC and participate in the democratic process.

### **### 4.2.3 About the Process**

In Cambridge, the Ordinance Committee, like other committees,<sup>65</sup> is responsible for taking up the suggestions made by Cambridge residents. An ordinance is a law passed at the municipal level and may address local issues ranging from quiet hour zones to additions of stop signs and other traffic signals. A progressive city councillor and a friend of CHJC was named the chair of the Ordinance Committee. With this advantage of a friend as the chair, the CHJC collectively decided to develop a public-facing campaign to garner public support. Toward that end, the CHJC developed a process for pitching ideas and learning about various aspects of the city's governing process in order to determine where we might most effectively take aim. There were several proposals within the CHJC group about campaigns that we might adopt. These included 1) increasing linkage fees,<sup>66</sup> 2) banning down zoning conversions,<sup>67</sup> and 3)

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<sup>65</sup> There are committees for Finance, Government Operations, Rules and Claims, Housing, Economic Development & University Relations, Human Services & Veterans, Health & Environment, Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebration, Transportation, Civic Unity, Public Safety, and the Ordinances.

<sup>66</sup> Linkage fees are a one-time fee paid by commercial developers. The money goes directly to affordable housing.

<sup>67</sup> Down zoning conversions are when somebody buys up a multifamily home and turns it into fewer, more expensive units.

reclassifying hotels from residential to commercial use.<sup>68</sup> I wanted to make a different proposal based on the needs of my research participants, a proposal that would target the inclusionary zoning rental housing programme.

### **### 4.2.4 Option One: Widening the Range of Eligibility for Inclusionary Zoning**

My pitch to the group focused on the first option, widening the range of eligibility for inclusionary zoning. In order to qualify for the inclusionary rental programme in Cambridge, one has to have an income that is between 50% and 80% of the area median income (AMI). This excluded many of my research participants. My proposal, therefore, was to expand eligibility by increasing the qualifying range of AMI by moving the minimum required income from 50% to 35%. The change would accommodate my research participants who had applied for this programme but were deemed ineligible, despite being employed full-time and earning more than minimum wage.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, in my research, I had discovered that there were more than 60 vacant studio and one-bedroom units. I couldn't help but wonder, why are there vacant units when there are gainfully employed people in need of housing?

This idea of targeting inclusionary zoning eligibility requirements came up after recommending this programme to five of my research participants. The first was Eric; he was gainfully employed in the tech sector, and his income qualified him for this programme. After incurring a life changing injury, he became disabled and needed a two-bedroom apartment. Allen, who was an anchor father, needed a two-bedroom for his wife and daughter, who would be moving to the area after he got settled. Patrick was a young man paying about 80% of his

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<sup>68</sup> In Cambridge, hotels are currently considered a residential use under the zoning. This means that when a developer promises '40% housing, 60% commercial', some of the 40% can actually be a hotel instead of housing.

<sup>69</sup> The area median income in Cambridge in 2021 was between \$95,000–\$103,000 in Cambridge ([Datausa.io, 2022](#); [City of Cambridge, 2021](#)). According to the Inclusionary Housing Program Preliminary Guidelines, to qualify for a studio apartment through this program, the applicant would need to earn a minimum of \$42,000 ([City of Cambridge, 2021](#)).



income toward his monthly rent. Khalil was living as an undocumented tenant of public housing and listed his business address as his legal permanent address. Marcus had recently come into salaried employment during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> These men worked in a number of professions: in IT, as a restaurant cook, a security guard, a barbershop owner, and a retail clerk. The security guard and restaurant cook typically earned between \$32,000 to \$40,000 annually while working full-time. These three did not qualify. However, the barbershop owner and the IT worker both earned above \$50,000 and were quickly accepted into the programme.

The fact that some of the other men did not qualify led me to call up a contact at City Hall; this is when I discovered that there were more than 60 vacant studio apartments available as part of this programme. When I asked why my other participants were not selected when there were so many available units, I was reminded of the income eligibility requirement. It just so happens that my older brother worked for a property management company at one of these luxury buildings and facilitated the paperwork for inclusionary tenants. He told me that all of the inclusionary residents in his building were also section 8 voucher holders. In my research, I stumbled upon this provision in the zoning code:

The gross household income of an Eligible Household upon initial occupancy shall be at least fifty percent (50%) and no more than eighty percent (80%) of AMI. **A gross household income less than fifty percent (50%) of AMI may be permitted in the case of an Eligible Household having a rental subsidy** allowing it to pay a rent equivalent to that paid by an Eligible Household with a gross household income within the range set forth above.

This was significant because it meant that voucher holders were able to access the units, despite earning less than 50% of the area median income. This meant that if my research participants had section 8 vouchers, they could access the vacant units right away. However, there were four complications. The first is the eligibility requirements. The two requirements for section 8 voucher eligibility are:

- Household income must not exceed 50% of AMI.
- **Applicants or households must be family or elderly and/or disabled.**

Second, there is a waiting list; third, there is a shortage of vouchers; and fourth, there are the preferences for selections (for families, seniors, and the disabled). According to the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) website (January 2023), under the heading 'Status of Waitlists',<sup>70</sup> it says:

- Public Housing and Former Public Housing- Family **(waitlist is open)**
- Public Housing and Former Public Housing- Elderly/Disabled **(waitlist is open)**
- Single Room Occupancy **(waitlist is open)**
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV/Section 8) **(waitlist is open)**

If a waitlist is open, this means that there are no currently available units. While the waitlists are open at this point, in late 2020 and early 2021, when I checked for my research participants, the waitlists were closed, meaning they were not accepting applicants for the waitlist. But even now, there is a years-long waitlist. I spoke with the head of the City of Cambridge's Office of the Housing Liaison, and I was told that there is a severe shortage of section 8 vouchers. And when I inquired to CHA about the voucher waiting list, I was informed that there are families with young children that are on the waiting list. These early conversations very much informed my thinking about what needed to be changed in order to help housing-transient low-income African-descended men in Cambridge.

The Cambridge Development Department (CDD) explained that families with children who apply for the inclusionary programme were searching for three-bedrooms and up. They also said that two-bedroom units had vacancies as well, although not as many as that for studios and one-bedrooms. After my conversations with contacts in the property management offices, CDD, the Office of the Housing Liaison, and CHA, I had come to the conclusion that we needed to widen the range of AMI for eligibility by lowering the percentage of AMI for studio and one-bedroom apartments in the inclusionary programme.

The objective of this campaign is to widen the eligibility range. Outside of the government housing subsidies, housing-insecure people had three options: 1) paying into the

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<sup>70</sup> Waitlist status information retrieved from <https://cambridge-housing.org/applicants/>.

private market where there is no cap; 2) using other informal means (using their networks to secure places to stay, living between multiple households); and 3) surviving poverty in public (rough sleeping and/or shelter homelessness) despite being employed.

Not widening the eligibility range did not just mean that these folks were un/der-housed, there were other, very serious, consequences for the larger community. If we did not widen the range for eligibility, the options would remain the same (paying more than 30% of their income in the private market or insecure and invisible housing circumstances by living between multiple households or residing undocumented). Some people would lose the right to vote, be undercounted in the census, and/or lose preference for Cambridge support because they would not be able to meet the burden of proof for residency.

#### **#### 4.2.4.1 Option One CHJC Discussion**

After my pitch, there were a series of initial remarks. Notably, one attendee said:

I was working full-time as a teacher at one of the Harvard child care centers while homeless. It affects your mental health when you have no place to live. I sometimes slept at work. Inclusionary housing was not an option available to me because the minimum salary requirement was above mine, even for empty studios and 1-bedrooms. I would stay at places where I was living with multiple housemates, or bounce between friends'.<sup>71</sup>  
—CHJC Notes

After the presentation, there was a discussion where people were invited to share reactions and ask for clarifications. There was praise for the idea of expanding the range of eligibility for the inclusionary programme.

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<sup>71</sup> What follows is the full account presented by this attendee: 'Waiting for a voucher, and also when looking at places, I had to compete against those in shelters. I finally got a section 8 voucher. But, I had to convince a landlord to sign up with Cambridge Housing Alliance, since there were no section 8 apartments available on CHA's housing list. ... To secure a place, I paid 3 months rent up front to live in an apartment—to show them that I was "trustworthy" and to buy time while CHA did their approval inspection; this was risky because if the apartment failed the inspection, CHA would not onboard or pay subsidy to the landlord for the unit. I painted and worked on the unit myself, as well as ran the paperwork between CHA and the landlord's agent (the landlord lived out of state) to make sure the place passed inspection... And then, within less than a year, it was being flipped, renovated and sold as a condo. I had to move out. This happened again at the following place I found; I had not even finished unpacking.'

'[We could] establish an overlap in income eligibility between the CHA lists and the inclusionary list to facilitate a smoother transition between the two brackets of eligibility.'

The low-income attendees, members of Association of Cambridge Tenants (ACT), The Black Response (TBR), and Cambridge HEART, favoured widening the range of eligibility for participation across the board. I had only prepared arguments for studio and one-bedroom apartments. The members of ACT suggested that we go even further, from 35% AMI down to 30% AMI.

However, there were also these responses to my pitch:

- Dennis - 'This is a compelling case, but this is a **losing campaign** because the developers and management companies will ask how can these residents pay the minimum rent necessary to keep the **program viable**?'
- Charles - 'While yes, we would be able to house 60 people right away, the issue then becomes the **burden of payment**. The minimum rent is set based on the 1/3 income ratio. Wouldn't it make more sense to campaign for more **city vouchers** in order to have more people qualify for these units through the inclusionary program.'
- Cassandra - 'I agree, I think the voucher campaign is a more feasible one. However, I don't think this would address Stephanie's concern, that is, the voucher program will in all likelihood **prioritise families with children**. It would be entirely too difficult to convince the community to get behind a campaign to **house perfectly able working young men, over low-income families with dependent children**.'
- Delia - 'I like the spirit of the campaign, Stephanie, but **we cannot win**. If we are taking up unwinnable campaigns, shouldn't we focus on grand social housing ideas such as decommodifying large swaths of land through community land trusts or the Project Right to Housing ARPA<sup>72</sup> application plan? That way, even if we lose, we are moving the larger conversation to engage with social housing as a concept. We can play the long game.'
- Hailey - 'I recall that your research participants are young Black men who live between multiple households ... and that this is something taking place in public housing. Have you talked this idea over with **Cambridge Housing Authority**? Aren't they the ones who administer the **section 8 program**? Doesn't CHA want to solve this problem? If we did a power analysis, would they be for or against us on this?'

After this discussion, there was a vote taken and it was decided that the CHJC would take up this campaign. From there, a discussion ensued about the **burden of payment**. The inclusionary programme operates by setting the rent at a 30% threshold for the household gross

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<sup>72</sup> The Project Right to Shelter, the Cambridge branch of the national movement called *The Project Right to Housing*, submitted an application through the City's process for funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Their proposal asked for millions to house each rough sleeper in the city into permanent private stock housing using the housing first logic.

income, at between 50% to 80% AMI.<sup>73</sup> If we are proposing bringing in people whose income is between 30% to 50% AMI, or (30%) \$21,225 to (50%) \$42,280, the base income for the management company would be as low as \$530 per month. *Who should be responsible for the difference?* This discussion had two parts 1) who should shoulder the burden of payment and 2) what is the threshold for the burden of payment?

#### **Here are some points raised during the discussion<sup>74</sup>:**

1. If we lower the AMI for inclusionary, **who should shoulder the burden of payment?** Is it the city, the developers/management companies, or the individuals?
2. We cannot win if we put the burden of payment on the developers/management companies. The burden of payment should only go to the city.
3. If the city should shoulder the burden of payment, **how are we going to pay for it?**
  - a. Municipal vouchers (paid using city income as demonstrated by Boston<sup>75</sup> and Somerville<sup>76</sup>)
  - b. Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust (they are tasked with expanding and protecting affordable housing opportunities in Cambridge) (CDD, n.d.)
4. If we are proposing these options for the city to pay for the program, are we proposing to take up two campaigns?

#### **What is the threshold for the burden of payment?**

1. Are we considering having the tenant be the one to shoulder the burden of payment? The threshold for payment would be too onerous to make up the difference.
2. The current threshold is set at 30% of household income. Are we proposing to raise the threshold? That is, allow people to pay more than 30% of their income.

I gave a presentation on 'The Orshansky Index', the origin of the notion that one should pay 30% of income toward housing.<sup>77</sup> Afterwards, we were still left with a very important question to be answered: *Who should shoulder the burden of payment?* For the purposes of the presentation, there were three possible options:

- The individual
- The developers/management companies
- The City of Cambridge

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<sup>73</sup> If AMI is \$84,560, then the range of income necessary for eligibility is (50%) \$42,280 to (80%) \$70,750. The base rental income that the management company makes is (30%) \$42,280, or \$1,057 per month.

<sup>74</sup> The meeting notes didn't include the speakers for this section of the discussion.

<sup>75</sup> Find more on Boston's voucher programme at <https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/For-Section-8-Leased-Housing/Voucher-Programs/City-of-Boston-Voucher-Program.aspx>.

<sup>76</sup> More on Somerville's voucher programme on the SHA website: <http://sha-web.org/programs.aspx>.

<sup>77</sup> See the housing chapter of the literature review.

#### **##### 4.2.4.1.1 The Individual**

I suggested that individuals should be allowed to shoulder the burden of payment from within the inclusionary housing programme. After all, individuals in the programme would be allowed to have access to formal, safe, and sanitary housing. There were two objections to allowing individuals to shoulder the burden of payment: 1) What about the viability of the programme?<sup>78</sup> And 2) people should not pay more than 30% of their income in government-subsidised housing programmes (referencing the Orshansky Index). There was a series of back and forth discussions on the Orshansky Index point. Coalition members were concerned with the negative precedent it would set. However, I pointed out that outside of these programmes, people were paying well above 30% of their income on housing. I brought up Patrick and how he said he would gladly pay 40% or 50% in exchange for the 80% he was currently paying. A vote was taken, and the CHJC members voted against allowing individuals to shoulder the burden of payment.

#### **##### 4.2.4.1.2 The Developers and Management Companies**

Members all agreed it would be preferable for the developers and management companies to shoulder the burden of payment, but that such a campaign would be utterly *unwinnable*. The developers and management companies have lobbyists and lawyers. They are too big and organised. We do not have the same level of resources. They can just buy the council, and they will win. No official vote was taken, but everyone moved on to the city.

#### **##### 4.2.4.1.3 The Municipal Government**

There was a vote taken: CHJC members collectively decided, ‘... this group ... feels the city should shoulder the burden’. So, Charles asked:

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<sup>78</sup> Meaning that these individuals would need to be able to contribute enough in monthly payments for development and management companies to continue building the types of housing that would contribute to this programme.

“What *means* does the city have to cover the difference? Are there other means besides vouchers?”

Over the next few meetings, Bill and I took turns giving presentations on how the following two options might be used in shouldering the burden of payment:

- The Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
- The city voucher programmes

#### ##### 4.2.4.1.4 Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)

Bill gave a presentation to the group about the Affordable Housing Trust (henceforth, ‘the AHT’ or ‘The Trust’). In 1989, the Cambridge City Council developed the Trust. Its mission is the expansion and protection of affordable housing opportunities in the City of Cambridge. The city’s website states, ‘The Trust is comprised of a nine-member board that includes experts in housing policy, finance, development, design, and advocacy. The Trust serves as both a policy advisory board and a loan committee, meeting on a monthly basis throughout the year to review proposals for new housing preservation and development efforts and other housing programmes, and to discuss affordable housing policy’ (CDD, n.d.). Since its inception, the Trust has financed the creation or preservation of more than 2,600 affordable units in Cambridge.

Currently, allowable uses of Affordable Housing Trust funding are for:

- Creation of new units
- Acquisition of new units
- Preservation of existing units
- Rehabilitation of existing or [for] new units
- Administrative expenses

CHJC member, Bill, proposed adding ‘**subsidization through a local voucher program**’ to the list of allowable uses of the Trust funds. In his presentation he gave the following sample language change:

Financing of any local voucher program established by the **City Manager or City Ordinance** for the purpose of expanding housing affordability, access, and opportunity for people at low and moderate income levels and/or supporting the creation and viable operation of Affordable Dwelling Units, including (but not limited to) units created by Section 11.203.

Note that Bill proposed that the City Ordinance, established via either the Ordinance Committee or the City Manager, would also be allowed to create a local voucher programme. That way, the community could work through the Ordinance Committee to create future voucher programmes.

In his power analysis, Bill anticipated four areas of resistance to this change:

1. Opposition from advocates of options for middle income households
2. Opposition from the city
3. Opposition from people who worry about an impact on new supply
4. Resistance from people who see this as buying into an unjust system

### **### 4.2.5 Option Two: The Municipal Voucher Programme**

The 'Housing Voucher Choice Program', referred to henceforth as 'section 8', is Section 8 of the U.S. Federal Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. § 1437f). Section 8 authorised state and municipal authorities to make rental housing assistance payments to private landlords as a housing benefit for low-income families and individuals (see the Housing chapter of the literature review for more on section 8). There are two types of section 8 vouchers, project-based vouchers and mobile vouchers. In Cambridge, both are administered by the local public housing authority but funded with federal dollars. There is also the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). This voucher programme has the same eligibility requirements and is administered and operates in the same way as the federally funded programme but it is funded with state funds. The voucher discussion among CHJC members was largely about developing a municipal-level voucher programme.

In 2022, the City of Somerville also developed a municipal voucher programme. A representative from the Somerville Office of Housing Stability gave a presentation to CHJC. They said the Somerville programme allows vouchers to be project- or tenant-based. The programme has a two-year pilot funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): from



FY25 through FY27, the programme is set to be funded through the Somerville city budget.

They cited the following reasons for the program:

- Lack of deeply affordable units.
- Lack of access for immigrants, especially those who have temporary protected status (TPS) or families that qualify as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and of course those who are undocumented.
- Demonstrable need: from 2018 to 2022, there were 1,527 requests for services and only roughly 400 were filled.
- Freedom from state and federal regulations.

#### **##### 4.2.5.0.1 The Problems with Vouchers**

The conversation on vouchers created another problem that came up later in CHJC conversation, namely that we were creating our own opposition. Other groups in the city are already working on vouchers. A new voucher programme will likely prioritise families with children. Hailey remarked, 'I think the group has operated all along on the assumption that we would have to make a political case for vouchers for people without children, but that the case could be made'. During the meeting it was determined that it would be entirely too difficult to convince the community to get behind a campaign to house perfectly able-bodied working young men over low-income families with dependent children. Other organisations that would normally be on board with us (Project Right to Shelter and MAAP, as well as others) are already working on vouchers for the homeless. If this campaign does not put us in direct opposition with them, it puts us in their way.

#### **#### 4.2.5.1 Change in the Campaign Discussions**

The first option was to widen the range of AMI by lowering the percentage AMI required to be eligible for the inclusionary rental housing programme from **50%–80% AMI to 35%–80%**. The base income requirement is just a few thousand dollars from the reach of my research participants, and yet they are ineligible. The CHJC membership had agreed to take up this campaign to widen the percentage range of AMI for eligibility into the inclusionary housing programme so that my research participants, employed low-income African-descended men,

would gain entry into the programme to fill the vacant zero- to two-bedroom units. The members of CHJC agreed to this campaign upon the condition that the group find, as Hailey put it, 'a way to keep tenants paying no more than 30% of income on rent'.

Up until this point, the conversation had largely centred around *who would pay the difference in profit for the management companies*. The options being the individuals, the management companies, or the city. It was agreed that we would construct a campaign to get the city to shoulder the burden of payment. Then we moved on to *how* the city could pay for this programme. So we learned what other cities, like Boston and Somerville, were doing to combat similar problems. The conversations began to centre around the creation of a municipal voucher programme, option two.

Hailey - I think part of the voucher discussion is about allowing our target group [low-income African-descended men] to access inclusionary housing without paying more than 30% of income. We did move away from focus[ing] on changing AMI because we found it did not need to be changed if people had vouchers.

There are not enough vouchers. If we create new vouchers, they would go to the waitlist, which prioritises families, not this population of low-income African-descended men. So, one CHJC member suggested that we create a project-based voucher, to *tie the city vouchers to the inclusionary zoning rental programme*. In doing this, the vouchers could not be used for anything other than the inclusionary programme. The aim of creating project-based vouchers is so that eventually they would serve zero- to two-bed inclusionary units. Once vouchers are used up to support entry into larger units (three-plus beds), there will be no other option than to use the remaining vouchers, but for entry into the smaller units such as studios and one-bedrooms. In discussions, five reasons<sup>79</sup> to disagree with the project-based voucher idea came up. They were:

1. We run the risk of creating our own opposition. The opposition in this case would be the groups that strongly believe that vouchers should prioritise families with children, elders,

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<sup>79</sup> These are summaries of the arguments presented during the meeting.

and disabled people. These groups are more powerful and more organised than the CHJC.

2. If we project that logic beyond this single issue, we run the risk of limiting the use of city vouchers for a single programme rather than thinking larger. For example, community groups have advocated for the Boston voucher programme to be used as down payments for first-time homebuyers.
3. If we changed the eligibility requirements for entry into the programme, we could finance vouchers, and other subsidies, from other sources. Additionally, [a community response programme] had been using mutual aid funds from a Resource Generation listserv to help with payment arrears and rent increases.
4. This single-use proposal of Cambridge city vouchers would force these potential tenants from social mobility. They would have to remain in the same income rung to continue to qualify for the vouchers. This would no longer be a ladder programme.
5. And a project-based voucher prevents CHJC from conceptualising further uses of the city vouchers in future. The exception would be to undertake a campaign for vouchers for each type of programme we envision.

Hailey wrote in an email,

We also discovered that other groups were working on vouchers and have been trying to see if we could collaborate or coordinate all our aims in a way we all felt good about. So we are still looking at vouchers specific (or as specific as we can make it) for the group we initially targeted but also at the possibility we would join a broader voucher campaign inclusive of our target group.

She also wrote,

Initially we talked about changing AMI in conjunction with a voucher ordinance, but discovered that as long as people have vouchers, they do not need to meet the 50% AMI based on their income (according to zoning language that set up the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)), so we don't need to change AMI.

This marked a shift in the discussion, away from the housing needs of the low-income African-descended men. So, the CHJC was moving forward with option two, a municipal voucher programme.

#### **#### 4.2.5.2 The Voucher Clause**

In meeting notes, a continuation of the meeting discussion states:

- (1) *New* option, Bill found the following language in the relevant existing zoning ordinance:

**A gross household income less than fifty percent (50%) of AMI may be permitted in the case of an Eligible Household having a rental subsidy** allowing it to pay a rent equivalent to that paid by an Eligible Household with a gross household income within the range set forth above.

He believes **this means that there is no need to change AMI for zoning** (as in option 1) because if Council provides vouchers for people at 30%, they are eligible for inclusionary housing. Bill suggests an alternative zoning petition to allow the Affordable Housing Trust to use its funds for vouchers (and maybe require that its Board have tenant representation), along with a Council initiative to get funds for vouchers.

That is to say, that the council has already passed a provision which allows people with rental subsidies to qualify for the programme when they do not meet the minimum AMI threshold. A vote was taken, and it was decided that the CHJC would shift its focus away from the AMI campaign. According to Lina, ‘The change on “abandoning” lowering the AMI ultimately came with the information that the AHT would cover below 50%’. This proposal shifts the conversation in two ways:

1. It means that the idea of returning to the burden of payment on the individual is forever moot.
2. It shifts the conversation entirely to vouchers, despite the potential to continue to exclude low-income African-descended men from participation.

Hailey makes the point that

There were always going to be challenges with getting resources for this group (low-income African-descended men) (in any initiative) but that is our job—some combination of making the political case for doing so and bringing allies together in what might end up to be a broader voucher program that still includes our group’. And further, ‘we all agree[d] (I think) that we should be working to get City Vouchers. There are disagreements (maybe) about whether we should do this through zoning changes about the AHT or in another way,...which is part of what I hope Xavier and Bill will help with at the special meeting next Friday.

There has been a collective decision to shift to a two-pronged approach:

1. A Citizens’ Zoning Petition to get the AHT to fund municipal vouchers
2. A City Council ordinance to create (and also fund) municipal vouchers

The focus is undoubtedly on the development of municipal vouchers, not on changing the inclusionary programme to fit the unmet needs. Since this shift to focus instead on the

development of a municipal voucher programme, there have been few mentions of housing low-income African-descended men in discussions. Hailey writes,

This 2-pronged approach is why we don't feel we are leaving people in need behind even if we aren't willing to have them contribute over 30% of their income. The goals are for AHT to fund municipal vouchers and municipal vouchers to go to this group (and possibly others) for inclusionary housing.

The focus has been on constructing a *winnable* campaign.

The conversation among the other CHJC members shifted to the power analysis on vouchers. CHJC members used the next set of meetings to learn about municipal voucher programmes. Preliminary responses from progressive organisations like MAAP, which supports and advocates for the housing interests of people surviving poverty in public, were negative because they had already been working on vouchers for unhoused populations. At a following meeting, one member disclosed that they were experiencing homelessness. They pleaded with the group to consider advocating for more immediate services, rather than abstract discussions about protecting the 30% household income idea. This person suggested that CHJC go back to ideas that favoured advocating for widening the inclusionary eligibility or creating a demonstration or pilot programme. But there was a vote taken, and it was agreed that the CHJC would take up a two-pronged campaign to 1) include people with lived experience in the composition of the affordable housing trust and 2) develop a municipal voucher programme.

### **### 4.2.6 Analysis of the CHJC Discussion**

Thus far in this chapter, we have looked at the two intervention options of 1) widening the eligibility range for inclusionary zoning and 2) municipal vouchers, and traced how the CHJC engaged with the question of *who should shoulder the burden of payment* for each. The payment options entertained were through:

- The individuals,
- The development/management corporations, or
- The municipal government.

By deciding that the government should shoulder the burden of payment, the CHJC members themselves take up the burdens of participatory democracy. In order to get the government to take up the burden of payment, they themselves are burdened by the *process*. This illustrates the ways burdens are already being borne, in this case by the community. In this next part, I use several key ideas, including the politics of social construction and bureaucratic structure, to link the process of policymaking from the perspective of these community actors, to the impact of policymaking on marginalised populations.

In the *Politics of Bureaucratic Structure* (1989), political scientist Terry Moe's first sentence is 'Policy is not designed to be effective'. If that is the case, *what is public policy designed for?* Here I would like to go back to the link between the evolution of policing and property (Marable, 2000). In the Abolition chapter of the literature review, I illustrate the link between policing and property; there we see a strong case that the purpose of policing is to protect private property. If this is the case, then the purpose of the justice system (judges, juries, courts, prisons) is to protect the interests of property owners like landlords and developers. In fact, Walcott writes, 'And in vigilantly protecting property, police too often aggressively seek out those who offend, or those they worry might be offending against it, which has led to deaths like those suffered by Mike Brown. . .'. Since the police are the enforcement arm of the justice system, then the justice system is designed to surveil and regulate those who engage in offences against property on behalf of those who belong to the property owning class. In that sense, the entire government structure is designed with the interest of property owners in mind. This takes us back to Moe's first point—that is, that policy is not designed to be effective. According to Moe, policy is not designed to intervene in an issue, correct a problem, or measure its impact; it is designed to demonstrate the interest of property owners.

In the United States, policymaking is a slow process of learning, campaigning, and making concessions, as is clearly demonstrated throughout this chapter. The members of the CHJC learn about the policies in order to design a campaign. And even in the process of

designing the campaign, they begin the concession-making. They choose to lean on the government instead of on the developers because, while CHJC members agree that the developers *ought* to shoulder the burden of payment, they know that they *won't*. This is a major concession.

I'd like to dig into participatory democracy a bit further here. It is my belief that participatory democracy as an approach to policymaking is intentionally designed to operate as a burdensome process. The burden is on the community members who take on participation in government. *What is participatory democracy?* Participatory democracy is a form of governance in which citizens participate directly in political decisions and policymaking. Examples of participatory democracy include participatory budgeting, referendums, and ballot initiatives, like the one that eliminated rent control in 1994 (see Housing Chapter in Literature Review). In general, democracy depends on civic participation, which includes citizens being willing and able to invest time in the gritty details and the slow process of governance. Civic participation requires time to wait in line to vote—but even before that, a citizen needs time to learn about the issues, time to talk them over with others, to go to meetings, to advocate for one's interests and contact one's elected officials, and time to assess different candidates. Depending on who is allocating time to the democratic process, the candidates decide whether to and how much time to allocate to learn about their interests and commit to their votes. So, not all civic actors are the same.

Anne Schneider has a theory of *social construction* to describe the social dynamics in policy design. The theory of social construction states that social construction, identity categories, and their perception in society can influence policy design; this includes policy tools, as well as the choices made by political actors. Social constructions become embedded in policy and can permeate the public ideology to affect citizens' positions and even political participation. I'd like to consider the role of social and symbolic ideology, or social constructions, in policy content and policymaking.

**FIGURE 1**  
Social Constructions and Political Power: Types of Target Populations

		Constructions	
		Positive	Negative
Power	Strong	<b>Advantaged</b> The elderly Business Veterans Scientists	<b>Contenders</b> The rich Big unions Minorities Cultural elites Moral majority
	Weak	<b>Dependents</b> Children Mothers Disabled	<b>Deviants</b> Criminals Drug addicts Communists Flag burners Gangs

Figure 18 Table of social constructions and political power types of Target populations

Schneider and Ingram (1993) identify four categories of social construction: advantaged, dependents, contenders, and deviants. In figure 18 we see that the 'advantaged' are both powerful and positively constructed. Whereas, 'deviants' are weak and negatively constructed. According to Schneider, policy is designed to give benefits to some or have costs for others. If this social construction and political power table is any

indication, then the advantaged construct, support, and are the beneficiary of social policy. Indeed, in *Poverty, by America*, Desmond (2023) illustrates this point with his description of benefits including government-subsidised retirement benefits provided by employers, student loans and 529 college savings plans, child tax credits, and homeowner subsidies. Schneider and Ingram also recognise that 'for whatever reason, legislators anticipate an outpouring of public support by punishing negatively constructed targets'. Take Katz's (2013) description of the consequences of misuse or fraud in government programmes, *jail time*. It is not a coincidence that criminals are top on the list of 'deviants' who are socially constructed as negative and weak.

The terms Schneider and Ingram have associated with 'deviant' include criminals, drug addicts, and gangs. Let's consider the social construction of low-income Black men. Three of the terms are included in the stereotypes often projected onto low-income Black men. In this sense, these men may be considered 'deviant'. There is a body of literature that associates Black men with violence, physical threat to individuals and the whole of society (Awkward, 1995; Fleisher, 1995; Anderson, 1999). As such, they are socially constructed as negative. As regards the punishment of the 'deviant', in another work (1993b), Ingram and Schneider write,



**Targeting people for punishment** is much more prevalent in public policy than is often acknowledged. The explanation offered by critical theory is that as capitalist societies fail more and more to deliver on the promise of equality and justice, it becomes more and more difficult to justify the distribution of privileges to advantaged groups. Further, it is increasingly necessary for the government to deflect criticism from itself by placing the blame for problems on others.

If low-income Black men under-perform as the patriarch, or worse, neglect to assume the position of responsibility as leaders of their nuclear families, this is another type of aggression, this time against the established social order, and for this infraction they ought to be disadvantaged (Moynihan, 1965). This 'disadvantaging' is done through punitive policymaking. What Schneider's theory of social construction and the table of 'types of target populations' does is make visible the links between policymaking and punitive design. The social construction of Black men illustrates them as violent in the public sphere, failing to be patriarchs in the private sphere, offenders against property, and under-productive in the labour market. These are all infractions against the social contract, not unlike the other two types of deviants in the table, flag burners and communists. The logical consequence of this is the social construction of Black men as 'deviants'. Meaning they are undeserving of social sympathy and public resources.

#### **#### 4.2.6.1 The Social Construction of Black Men and the CHJC Process to Construct a Winnable Campaign**

Rather than viewing these men as 'negative' or 'deviant', I consider them vulnerable as targets and to the threat of punishment by the state. However, the social construction of low-income Black men as 'deviants' figures heavily in the discussions among the CHJC members.

Take, for example, some of the comments following my pitch for widening inclusionary eligibility. Cassandra's comment is especially poignant.

- Cassandra - ‘... It would be entirely too difficult to convince the community to get behind a campaign to **house perfectly able working young men, over low-income families with dependent children**’.

Her point here is that it would be difficult to persuade the community, or rather, the ‘*advantaged*’ groups, to allocate resources to a ‘deviant’ population. Delia’s comment, on the other hand, is focused on the idea of winnability.

- Delia - ‘I like the spirit of the campaign, Stephanie, but **we cannot win**. If we are taking up unwinnable campaigns, shouldn’t we focus on grand social housing ideas such as decommodifying large swaths of land... That way, even if we lose, we are moving the larger conversation to engage with social housing as a concept. We can play the long game’.

Delia is making concessions. She accepts that focusing a campaign on a ‘deviant’ population is unwinnable. In accepting losing the campaign, she shifts her objective away from the men altogether, to the abstract philosophy that she stands for. In doing this, she decentres the housing needs of African-descended men.

I found Hailey’s comment the most interesting of all.

- Hailey - ‘I recall that your research participants are young Black men who live between multiple households ... and that this is something taking place in public housing. Have you talked this idea over with **Cambridge Housing Authority**? Aren't they the ones who administer the **section 8 program**? Doesn't CHA want to solve this problem?...’.

She recalls who the project centres, low-income Black men, she notes that there is an entity designed to support the interests of low-income people, the public housing authority. Why not go back to the PHA to work out how to support this population? This idea that this one entity should be responsible for all low-income people fails to acknowledge how entangled these agencies are with the carceral systems. Public housing authorities either work directly with the city police department, like the Cambridge Housing Authority, or have their own police departments, like the Philadelphia and New York Housing Authorities. Through programmes like the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP) in the 1980s, HOPE VI in the 1990s, and RAD in the 2010s, public housing authorities have been given government grants to

collaborate with police. Not to mention that public housing authorities allow the police department to install video cameras, patrol the grounds, and facilitate evictions. The PHA does have an interest in low-income Black men, but they are actively participating in their precariousness and housing insecurity.

There were three examples of a critical disconnect between the CHJC members and how Black men figured in the discussion: 1) After my pitch for widening inclusionary eligibility, the ACT members were thrilled by the prospect of creating a ladder programme between public housing eligibility and the inclusionary eligibility. Instead of sitting with this prospect, the conversation shifted to the burden of payment. 2) In 'the burden on the individual' part, there was a discussion among the CHJC members about the concept of paying 30% of one's income for housing. I brought up the fact that Patrick, a research participant, said he would gladly pay 40% or 50% in exchange for the 80% he was currently paying. The group voted against allowing the individual to shoulder the burden of payment. And 3) a CHJC member, a woman, confessed that she was experiencing homelessness and pleaded with the group to go back to the AMI discussion, because it would make her automatically eligible for housing, or consider the idea of developing a demonstration programme. The CHJC members decided to focus on the development of a campaign for vouchers. These three examples are at first glance more focused on the burden of payment than low-income Black men. However, Black men figure in their absence or dismissal. When the low-income Black people are excited by a campaign or programme, we are reminded that the people who matter here are the CHJC members who are socially constructed as advantaged. They steer the discussion and they develop the campaign. The choice to abandon the AMI campaign illustrates plainly how the social construction of low-income Black men figures. In 'The Voucher Clause' part, Lina and Hailey explain what is happening with the advantaged members when they abandon the campaign that most excited the marginalised members.

- Lina- ‘The change on “abandoning” lowering the AMI ultimately came with the information that the AHT would cover below 50%’.

The group insisted that the future was in developing more vouchers. This is despite the fact that there are never enough vouchers. The vouchers will not trickle down to the most negatively constructed population, low-income Black men. That is why the marginalised members wanted to intervene in the programme eligibility directly. Hailey said the quiet part out loud:

- Hailey- ‘there were always going to be challenges with getting resources for this group (low-income African-descended men) (in any initiative) but that is our job—some combination of making the political case for doing so and bringing allies together in what might end up to be a broader voucher program that still includes our group’.

Ultimately what was decided was that they could not bring allies together for a campaign that centred the needs of low-income Black men. Perhaps, they are just too ‘deviant’. This would never generate a winnable campaign.

### **### 4.2.7 The Fundamental Disconnects**

Throughout this analysis, we have been paying attention to the dynamics of participatory democracy and politics of bureaucratic structures. Moe states that policy is not designed to be effective. The CHJC asked, *who should shoulder the burden of payment?* Of the three options they were presented with, they settled on the government, a bureaucratic structure. They engaged in the participatory democratic process with the objective of making an effective change in the housing policy, to win their campaign. However, the CHJC was trying to intervene in housing insecurity via an entity that doesn’t work the way they think it does, if Moe and Schneider are to be believed. The CHJC members took up the burden that is inherent in the slow and intentionally burdensome process of participatory democracy. They shouldered the burden of payment; they paid it with their time, with their social positions, and through their efforts.

In this analysis, we have unveiled the open secret: what Schneider's social construction describes—that is, that some people are advantaged and some are seen as social deviants who are deservedly punished through policy design. The CHJC's intervention was to leverage their political position, as advantaged, to uplift the interests of a politically weak group, low-income people. But low-income Black men are socially constructed as deviants.

There are two issues that came up: 1) They were finding it hard to construct a campaign with an interest that would converge with the interest of other powerful and dependent groups in the city. 2) The CHJC insisted that intervention must take place within the government. But again, policymaking is not rational and it is not designed to be effective. Simply leveraging the position of some advantaged members will not develop a critical mass of interest convergence. Developed by legal scholar Derrick Bell Jr. (1980), interest convergence is a critical race theory tenet. It explains that social change for politically weak groups occurs only when their interests align with the interests of those who are politically strong. The members of CHJC attempt to leverage their political position, as advantaged, to uplift the interests of a politically weak group, low-income Black men. You cannot do participatory democracy without a framework of interest convergence—within or without the CHJC.

Both in this chapter and in the Methodology, I explain that the CHJC membership was largely configured of middle class white people, who are decidedly not low-income Black men. Although the members took up the process to construct a winnable campaign, their actual interventions were in the form of resources they shared: the organisations and people who worked toward gaining housing for these men. In other cases it was the mutual aid they offered; several members of the CHJC donated funds toward housing fees to get these men housed through various means. Their true interventions were through interrelationships and interdependence, not the political process. But in a presentation at Goldsmiths University of London, abolitionist sociologist Alex Vitale firmly stated, 'We cannot solve the housing crisis with mutual aid'.

Alex Vitale may be right, but we cannot continue to live in a political system with punitive policies that reinforce social constructions. We need more structural resources to solve the housing crisis. Attempting to intervene in the housing crisis via participatory democracy that centres a deviant population like low-income Black men hasn't been viable. Other interventions prioritise dependents, like elders, the disabled, and children. But, what if we rework participatory democracy, with an abolitionist logic, might we get further? By abolitionist logic, I am thinking about two crucial differences in approach: 1) What if we begin with a critique of bureaucratic and punitive structures? From there, we might design interventions that prioritise effectiveness over punitiveness. 2) What if we consider interest convergence and bureaucratic structures?

Moe described bureaucracies as being defined by the political situation that determines their structural design. That is, the opposition also participates in the decision-making. The end result is that every policy is a product of political compromise. That means each policy is a product of its spatio-temporal position. So, in order for any policy to be effective at addressing an issue, the issue needs to be of concern to all sides of the issue. And, the solution proposed and the resources allocated to that solution need to be evident to all sides of the issue. So, nobody ever truly wins in democratic policymaking. The reality of bureaucratic structure is concession, and the politically weak suffer as a result. But, when interests converge to pass a policy, then a change can be made. However, Bell accounts for the impacts of concessions in bureaucratic structures, i.e., pyrrhic victories. In the case of the CHJC, if interests converge to develop a municipal voucher programme, that will be a win for the CHJC. However, when the programme is under-funded and no vouchers reach low-income African-descended men, that will be a pyrrhic victory.

### **### 4.2.8 Connecting the Threads**

The overarching argument this research project seeks to make is that housing transience among low-income African-descended men in Cambridge is politically protracted. By

that I mean that policies are engineered and re-engineered over time to prioritise certain deserving populations and, by extension, to de-prioritise others. This de facto exclusion by deprioritisation is experienced by these men as prolonged periods of housing transition, instability, and insecurity. *How do gender, race, and class figure in the process of selecting and constructing a winnable campaign?* This question gets at my first finding—we need more empirical research on low-income African-descended men. It is hard to develop approaches to address the housing needs of African-descended men because there is not enough empirical research that focuses specifically on their housing needs. We do not have enough data on what the benefits could be or would be if we were to focus on this population. We cannot continue to collapse their experiences of housing insecurity with those of others.

The discussions throughout this chapter illustrate the entanglements of housing policies over time. This gets at my second finding: the *complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements work together and result in de facto exclusion of low-income African-descended men*. What I hope is clear in this chapter is the temporal, legal, and social challenges that come with attempting to disentangle these policies to serve the interests of a needy population.

### **### 4.2.9 Conclusion**

The CHJC was and is one of the few groups in Cambridge taking up conversations that consider the needs of housing-transient and low-income African-descended men. I have deep appreciation for their willingness to engage in discussions and to work toward the development of a campaign that might work for this population. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the objectives and the outcomes. They had a deep desire to accomplish something, the desire to construct a *winnable* campaign, coupled with the primary objective to meet people's long-term housing needs. There were no sufficiently convincing arguments to show the benefits and multiplier effects of prioritising low-income African-descended men over

other populations. There were those who wanted to figure out how to make sure we served this population, but prioritising this population was considered too complex. It would involve more than simply pressuring the city council and attending zoning board meetings.

At the end of the day, CHJC members were sympathetic to the plight of low-income African-descended men. Hailey writes, ‘I think it is up to us to make a political case for this constituency. You have given us some of the tools to make that case—both research findings and the play based on your work. I personally like the idea of a voucher plan that includes our group [low-income African-descended men] and others’. The CHJC still found it challenging to develop a *winnable* campaign that would address their immediate housing needs. They were navigating the policies, the federal fair housing laws, the housing crisis, the developers and management companies, the dynamics between advocacy and service organisations, and the plan E form of municipal governance (as described in the Massachusetts General Laws of governance). There was not one specific thing that made them decide to deprioritise this population in favour of a programme that could serve anyone in need.

The campaign goes on—the members of the CHJC are hard at work developing policy language and moving forward with the logistics of developing a municipal-level voucher programme. No doubt housing-insecure people will benefit from CHJC’s efforts to create the municipal voucher programme. It remains to be seen how the campaign will turn out. The power analyses continue. Will this campaign splinter the progressive organisations that seek vouchers for their interest populations? We will see.

Meanwhile, the needs go on—the housing-transient and housing-insecure low-income African-descended men in Cambridge still have unmet housing needs. At this point, the CHJC will not be able to rescue them. I mentioned the work of CHJC to several of my research participants. One of them, Quintin, said, ‘Not holding my breath. Liberal white people have yet to help. I’ve never seen it done’. I found that quite telling.



In this chapter, the CHJC is forced to ask and answer the question of *who should shoulder the burden of payment?* They come up with the options of 1) the individuals, 2) the development/ management corporations, or 3) the government. However, this question of who *should*, is quite different to who actually *does* shoulder the burdens. By deciding that the government should shoulder the burden of payment, the CHJC members themselves have been burdened by the process of participatory democracy. This illustrates that the burdens are already borne, in this case by the community as we have seen throughout this chapter. In the next chapter, I go on to ask, *who actually shoulders the burden of payment?* We look at the networks of the men. Or importantly, how are these low-income African-descended men already meeting their immediate housing needs in Cambridge? In the next chapters, *The Burden on Networks*, I answer these questions. I focus on the people who make up the networks, *how* they help meet housing needs, and the burdens and risks they bear as a result.

## ## 4.3 The Burden on Networks

### ### 4.3.1 Introduction

While the CHJC members were developing a campaign that has become quite abstract in terms of *if*, *when*, and *how* it ultimately helps these men, the men still needed to meet their immediate housing needs. So, how were they navigating the existing sociopolitical institutions that serve as gatekeepers to their housing security? In order to study the flows of resources to and among this population, I was interested in their social networks. *Who are the people who are supporting them in a practical way?* I wanted to know *who* makes up the networks that house these men absent effective programmes and policies. When I ask *who* makes up the networks, I mean *what are the relational ties* between the members of these networks and the men in this study? *What are the intersectional categories of the members of their networks?* What is the racial and gendered makeup of the networks that house these men? This chapter reviews the ‘people power’ or community relationships that fill in the gaps left behind by housing and other social policy.

I begin with a brief note on ‘networks’ to explain my use of networks and network analysis in this chapter. I emphasise the influence of sociologists Barry Wellman and Melvin Oliver. Next, I review the categories previously described by Wellman and Oliver in order to explain which categories I will use in this chapter to conduct my analysis. I then answer the research question: *What are the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks that house transient Black men?* I include one section that focuses on *gender* and another on *racialisation*. This section includes a breakdown of how women figure into the narratives and another on how men figure into them. Additionally, there is an analysis of gendered entanglements. Following in Oliver’s footsteps, I do an analysis of reciprocity, detailing the formation, strength, and duration of ties. I bring up the phenomenon of *anchor homes* and do an

analysis of anchor homes from the narrative and survey data. Before going any further, I will define ‘the anchor home’. An anchor is a device used to secure a vessel to prevent it from drifting. And an anchor may be a person who presents, coordinates, or facilitates, such as an anchor of a television series. I’d like to apply this concept, of an anchor, to members of the networks of these men. The term ‘anchor home’ first occurred to me when I was describing Orion’s relationship to his grandmother’s public housing unit. I began to see Orion’s mother use her mother’s home as an anchor, the centre of her relational ties, from which she can regroup and make new moves. After seeing this in Orion’s narrative, I began to look for it in other narratives too. Throughout this chapter, I will be looking at the anchor homes of these men. After the analysis of anchor homes, I then move into the policies that this research focuses on, breaking down the ways the policies figure in the networks and why they matter. Finally, I conclude by connecting the threads between the overall claims this project seeks to make and the relationship between this chapter’s data and the overall conceptual framework of abolition.

### ### 4.3.2 On Networks

As the United States industrialised in the 20th century, African-descended people joined the mobility movement that has led to high urban density. Since then, there has been a great deal of discourse pathologizing the *behaviour* of Black communities (Moynihan, 1965; Pattillo, 2010; Wilkerson, 2010). In the 1950s, social network analysis, the study of the *organisation* of human subcultures, began to take off in the social sciences<sup>80</sup>; it was generally understood that African-descended communities, as well as other marginalised populations, exhibited what Oscar Lewis termed a ‘culture of poverty’. Originally introduced by Lewis in 1966, the culture of poverty argument rests on the claim that humans are solely a product of their circumstances, and that behaviours, practices, and values differ widely between classes. In *The Undeserving*

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<sup>80</sup> Network analysis was said to have been established in the 1930s in psychology. Social Network Analysis was coined in 1954 by J. A. Barnes in *Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish*.

*Poor*, historian Michael B. Katz critiques the culture of poverty framework as racist, classist, and xenophobic. He also critiques the static presumption of its application. However, another movement was taking place in social sciences simultaneously—the movement to conduct analyses based on networks.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus my attention on social network analysis as described by Barry Wellman and Barry Leighton in ‘Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities’ (1979). In general, a social network can be described as a set of social entanglements between agents, or nodes, connected by one or more relations. Social network analysis attempts to study the connections and entanglements between individuals and within clusters of individuals. Barry Wellman, an urban sociologist, contributed significant methodological approaches for collecting empirical data on networks in urban settings. He created the frameworks that underpin the use of social network analysis to conduct empirical social research. However, Wellman focuses his attention primarily on Canada.

In this chapter, I will use sociologist Melvin L. Oliver’s work, which builds on Wellman’s analysis but applies it to Black communities in the United States. In his 1988 article, ‘The Urban Black Community as Network: Toward a Social Network Perspective’, Oliver offers a foundation that this chapter builds on. The article critiques the persistent representation of Black communities as socially disorganised and as producing subcultures of violence. Instead, Oliver conducts a medium-scale study with 352 participants, to learn about ‘the complex internal structure of black communities...’ (Oliver, 1988, p. 624). I find the ways Oliver applies social network theory well suited to my study.

In his analysis, Oliver makes use of Wellman’s framework of ‘community-lost, community-saved, and community-liberated’. The ‘community-lost’ argument contends that urbanisation has forced the urbanite into a relationship of dependence upon the bureaucratic system itself (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). This, it is claimed, has led to a deterioration of primary ties limiting people to loosely knit social networks bound by secondary affiliations

(Wellman, 1979). The community-lost position sees these secondary relationships and ties as minimally functional. In the argument, secondary ties break down when members are in need of help during routine crises and emergencies. This dysfunction and disorganisation is claimed to be connected to activities such as criminal behaviour and deviant lifestyles (Oliver, 1988). The 'community-saved' position rejects the idea that urbanisation has led to deteriorating social networks and argues for the persistence of local solidarities among urbanites, as well as for the existence of kin and neighbourhood solidarities in urban and industrialised societies (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). It further argues that densely knit kin and friendship-based networks are involved in the exchange of goods and services in low-income urban communities (Oliver, 1988). However, the community-saved argument includes the limiting idea that members tend to be part of multiple networks, all associated with a single neighbourhood or geographic area. This ignores people's membership in non-neighbourhood based social networks, such as their workplace, religious community, and site of recreation/hobbies. This community-saved position also claims significant overlap between these neighbourhood-based networks (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). The '**community-liberated**' argument rejects the idea of the neighbourhood as the basis of community, but affirms the prevalence of relational ties and social networks in urban surroundings (Wellman, 1979). In spite of its rejection of the neighbourhood as a central focus, its analysis relies on the spatial, contending that the separation between workplaces, social spaces, and neighbourhoods is a matter of geography. Additionally, the rise in cheap and widespread transportation within urban areas spreads out networks, liberating them from their geographic areas. Later on, Wellman would add the creation of the technosphere as increasing networks beyond the physical (2001).

### **### 4.3.3 Network Categories**

In this chapter, I build on Oliver's work to illustrate the utility of a network analytic strategy in studying African-descended urban neighbourhoods. Oliver does a comparative

analysis of three neighbourhoods in Los Angeles, California, that have large African-American populations (Watts, Crenshaw-Baldwin Hills, and Carson). In my study, I look at the networks of various types of African-descended residents (African-American, African-Caribbean, first or second generation African migrants) within the municipality of Cambridge in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While housing figures into Oliver's description of network formations—namely, the way that historical racial discrimination in the form of restrictive covenants and other bias have impacted housing choice—Oliver's focus is not on housing and housing networks. My data, and my general inquiry, is focused entirely on housing and housing networks.

My project and the analysis in this chapter differ from the Oliver study in crucial ways. In Oliver's depiction of the relations that make up 'core networks', he leaves out three key elements of networks that my data force me to consider as central. First, in his relationship categories Oliver neglects romantic partnerships. This is a notable omission, considering that he mentions the critiques of family formations from scholars such as Frazier (1930, 1948)<sup>81</sup> and Moynihan (1965).<sup>82</sup> To address this oversight, I have created two sub-categories under 'friend': 'platonic friend' and 'romantic partner'. Second, Oliver neglects to analyse the impacts of space and time on networks. He presents his data as fixed networks as opposed to networks that can shift and change in time and space. This is something that I acknowledge throughout this chapter. Lastly, while Oliver mentions housing in his analysis and critique, he omits the impact of social policy and programmes on network formation. This is a noticeable omission, since Wellman (1979) writes that bureaucratic institutions play a large role in the formation of cities. In

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<sup>81</sup> Frazier's point is that the institution of slavery disrupted natural kinship formation structures and patterns that are indigenous to Africans and that the non-nuclear family structures are not natural practices but a product of the social conditions of African-descended people in the United States.

<sup>82</sup> The Moynihan report explains that the sex/gender system of the United States rewards nuclear family structures. The report depicts the crisis of the nuclear structure breakdown within African-American families and connects other pathological conditions to their prevalence in communities concentrated with African-descended Americans.

fact, Oliver himself conducts a comparative analysis of three different neighbourhoods that have been formed by various policies, policies that have constructed their demographic compositions. In my analysis, I point to the impact of housing transitions into and out of various government housing programmes as factors in network formation and network strains.

While there are many scholars that conduct social network analysis (Wassman & Faust, 1994; Marin & Wellman, 2011; and more), Oliver notes that many scholars do not centre the experiences of African-descended peoples. And, the scholars conducting research on Black social structures and housing formations tend to either pathologize Blackness (Moynihan, 1965) or focus on the middle classes (Pattillo, 2005). I was influenced heavily by Mary Pattillo’s work ‘Black Middle-Class Neighborhoods’ when conceptualising this chapter. Others have conducted comparative studies that look at Black communities alongside white ones, such as Douglas Massey’s work ‘The Dimensions of Residential Segregation’. In this chapter, I am simply looking at the social networks of my research participants. I am using a combination of demographic survey data, narratives, researcher notes, and follow-up outreach data to illustrate these networks. Oliver’s work is a great foundation upon which to build as I examine the networks that house these African-descended men absent effective policies and programmes.

Wellman's frameworks of community-lost, community-saved, and community-liberated measure the availability of or access to networks, the relational ties within networks, the spatial proximities of the network agents, the frequency of contact between members, as well as such things as reciprocity. In Oliver’s study, his categories include the functions of ties. He looks for the types of associations between members (kin, friends, co-members); mode and frequency of contact; and the functions of these associations (emotional and material support). He also looks at relational ties and measures the numbers of kin within households, kin outside of households,

Kin / family (within / outside of household)	Co-members of the same networks	Neighbours	Co-workers	Friends	Other
Parents - mother / father	High School network	Community / neighbourhood Contacts	Work contacts	Friend - Male / Female	Roommate
Relatives - Grandmother	University network	Community contact of romantic partner	Employer	Friend's mother	Landlord
Relative - Sibling - Sister	Religious Network			Romantic partner	Mother of romantic partner
Relative - Aunt / Uncle					Grandmother of romantic partner
Relative - Cousin					
Children					

**Figure 19 Table of network tie categories**

co-members of the same networks, neighbours, co-workers, friends and ‘others’. In this chapter, I will focus on ‘relational ties’. Instead of starting with Oliver’s categories, however, I started by creating categories based on the network members that appear in my narrative data. I have created this key (see figure 19 above) to capture how Oliver’s categories correspond to my narrative data categories.

### ### 4.3.4 The Relational Ties

As a reminder, the overarching question in this research project is *where do Black men live?* In the demographic survey data, I found that Black men live *with* other people or that they live where they do *because of* other people. So who do they live with? We know that Cambridge is expensive. We know that there is a housing shortage and multiple crises in the housing markets. We also know that government-subsidised housing programmes are under-funded and lack a sufficient number of units to meet current needs. So, absent effective government programmes, how are these Black men meeting their housing needs? The answer can be found in their networks. One of the research questions of this project is ‘*What are the relational ties and intersectional characteristics of the networks that house these men?*’ In order to answer this question, I have leaned into my narrative data. I have paid particular attention to the narratives that mention public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary zoning.

The average housing network size of the 25 research participants is about 4.64 members.<sup>83</sup> These men overwhelmingly rely heavily on ‘kin’ and ‘friends’, which means that networks of African-descended communities in Cambridge would land somewhere between ‘community-saved’ and ‘community-liberated’ in the Wellman framework. That is, according to my data, subjects maintain strong primary ties and form and retain secondary ties that are not

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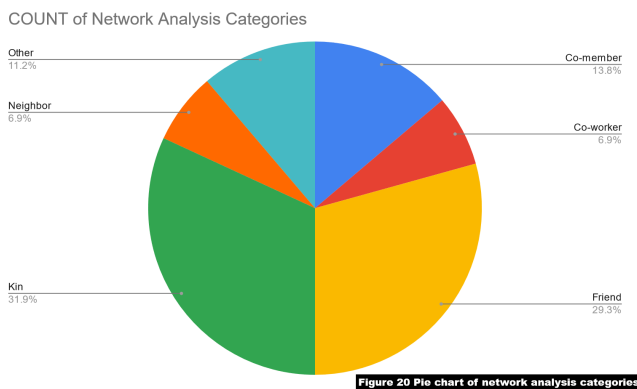
<sup>83</sup> This was calculated by the number of contacts or alluded contacts in the narratives. This means that in the narratives, there were at least 116 network members mentioned. See the network analysis table in the Appendix ## 7.31. For the remainder of the chapter, when referring to the research participants, I will use the number of participants. When referring to the share of network members, I will use percentages.



bound entirely by geography but also by institutions such as school and work. And my research participants are able to access resources from these network members in times of housing crisis and emergencies.

To show why Cambridge does not appear to fall under the ‘community-lost’ argument in Wellman’s framework, one would need to show the high proportion of links or the limited degree of separation among members within the networks (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). Despite having the data, a significant limitation of this project is my inability to link the entanglements between various members in the networks of my research participants because it would deanonymize the data. After all, this is a microscopic project, a case study. I have observed the presence of certain agents in the lives of multiple participants. Being able to show the links and the centrality of certain actors would significantly enrich my data and my argument. However, clearly illustrating these links risks exposing my participants and would breach the confidences built throughout the development of this project.

#### #### 4.3.4.1 What Are the Relational Ties of the Networks That House These Men?

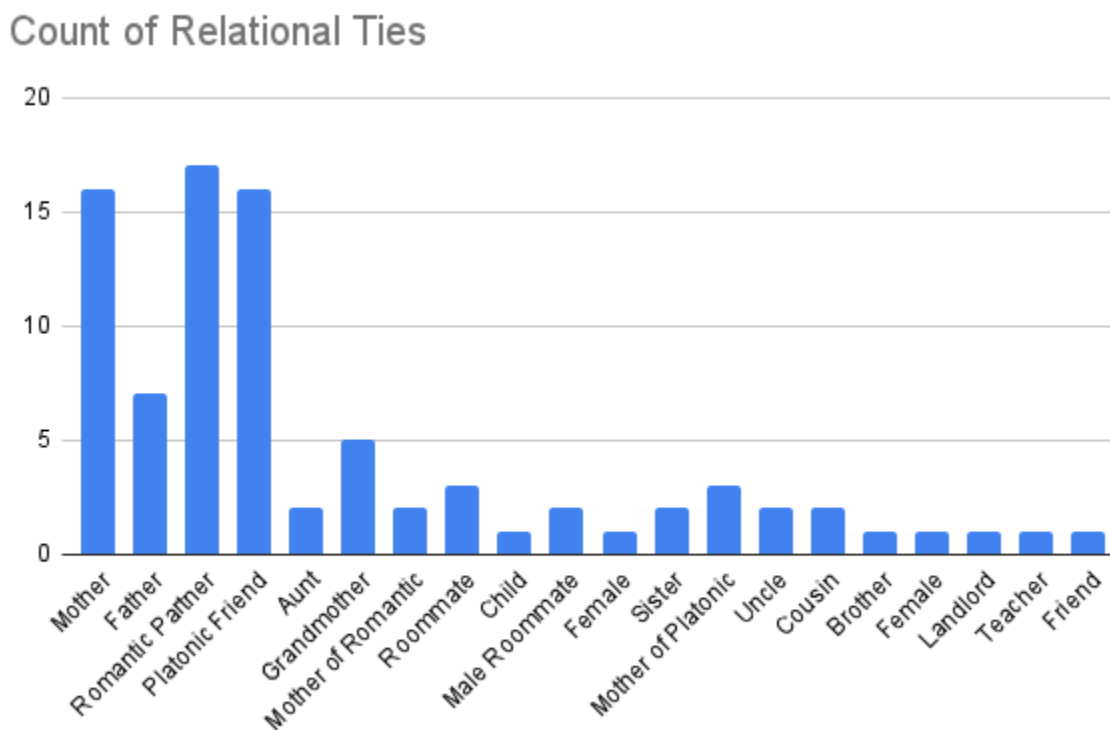


We can see in this pie chart (Figure 20), ‘romantic partners’, ‘mothers’, and ‘platonic friends’ play a large role in the housing networks of these men. Something that immediately stands out is that the networks of these men are overwhelmingly made up

of women.<sup>84</sup> The relationships in these networks are interesting. For example, it’s not just the mothers of the men themselves, but the mothers of romantic partners and platonic friends who play a large role in the housing networks of these men. These are only the people who are

<sup>84</sup> None of the research participants identified any members of their network as trans.

named in the narratives. That suggests that these are the people who were successful at supporting and being present for them as members of their housing networks. Their networks are likely even larger than what is presented here.



**Figure 21 Bar chart of total counts of relational ties**

The role of romantic partners is crucial in these networks; 17 of 25 narratives include a mention of romantic partners. Take Quintin’s story for example. It begins with a move into a market-rate apartment with his pregnant girlfriend. Quintin was arrested for drug dealing. During this time, the couple made the intentional decision to pause their romantic relationship so that the girlfriend could go on to acquire a section 8 voucher. She did this by going into a shelter and going through the transitional housing route.<sup>85</sup> The female romantic partner acquiring a section 8

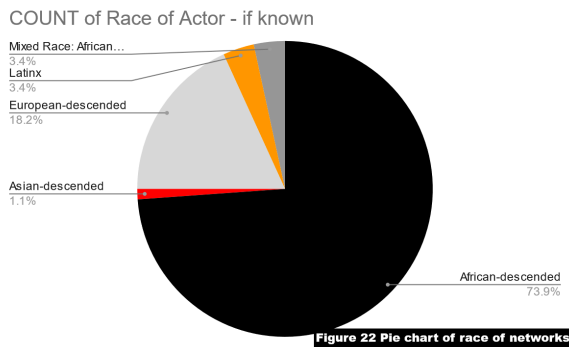
<sup>85</sup> Note that they learn that you can access long-term government-subsidised housing programs from a female friend and make a plan to acquire a section 8 voucher. Quintin went to jail before they made the plan to have her and the child seek the section 8 voucher through transitional services.

voucher after the birth of a child appears to be a pattern. The split appears performative, as they later marry. Hakeem's situation might appear similar, but he and his baby's mother did not break up primarily for the purpose of acquiring a section 8 voucher; rather, it was a real break up. Acquiring the section 8 voucher liberated her and moved her closer to her social network for child rearing support. Romantic partners Wesley and Vince lived together in public housing. Grant moved into his inclusionary housing unit with a romantic partner. Grant went from living with his mother to living with his girlfriend. He never lived alone or with other roommates (excluding a period residing in university dormitories during his undergraduate years). The role of romantic partners is important.

Not surprisingly, mothers also figure prominently in the social networks; 16 of 25 narratives include a mention of mothers. For example, Trey lived with his mother securely and uninterrupted until this opportunity came up. Jamal's mother, a Black woman and a homeowner, allowed him to use that property as his legal permanent address as well as a space to store his belongings. Nasir lived with his mother (and brother) for many years until he completed his educational programme, which allowed him to get a very secure job in the tech industry and move out. All three made some sort of payment to their mothers while they 'lived', as in slept, in their mothers' residences. Both Nasir and Trey continued to support their mothers with regular financial payments after they moved out. Jamal was not financially able to. Others like Lamonte and Orion were much younger than Nasir, Trey, and Jamal when they left their mothers' homes. Orion was not making financial contributions to the home, but Lamonte continued to send regular payments to his mother after he left, knowing that he would eventually have to go back there.

Grandmothers are important too. In the narratives, five of 25 mention grandmothers as housing anchors. For example, Damien had his grandmother's home as his anchor. Between romantic partners and other housing opportunities, he went back to staying with his grandmother who resided first in public housing and later in inclusionary housing. Damien said

that his grandmother was very well connected in the city and often knew of programmes and opportunities for him to try. While he didn't always take advantage of her suggestions, he regularly learned about things from his grandmother. Orion was introduced to his grandmother as an anchor by his mother, who regularly returned to her mother's home during periods of transience. When Orion started to experience housing transience himself, he returned to his maternal grandmother's public housing unit too.



Unexpectedly, the mothers of platonic friends and romantic partners played a significant role too. Of the 25 narratives, four of them mentioned mothers of network members. For example, both Orion and Lamonte received help from their high school teammate's mother

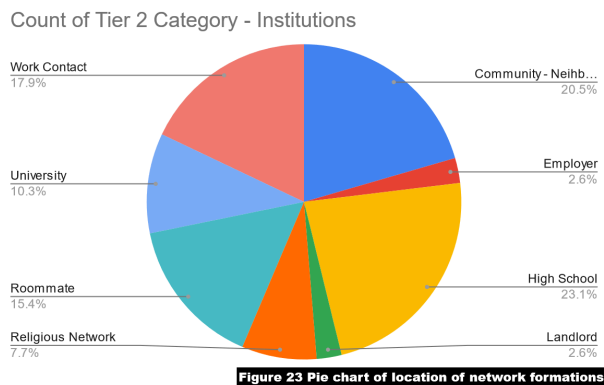
when they were experiencing housing insecurity. Both Eric and Hakeem learned about programmes and opportunities from the mothers of their romantic partners. Hakeem's female romantic partner's mother and grandmother taught her about section 8, which she later applied for and received. Eric's female romantic partner's mother regularly utilised her own networks to find housing opportunities for him.

#### #### 4.3.4.2 How Are the Networks That House These Men Racialised?

As an unregistered tenant of public housing, Wesley needed to find another location to send his postal correspondences. His partner had some female work friends who allowed Wesley to use their address for his mail. Wesley said these friends who let him use their address for his mail were 'nice white folks'. For his legal permanent address, he went through the relatives of his romantic partner. Wesley explained that his partner's father, an African-American man, allowed Wesley to use his address as Wesley's legal place of residence. Wesley later shared that at some point he moved his legal address to the same location where

he received his mail—with the ‘nice white folks’. He said, ‘I can’t be messing around like this as a Black man in America; they are checking for me’, meaning that just in case someone pieced it all together, they would at least find that his legal permanent address and his correspondence address were the same.

The network of each of these men is made up overwhelmingly of African-descended people (73.9%). However, this is not a complete picture of their social networks or the full range of people they know or ask for help. The adjacent pie chart shows actors who were successful at reaching some housing goal and the people who were successful at helping them reach their goal. When we zoom out, it makes more sense to look at where these networks are formed and then to look at the racialisation of the institutions that form these networks.



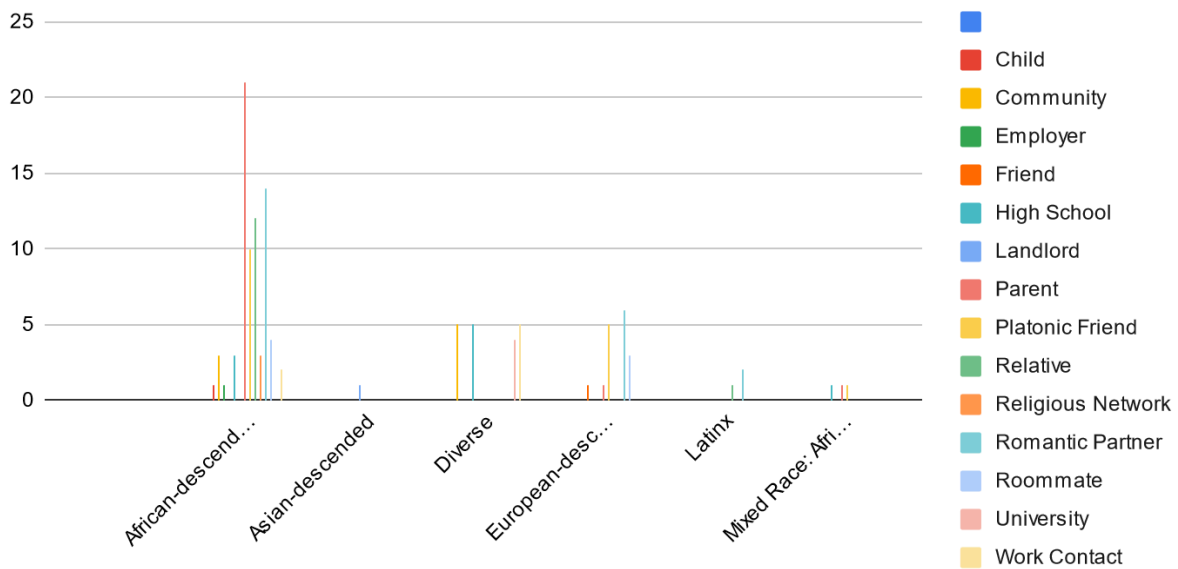
For these men, the largest share of the network contacts came from high school, about one-quarter. Study participants who grew up in Cambridge and went to high school there tended to have more diverse networks than those who did not attend high

school in Cambridge. The next largest network was community-neighbourhood, about one-fifth. This is curious, because it really depended on the neighbourhood and when the ties were formed. Again, my research participants ranged between 19 and 54 years of age. The demographics in Cambridge have shifted significantly since the end of rent control in 1994. Neighbourhoods in Cambridge are getting more and more racially homogenous. As public housing shifts after the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) programme<sup>86</sup> was rolled out by

<sup>86</sup> The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) programme is a federal housing programme administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This programme allows public housing projects and properties administered by local public housing authorities (PHAs) to improve properties and/or convert PHAs to administer section 8 housing, both project-based and mobile vouchers (<https://www.hud.loans/hud-loans-blog/rental-assistance-demonstration/>).

the federal government in 2014, communities that have been historically lower income and therefore more diverse—those communities that border public housing projects—too are being gentrified and therefore experiencing demographic shifts. Of course, this is all contextual information; the data that I have gathered would need to break down these networks over time to show the impacts of policy and the changes of demographics in the city over time.

### Institutions + Race



**Figure 24 Bar chart of racial makeup of institutions of networks**

However, this data does capture institutions that form social networks. If we look at this data alongside the race data, and if we also leave in the granular, it paints a clearer picture of the racial makeup of the networks that housed these men. We can see clusters of institutions within each racial category. If we zoom in, we can see that the most racially diverse institutions where members of social networks are connected are institutions like high schools, workplaces, and universities. Whereas, relatives and romantic partners are more homogenous and populated largely by those in the same racialised category, African-descended.

It is important to point out that religious institutions are presented as racially homogenous, and in the narratives, when religious institutions were brought up, they garnered a lot of trust and played a large role in providing immediate support. For example, Ulrick said,

In the five months I had been here, I found a church. I got benevolence from my church. They helped me with the first, last, and security deposit. I tapped the "benevolence" of the church at least twice, maybe three times. In those early days, I needed support paying the utilities and rent.

Allen and Benji emphasised that they were Black Muslims. The people in their networks that supported them tended to also be African-descended and Muslim. This is an important point because diversity doesn't necessarily result in immediate support. What the data illustrates is racially homogenous institutions provide immediate support, whereas diverse institutions produce networks that change long-term outcomes. Trust appeared to be the most important factor in the formation of the networks that actually provide support. Who trusts these men? Who do these men trust? Institutions of accountability like religious and cultural institutions are more homogenous but have trust built in from the beginning. Whereas informal network building spaces like schools take longer to garner trust and material outcomes. There is still a lot to be learned about the relationship between race and trust in social networks.

These findings link to Raj Chetty's (2016; Chetty et al., 2022) series of publications on social capital, which can be described as the value of social networks. Chetty's work examines large datasets on social capital and social mobility in the United States; my work is a small case study examining housing use and burden on social networks. However, I think the range of experiences among my research participants are exemplary of Chetty's social mobility theory. Chetty says that for upward mobility, it is better to live in a more connected place than a richer one. Additionally, Chetty and his team find that urban areas, areas with more deviance in family structure (such as single-female-headed families, etc.), and places with high concentrations of

low-income racialised populations have lower rates of upward mobility. Nothing stunts upward mobility like housing insecurity.

Cambridge is generally known for its affluence and critiqued for its social and economic disconnectedness along class lines (Desmond, 2023). What this data reveals is yes, the earlier someone arrives in Cambridge, the stronger the ties formed. This is especially true for ties between racialised youth and the wealthy parents of platonic friends made in childhood through school enrollment and sports. The exception of course is when the ties are impacted by another force, like eviction or housing location change. Chetty found that poor people make friends of neighbours, or that friending is neighbourhood dependent among low-income populations. This tended to be true among my research participants. And the longer the ties are held, the stronger the ties. And as housing becomes less and less affordable in Cambridge, there are more and more affluent people coming to Cambridge. So the low-income people who remain tied to Cambridge have the potential to ‘befriend’ more affluent people, which Chetty’s research suggests can impact upward mobility. Looking at the racial makeup or diversity of the networks, this research data illustrates that racially diverse networks may be beneficial in housing networks and housing security long-term, like in the case of Xavion, but it does take a long time to develop those ties to function toward that utility. Whereas, homogenous racial segments of someone’s network operate as a space to access immediate resources.

### ### 4.3.5 How Gender Figures in Housing Narratives

COUNT of Biological Sex

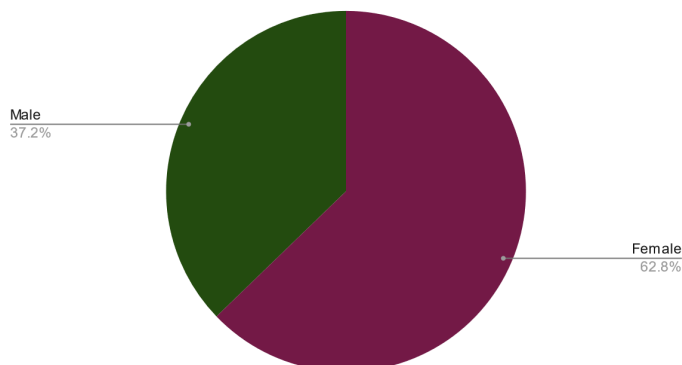


Figure 25 Pie chart of gender makeup of network members

These networks are made up of over 62% women and 38% men. This illustrates the outsized role that women play in the networks that



house these men. Gender figures significantly in the narratives and does so in a few interesting ways. Masculinity and fatherhood figure in the narratives prominently. For example, Allen felt it was his duty to find a home for his new wife and daughter. His sense of duty came from associating his role as the father with the provider. He feels a great sense of pride in being able to perform the role of provider and father. Just the same, women figure in the stories too. The mothers play a particularly significant role. They are the keepers. They know where papers, people, and resources are. Female romantic partners play a similar role: they have administrative responsibilities, and many times, the women were called upon to answer questions, fill in gaps in the men's memories, and to send paperwork along. For example, mid-conversation Orion called his mom and she became part of the interview too. He verified his answers and checked in on her thoughts about his account of things. In this next section, I am going to look more closely at some gendered elements of the narratives to illustrate how gender figures.

#### **#### 4.3.5.1 How Women Figure**

For Benji, it was his mother who knew everything, from where his documents were to the person who was responsible for housing their entire family. Benji's mother is a Black Muslim woman. She is reportedly in her early 50s.

At the time when I met with Carl, there was no woman in his life. However, his story mentioned his ex-girlfriend—a young white woman. He also mentioned his aunt, the former owner of a house with a lien on it. She is reportedly an elderly Black woman.

For Eric, after he got shot, I worked exclusively with his girlfriend to sort out his housing situation. There were other women who were mentioned in his story. It is also important to mention that his mother returned to oversee his care. The mother of his child was in the picture too, as well as his daughter. However, I didn't interact with them. Eric had been living in the projects in an apartment under his mother's name at the start of his story. He mentioned living

with his mother one other time before moving out. He mentioned that he lived with two immigrant women in a basement apartment. The house where they lived was owned by a female head of household. After living alone, he mentioned moving in with one girlfriend, before the current one. All of the women in his story were African-descended women of varying ages.

Although Felix was currently listed as living alone, his story had women in it, his mother and his on-again-off-again girlfriend. Felix had lived with his mother, a Black woman, and his father and brother, Black men. When he had a falling out with his parents, he 'stayed' with his then girlfriend. When he settled into his new place in the city, his ex-girlfriend would 'stay' with him when she had cause to be in the city.

For Grant, there were two women who were central to his story, his mother and then his wife. His mother was a mixed-race European and African-descended woman. At the time of the interviews, his mother was in her late 40s. She had been a teen mom. He and his wife are roughly the same age, and she is an African immigrant to the United States.

Hakeem mentioned four women. The first was his mother, who is married to his father. Together they managed to buy a house outside of the city of Cambridge at the start of his story. The second was his baby's mother. She is central to his story. She is a Black woman roughly the same age as Hakeem. A lot of the choices he made about where to live were connected to her choices about where she and the child they shared would live. Her mother, his son's maternal grandmother, was only mentioned briefly, but they got housing support and childcare from her, so she was an important person in his story nevertheless. Living with her was also the catalyst for him to move out of his parents' home and in with his girlfriend. And lastly, there is his current wife. The one with whom he became a homeowner and has stable housing.

Isaac mentioned two women in his story, and later added a third. The first and most prominent woman was his mother. He has lived with her pretty much his entire life, with the exception of a couple of short stints. The second was his sister. Isaac stayed with her in her section 8 apartment while he was having a row with his mother. And later, he mentioned that he

stayed with a cousin for a few nights when he and his mother had another row that resulted in the police being called.

Jamal was a special case. There is much that still needs to be verified about this story. But his story mentions many women. His mother features prominently. She owned a house where he would stay for long durations, his anchor home. He moved in as a legal tenant with another female friend. He stayed with various female friends here and there. He also mentioned his sister. He didn't mention staying with her but she seemed to be the one doing lots of administrative things for him.

Khalil really only mentioned living with his sister and her family. But he alluded to other women, like his aunt. He said that he moved into the projects with his uncle, but the uncle is still married and resides with his wife, his aunt. He also mentioned, in passing, that his cousin that he lived with for a few years also lived with his girlfriend whom he later married.

#### **#### 4.3.5.2 How Men Figure**

When I read Elijah Anderson's *The Code of the Streets* and Alice Goffman's *On the Run*, I came across the term 'decent'. That term refers to young Black men who are involved in 'good' activities and are often juxtaposed to criminals or thugs. In my experience, the 41 African-descended men I encountered merited more categories than just decent or thug. In order to find more apt adjectives, it might make some sense to look into how these men interact with one another and how men figured in their narratives.

The precipitating incident, the event that thrust these men into periods of transition and/or instability, was sometimes spurred on by a clash between two men. For example, Xavion butted heads with his uncle, and he felt forced to move out from under his uncle's roof. The precipitating incident was a verbal fight that Xavion himself referred to as a clash of masculinities. During that fight, Xavion decided to become a rough sleeper rather than remain under his uncle's roof. Allen and his dad had a row one night. This was the final straw after too

many previous disputes. This precipitating event thrust Allen out of his family's home and into lodging with his friends. Felix and his father had a similar row, but he acknowledged the lack of a proper facilitator at that moment. Felix wanted to share some important information about who he wanted to become; instead he and his father clashed, and Felix felt the need to leave the space. He stayed with friends, his girlfriend, in his car, hotels, and Airbnbs. Felix said he didn't have a plan or know how long he would be out of the house, he just knew he needed to leave.

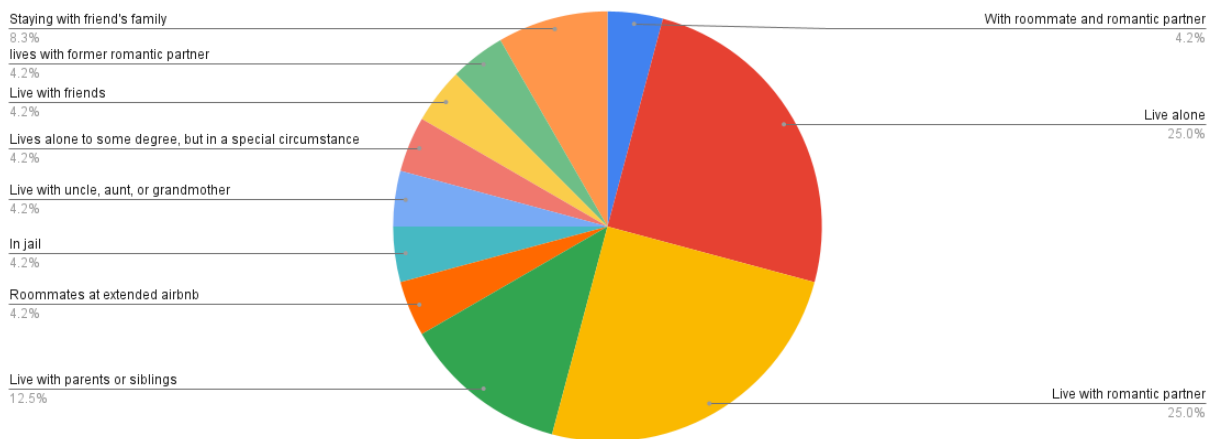
There are some indecent acts in the narratives: Eric's mother's crack addicted boyfriend who stole their belongings, for example. However, most of the stories depicted men in decent ways. I use 'decent' here, in reference to A. Goffman's and Anderson's use of the term. For example, it was a Black older male homeowner who rented Eric's apartment to him—the apartment he had been living in for over eight years when I met him. Allen seems to have a plethora of men he trusts in his life. His father figured prominently in his story as a man he trusts and as a man who showed him grace when he was at a low point. His male friends, all of whom were identified by Allen as African-descended, shared their homes with him, shared opportunities like the use of Airbnbs with him, and shared space with him as formal roommates. He paid these kindnesses forward too, despite not being a member of any formal network like Isaac. In Wesley's story, he resided with his African-descended male romantic partner. They enlisted the support of the partner's father to aid Wesley with postal service and storing belongings.

Black men figured prominently in each other's narratives. The verdict is overwhelmingly positive. Just as with others of various identity categories, Black men played essential and positive roles in each other's lives. The stories seem to show that if Black men had more access to resources, they would lift up one another as well as the women in their lives. Importantly, this is evidence that if we were able to allocate more resources to Black men, it would significantly relieve Black women of the burden to support.

### #### 4.3.5.3 Typology of Gendered Entanglements

In the introduction chapter of this thesis, I say that low-income African-descended men and women live entangled lives. Throughout this chapter, we see the ways that they are socially entangled and how coping with housing insecurity further entangles the lives of low-income people. Being transient within one’s community, or intra-community transience, is living between multiple households. This is where the entanglements become evident, although not necessarily visible. In this section, I would like to examine the entanglements.

Figure 26: Pie Chart of Current Housing Situation



In this pie chart, we can see ‘where’, meaning with whom, the research participants were living at the time of the project. Out of the 25 research participants, six said they lived with romantic partners. Of the six participants, five lived with female romantic partners and one lived with a male romantic partner. Six participants said they lived alone. When we probe into that selection, it is a bit more complex, and the entanglements matter. Zaire and Nasir truly lived alone: Zaire owned his house out-right, and Nasir had a rental lease under his own name at the time of the survey. The picture is a bit more fuzzy for the others.

For example, Eric wrote that he lived alone. However, I know that his girlfriend had moved in, and he had partial custody of his daughter, who had a room in his apartment. I later

also found out that his cousin from out of town was staying with him for several weeks. While Xavion lived alone, in that he was the only occupant of the unit, he shared the lease with a guarantor who helped him make the monthly payments. Patrick did in fact live alone at the time of this survey; however, he was paying more than 80% of his income on rent. Early on in our work together, he made the decision to give up his apartment. He decided to stay with a friend who owned her own house. Felix was the single lease holder in his rental apartment at the time of the project. However, his on-again-off-again girlfriend regularly resided in the apartment when she needed to be in the area. She even had a key. According to his narrative, he felt a sense of obligation to share his space with her because when he was transient, she allowed him to stay with her.

There were three respondents who 'lived' with parents. We know that Benji has, with the exception of a brief stint in Allen's long-stay Airbnb, always lived with his mother (and whichever member of his family happens to be living there). Isaac, too, we know, with the exception of a few periods of conflict and an entanglement with the police, has for the great majority of his adult life lived with his mother. And even during the periods of transience, his mother's house remained his legal permanent address. Allen's story has a lot more twists and turns, but he always considered his parent's home his legal permanent address and something of his anchor home. The fact that only three respondents selected 'lived with parents' is misleading in some ways. For the folks who have ties to their parents, the parents seemed to remain the anchor home. There is a relationship to the anchor home and legal permanent address.

Two people, Lamonte and Orion, stayed with the family of friends. They 'stayed' with the parents of their high school friends. Marcus also said that he was 'living' with friends. It turns out that he had experienced a major life shock to his living arrangement and was forced to move out. He was living with friends at the time on his way to a more secure leaseholding situation. So, friends figure prominently in the narratives. We know from the narrative charts that friends play an even larger role in the housing narratives.

When conducting research with and on low-income African-descended men, it is hard to stray far from proximity to the prison industrial complex. By the end of the project, there were three research participants in jail. I remain in touch with one jailed research participant, Jamal, and the subject of our correspondence is *where* he will reside upon release. We are making plans by mapping his networks and doing targeted outreach.

These are the entanglements. These are the ways that ‘people power’ houses community and network members outside of formal systems. It is clear that romantic partners and parents play a large role in housing these men. Parents continue to house these men well into and through adulthood. Friends play a critical role in providing options of places for these men to stay when they need immediate housing support. They often named friends as the people they could ‘stay’ with. Whereas with family they tend to ‘live’. What is not illustrated here is the role that knowledge sharing plays in housing. These men and their friends play an invaluable role in giving information that helps them navigate their housing precarity. It isn’t always the first degree of networks that help house, but second degrees and third degrees. The parents of friends, in the Lamonte and Orion narratives, friends of cousins, in the case of Quintin, and in Khalil’s case, the networks of a community of responders.

### **### 4.3.6 Reciprocity in Social Networks**

Reciprocity is the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. In social networks, reciprocity is important. There are times someone can give and times when someone has a need. In Melvin Oliver’s analysis, he included a measurement of reciprocity (giver, taker, and giver + taker). Focusing on these men and their networks, I was curious as to how *reciprocity figured* in the construction of ties, strength of ties, and duration of ties.

### **### 4.3.7 The Construction of Ties**

I first thought about reciprocity when Orion clarified that he was already receiving support with his housing needs from his friend's mother, but that he wanted to meet with me because he wanted to be able to call on me in the future. He was doing me the favour of participating in my research project now just in case he needed me later. Ulrich explained that he paid his tithes at his church because he had personally been blessed with its benevolence and knew its value.

Lamonte's mother was part of a network of immigrant women who shared information about resources with one another. Not only did they share information, they helped each other complete forms, helped each other with transportation, and showed up for one another. That had a multiplier effect—the men in their lives, including Lamonte, benefitted from this network structure.

Another distinctive sort of reciprocity I observed was in relationships established through sports. Orion met his friends through sports in high school. That is how the mother of his friend got to know him, by providing transport to training and events. The reciprocity here is a comradery.

Trey explained that his roommate's situation was an unusual one. He was finally able to move out of his mother's house because he found a roommate situation with reciprocity. A disabled young man wanted to live independently from his family, so they arranged for him to have a roommate for companionship and for support when he needed it. In exchange, Trey got very cheap rent, a friend, and a new branch of his social network, the family of his roommate.

#### **#### 4.3.7.1 The Strength of Ties**

Hakeem mentioned that he developed a relationship of trust with each of his roommates. He had three roommates, the father of a son, the mother of a son, and a former high school



friend. The father and the mother felt comfortable renting a room in their home to Hakeem because he was a father himself. They would watch each other's kids and share information about resources. Hakeem said that his son refers to the former high school friend as 'uncle'. His roommate was a role model and family figure to his son. The strength of the trust that is built through these ties creates informal kinship structures.

Xavion didn't go into detail about this relationship, but he had a guarantor for his apartment. He admitted that he could never have been able to afford or even access his apartment without that support. The strength of the tie was through a formal social network, a professional association, that Xavion joined. He developed relationships with a mentor who has invested in his well-being. Xavion mentioned that he had once interned and continued to do odd jobs for his mentor. This was how they had built up their relationship over the years. Xavion also said that he spends money to be a formal member of this professional association. The strength of the tie was through this formal structure of the professional association to which they both belonged.

Wesley lived with his once romantic partner in public housing. He paid monthly rent, contributed to other bills including electricity, heating, and internet. They also shared the housework and supported each other's professional development. Khalil also lived in public housing as an unregistered tenant, and he helped by also paying rent.

#### **#### 4.3.7.2 The Duration of Ties**

Eric had a long-term girlfriend. Both the girlfriend and his mother invested in Eric's housing. The investment was long-term. They both saw Eric as a good potential long-term partner and saw his well-being now as integral to their potential future together. This relationship endured for years during insecure housing times for Eric. The strength of the tie was this potential romantic partnership and their future together. Again, this is tied to kinship-making.

Zaire made a friend during university who turned out to be a very important member of his housing network. While Zaire's family was experiencing a series of housing transitions, this friend became an anchor to Zaire, a place he could go no matter what. Over time, this relationship shifted from just simply providing him with a place to live to teaching him how to be a homeowner and how to maintain a house.

When Quintin was sleeping in the hallway of the public housing projects, the tenants allowed him to be there because he took up the responsibility of supporting the residents. He mentioned that boyfriends would get into fights with the female residents, and he would have to intervene and 'put out the fire'. This accountability structure put a lot of pressure on Quintin. He didn't feel comfortable because if anything went awry, the police might be called. With his status as 'ex-felon', he couldn't risk police involvement. He used the hallway as a last-minute option during his periods of rough sleeping.

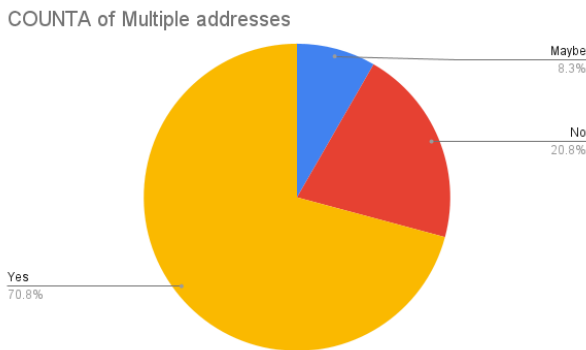
Reciprocity worked as a sort of investment too. Grant's mother would help them apply for government programmes; in return, she needed to invest less of her own personal resources into stabilising Grant and his partner. Ultimately, Grant and his partner became homeowners. Jamal had an anchor home, his mother's house. When he had no other options, he could find his way back to her. He mentioned that he has walked from Cambridge to Brockton to get back to his mother's house before, about 25 miles. When he was at his mother's house, he helped with yard work, cleaning, and moving large objects. The fact of Jamal's incarceration and subsequent prison stints eroded the trust in their relationship. It was a moral issue—that is, Jamal's mother equated his crime with a moral failing. This further eroded the confidence and eventually the relationship altogether. There was no amount of labour that could fix the underlying issues here, leaving Jamal without an anchor home.

### **So, how does reciprocity figure?**

Reciprocity presents as accountability, comradery, association, investment, resources, and information. Reciprocity is integral to the social housing networks of low-income people.

Unlike in the Oliver study, I did not ask any direct corresponding question to measure reciprocity quantitatively. A future iteration of this project would include such a question in the demographic survey.

### ### 4.3.8 What Does It Mean to Live Somewhere?



**Figure 27 Pie chart of use of multiple addresses**

How does someone cope with housing insecurity? Transience. They mobilise the resources of their network of relatives, friends, romantic partners, and community members to help meet and maintain basic needs. Highly mobile people understand that home is used in multiple ways. Homes can be used as 1)

the legal permanent address, 2) the location where one receives correspondence and postal service, 3) where one stores belongings, and 4) where one sleeps. And there are affective uses of the home too, where memories, connections, and trauma are made and kept (Gurney, 1997).

In the demographic survey, I asked the research participants, 'Do you use multiple addresses and locations as your legal permanent address, where you receive mail, where you store your belongings, and where you sleep?' The pie chart above illustrates that 17 of the respondents found themselves using multiple addresses to meet their housing needs, two were unsure, and five said no, they were not using multiple addresses. Of those 17, we know that Wesley was sleeping at his male romantic partner's apartment in public housing, storing his belongings at the father of his romantic partner's home not far from the public housing complex where he 'stayed', and receiving correspondences across town at the home of some 'nice white folks'. Wesley confirmed that these folks were homeowners and friends of his partner. Similarly, Xavion found himself rough sleeping for a period. During that time, he slept in public spaces and

trespassed on university property. He had a post office box to collect his regular mail and sent packages to his high school friend's parents' house. They too were homeowners.

Marcus, Nasir, Benji, Isaac, and Rashaad replied 'no' to this question. In following up with Marcus, he had selected that he 'lived' with friends because he had been added to the lease of the place where he was staying at the time of the survey. Marcus had switched that address to his legal permanent address too. Even though he had in his past had periods of using multiple addresses, at the time of the survey, he was using one address for all of his needs. Nasir was the sole name on his rental property lease. Isaac selected yes, but at the time of the survey, he was back living with his mother. He had never switched any legal paperwork to another address. Rashaad had a tumultuous few years, but at the time of this survey, he was properly settled with his wife, living in a house that was owned by her family outright, and had been there for several years. All of his housing needs were being met by this one location. Carl and Ulrick selected 'maybe'. At the time of the survey, Ulrick believed that he had all of his physical needs being met by his current address. However, he received postal service at work. This made him unsure about selecting yes. Carl on the other hand, was living in a long-stay Airbnb at the time of the survey. He had experienced several years of being unsure where his postal correspondences were being delivered and had switched as much as he could to his email address as his preferred method of contact. He had gotten rid of most of his belongings and mostly lived out of his bag. His biggest possession was his bike, which he used as transportation. He selected 'maybe' because he wasn't sure the question applied to him.

In terms of entanglements, we can see that these men rely on social networks to have a place to sleep. Some people used their networks for receiving correspondences. With the rise of electronic mail and the increased use of the technosphere for administrative work, this is something that has less relevance. However, receiving packages presented a wrinkle. Participants sometimes had post office boxes or had them delivered to friends' homes and/or

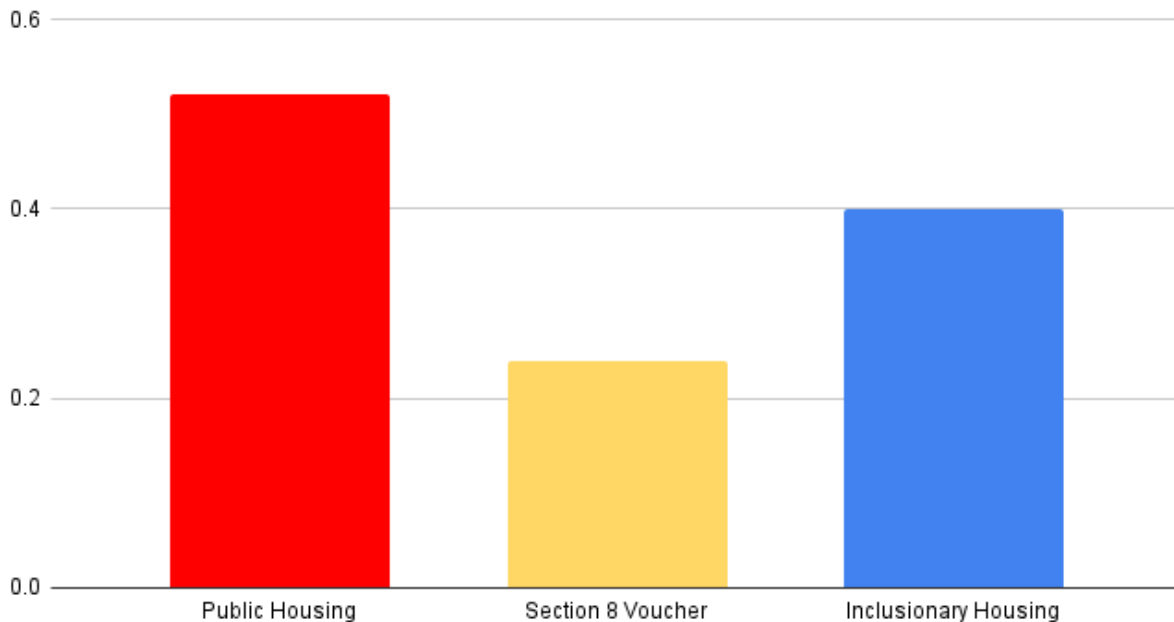
workplaces. The legal permanent address seemed to hold the most weight. Most people didn't switch their legal permanent addresses very often, despite sleeping in multiple places. Family homes, with parents or mothers in particular, seemed to be the preferred and secure legal permanent address.

### **### 4.3.9 The Policies and Programmes**

There are three major housing programmes that this project focuses on. They are public housing, section 8 vouchers, and inclusionary housing. Each is governed by a set of policies that determines eligibility, rules, and regulations. By looking at the networks of these respondents, we see that each of these three programmes plays important roles in the housing stories of these research participants. As we saw in the previous chapter, *The Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition*, the policies governing these housing programmes are designed to effectively exclude certain *undeserving* people—like the men in my study. The point I would like to underline here is that these programmes are being used and are accessible to these men through the members of their networks. They access them primarily by informally residing as unregistered tenants.

In the next part, I break down how each of these programmes figure in the networks that house these men. I use the narrative data to conduct my analysis. There are some cases where I include the data from my observations and from the process of helping them meet their housing goals. This has meant that there are a lot of people whose narratives did not include the inclusionary housing programme, but since they have either applied or now reside in an inclusionary unit, I have added them to the list that includes the inclusionary programme. There are also people—like Orion and Isaac—who mentioned programmes like public housing. These mentions help orient us geographically. They show the men's proximity to programmes like public housing or inclusionary housing. I bring this up here because even though they

themselves were not residing in public housing or inclusionary housing at that moment, the programme showed up in their narrative and is therefore included in the graphing data. I will break this down further in the description below.



**Figure 28 Bar graph of government housing programme use**

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#### #### 4.3.9.1 Public Housing

As you can see from the chart above (figure 28), 13 of the 25 research participants mentioned public housing in their narratives. As noted earlier, public housing is a form of housing structure in which the property is owned by the government, usually the federal or state government, and administratively managed either as a department of a municipality or as a separate quasi-non-governmental organisation, usually referred to as a public housing authority

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<sup>87</sup> This chart does not represent the percentage of time spent in each programme, it simply illustrates the percentage of use of the programme.

(PHA). In Cambridge, the public housing authority is Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA).

Public housing seems to play an important role in the lives of housing-transient

African-descended men in Cambridge. The ways that public housing figures in their narratives in relation to their networks are distinct and warrant a closer look.

Allen mentioned that he was staying with a college friend, a young African-descended man, whose parents were away on a long-term trip. The friend resided in public housing and allowed him to stay there too. Allen's access to public housing came through an African-descended family with children. During his tenure in public housing, Allen was not a documented tenant. He gave the impression, although he wasn't sure the exact duration, that he stayed longer than two weeks and that he was not a properly registered guest with the public housing authority. If he were to be found residing there during that time, the entire family would have faced eviction.

Growing up in public housing, Eric was a documented tenant of public housing both as a minor and later as an adult, when he resided in a Cambridge-based public housing unit. He had access to that unit through his African-descended mother, who resided there with her children. After his mother moved out of the city, his older brother became the primary leaseholder. Eric spent a brief stint in custody of the state before returning to public housing. This means that Eric's brother was able to inherit the lease because his mother had previously acquired the public housing unit. At some point, Eric's brother moved in with his adult girlfriend, a young African-descended woman. In a passing comment not included in the narrative, Eric said that CHA knew about the brother's girlfriend, but that it was the rent arrears and overall lack of communication with CHA that led to their eventual eviction. This means that the girlfriend was never formally added to the lease, despite residing in the unit for a significant amount of time, years, according to Eric. He also mentioned in his narrative that he resided in public housing projects in Boston. There, he was an unregistered tenant. The leaseholders were an

African-American family with children. Eric recounted that he had to move at night to evade the gaze of authorities, meaning he was knowingly an unregistered resident in public housing, although this time in Boston.

Orion was the only participant to have some relationship to all three programmes. He began his narrative in public housing. When he was born, his mother returned to the public housing unit of his maternal grandmother. Both his mother and his grandmother are African-descended women. Orion, a mixed-race young man, gave the impression that his mother was not a documented tenant of public housing when they 'stayed' with his grandmother. There are several points in the housing narrative where both Orion and his mother returned to public housing as unregistered tenants. Despite being moved in and out of various units in multiple public housing projects throughout the city of Cambridge, the grandmother's public housing unit, wherever it was, functioned as something of an anchor home for Orion and his mother throughout his childhood. His mother opted to stay in her mother's public housing unit, which prevented them from staying in shelters and sleeping rough. In addition to the stints as unregistered tenants in public housing with his mother, Orion mentioned that he had a friend who lives in the projects. That friend, also African-descended, and his family offered him a place to stay when he was transient after precipitating incidents with both his mother and father.

Both Orion and Isaac mentioned public housing as a geographic orientation marker in their narratives. Orion mentioned that he and his mother moved to an apartment near the projects. His geographic orientation was also economically oriented in that, historically, the neighbourhoods that surround public housing projects have lower income tenants and other territorial stigma. This is of course compared to neighbourhoods that surround other types of structures and institutions such as good schools, transport links, and public parks with trees in high-income neighbourhoods. Isaac mentioned that his mother was able to purchase her house near a public housing project in the city. Again, this geographic marker is also economically



orienting, in that we can think of middle-class African-descended communities serving as a buffer to higher income and whiter communities, as Mary Pattillo describes in both 'Black Middle-Class Neighborhoods' and *Black Picket Fences*.

Quintin was rough sleeping in the hallway of public housing projects. He was the only research participant to mention that he had done this. How was he able to access the public housing hallway? Quintin mentioned that he struck a deal with a janitor, a Black man, to get the keys. He was very clear that he only allowed himself to do this for three reasons: 1) He was a man, and he wasn't necessarily worried about his physical well-being. 2) The people who lived off of the hallway where he slept were all women and children. 3) He had gotten their informal 'permission' to be there. That is, the residents knew he was there and didn't turn him in to the housing authority. Quintin alluded to some women living in that building who were his distant relatives. He said that the fact the residents were African-descended, and that he was accountable to his relatives, made it easier to gain their trust when he was there.

In Wesley's narrative, he lived as an unregistered tenant of public housing with a male African-descended romantic partner. In fact, when I met him, he was still residing there. The public housing apartment was originally under his partner Vince's mother's name. (See Vince's narrative in Appendix ## 7.23). Vince's mother was also African-descended. The apartment later went into Wesley's partner's name after his mother passed away. So, neither Wesley nor his partner Vince would have had access to the public housing unit without his romantic partner's mother having had access to it first and Vince inheriting the lease that way.

#### **#### 4.3.9.2 Section 8 Vouchers**

Section 8 is a government programme whereby low-income families (as well as individual low-income senior citizens and families with disabled members) receive a housing benefits voucher to assist with covering costs of their rental accommodations. Section 8 voucher

tenants pay only up to 30% of their gross monthly income on rental accommodations in the private market. For the purposes of this section, we will focus on the research participants who mentioned section 8 in their narratives.

For Hakeem, the mother of his son, who got a section 8 voucher early in his son's life, was a stabilising factor for his son. After their romantic break up, Hakeem's baby's mother left the apartment they rented together. She had been able to acquire a section 8 voucher for her and her son. This allowed the two of them to move back to Cambridge where the bulk of the members of her network resided. Hakeem, on the other hand, explained that he saw the section 8 voucher as playing a role in his displacement from his son's life. That is, the voucher allowed his son to move to a city that he could not afford. This puts physical distance between them. Hakeem explained his entire housing trajectory as an attempt to close that physical gap.

In a similar situation to Hakeem's, Quintin's baby's mother secured a section 8 for her and her child after they found living in an expensive market-rate apartment too draining on their social resources. Quintin spent a great part of his story going in and out of prison. At one point in his story, Quintin mentioned that he got paroled to a section 8 unit.<sup>88</sup> I wasn't aware that this was even possible, but it was true. During the Obama administration, between 2009 and 2016, there were significant roll backs of War on Drugs policies. Local public housing authorities—either publicly, like the Los Angeles Housing Authority (Palta, 2015) or quietly, like the Cambridge Housing Authority—made changes in their eligibility or administrative policies concerning the formerly incarcerated, those on probation, and parolees. Quintin was able to be paroled to this woman's section 8 apartment because at this time there were new interpretations of the law. The Anti-Drug Abuse law of 1988 included the Public Drug Elimination Program,

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<sup>88</sup> To be paroled means that he was released from prison early and agreed to abide by certain behavioural conditions, such as checking-in with parole officers. If he failed to do so, he risked being rearrested and returned to prison. Being paroled to a section 8 apartment meant that his release was tied to that unit. This is the location where he would be required to reside during his parole sentence. This means that the parole officer could request to see him at any time at that address.

which would have prevented this in the 1990s.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, Quintin himself credited Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* for changes in public ideology. In this case, despite being formerly incarcerated and being monitored through the parole surveillance system, Quintin was able to access his romantic partner's section 8 apartment.

Orion's mother's section 8 voucher has played a critical role in his housing story. Once they got the section 8 voucher, they were able to find legal and documented tenancies. After acquiring the section 8 voucher, their use of their public housing anchor became less frequent. Both Orion and his mother credit the section 8 voucher with preventing them from leaving Cambridge, the city where they have the most social capital and relational resources. And it was when Orion's mother used the section 8 voucher in combination with the inclusionary housing programme that they became housing secure as a family. After that, Orion himself needed to resort to his grandmother's public housing unit as his anchor home, but his mother was securely housed in the inclusionary unit.

#### #### 4.3.9.3 Inclusionary Housing

Ten of the research participants either mentioned or were involved in the inclusionary programme. The inclusionary housing programme figured in several stories in significant ways. Two reminders before diving in: First, the inclusionary housing programme is developed through local policies or zoning ordinances. The programme ties the development of new market-rate apartments to development of a percentage of 'affordable' units, which are administratively co-managed by the development/management companies and the city department. In

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<sup>89</sup> According to the Massachusetts Parole Board's *Supervision Manual for Parolees*:

If you are living in a housing authority or Section 8 housing unit, you must take the appropriate steps to be put on the lease of this unit as a member of the household. You must verify that you are applying to live in this unit and provide evidence of a final approval to your parole officer within 90 days of staying in such home. If the landlord or housing authority denies your request to stay in such housing, you must submit a new home plan to your parole officer immediately. Failure to comply with housing authority/Section 8 requirements may be grounds for the revocation of your parole. ([2016, p.14](#)).

Cambridge, the CDD administers the program. Second, the data for this section includes both data from the narratives and researcher notes that depict the outcomes of my intervention. The research participants who mentioned inclusionary housing in their narratives are Orion, Grant, and Lamonte. The rest are here because we, the participant and the researcher, either applied for the inclusionary programme or the participant currently resides in an inclusionary unit.

I worked with both Damien and Sam, and a Cambridge city councillor's aid, to apply for the inclusionary programme, after they both acquired new and secure employment earning salaries of \$50,000 per annum. They were both accepted into the programme within nine months of submitting their applications. They both now reside in inclusionary units and are now working toward new goals, such as searching for higher income positions and seeking to get partial custody of their children. I have helped Khalil submit his application, but he has not yet moved into an inclusionary unit. Allen has also submitted his application, but I have not heard from him about its outcome. I had also suggested to Patrick that he apply for the inclusionary programme, although, at the time of writing, he had not yet submitted the necessary paperwork.

With his high salary as a tech sector employee, Eric was eligible for the inclusionary programme at the higher end of the salary spectrum. In theory, Eric should have been able to access market-rate housing, but due to his poor credit score, and in his opinion, his presentation as a Black man, he always found it challenging to access certain segments of the housing market. So, he was ultimately able to access the inclusionary housing programme because credit history doesn't appear to be a factor in eligibility. He now resides in an inclusionary unit with his romantic partner.

Both Eric and Benji's mother sought Black homeowners to rent from. Although this project does not dig deeply into homeownership, Black homeowners played a significant role in the narratives. If Benji and Eric's narratives are an indication, Black homeowners are more likely to rent to low-income African-descended men, as well as other marginalised African-descended people, such as immigrants and formerly incarcerated people. Black homeowners seem to

house these populations in both formal and informal accommodations. In both Eric and Orion's narratives, we can see that after the subprime crisis of 2008, many Black landlords were selling or losing their homes for a variety of reasons, sometimes selling to corporate landlords. As a result, people like Eric and Benji, and members of their networks, were thrust into transience because the pool of housing accessible to them without government housing programmes became smaller. The decline of Black homeowners seems to have a knock-on effect in terms of available housing for other low-income African-descended people. This is especially evident during economic downturns such as after the Great Recession or more recently, the COVID pandemic. Benji's family may have benefited from the relative security of a programme like inclusionary housing.

Benji's experience with inclusionary housing is very interesting. Because their family resided primarily in Black neighbourhoods in Boston, they understood the inclusionary programme there very well. However, the inclusionary programme in Boston operates very differently than it does in Cambridge. In Boston, developers have three options: 1) make 13% of their on-site units affordable, 2) contribute to the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) Fund,<sup>90</sup> and 3) create off-site affordable units nearby (Boston Planning & Development Agency, 2019). For the renters, the system is a lottery that is restricted by number of occupants and household income. There is no guarantee that listings in your income range will be in Boston (City of Boston, 2022). Benji's family heard from others that the BPDA Income Restricted Housing Lottery programme was incredibly restrictive and exclusionary. For example, Benji rightly heard that they restricted the number of overnight guests a tenant in an affordable unit could have, and in many cases, they could not have any overnight guests at all. Benji told me that he had heard about the inclusionary programme through a television show called *High Maintenance*. In an episode called 'The Housing Crisis' (s. 2, ep. 3), it depicts the exclusionary nature of these types

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<sup>90</sup> Contributing to the Inclusionary Development Policy Fund means funds that are allocated to the City of Boston [Mayor's Office of Housing](#) (MOH), which creates affordable/income restricted housing across Boston (<https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/standards/inclusionary-development-policy>).

of programmes (Blichfeld et al., 2016–2020). The management companies prevent the low-income tenants from accessing and using the amenities on-site that are used to attract higher income tenants. Benji's mother had also heard that they monitored how many nights tenants spent away from the unit, which was used as grounds to evict some tenants. Given these restrictions and the boomerang tendencies of Benji's siblings and their families, Benji's mother had not even considered the inclusionary programme—not in Boston, Cambridge, or anywhere. They didn't know that the programme might operate differently in Cambridge.

Grant's mother, a mixed race, African- and European-descended woman, lived in an inclusionary unit. She knew about the programme and understood the process for applying for it. Grant legally resided with his mother in an inclusionary unit before moving out with his romantic partner. Grant's mother helped him and his partner apply for the inclusionary programme. Once they were accepted and allocated a unit, they lived in the first unit for about two years and then moved to another for about a year before they sought to purchase their own home.

Lamonte, at the time of this project, was sleeping at a friend's family's house. But he was still registered as a documented tenant of his mother's inclusionary unit. She was made eligible for this inclusionary unit because she also had a section 8 voucher, as her income was below the 50% AMI threshold. So, Lamonte was able to access the inclusionary unit because his mother had acquired that section 8 voucher when he was a minor. Lamonte and others could be eligible for the inclusionary programme on their own, but they need to be earning 50% AMI. Lamonte, a retail employee, earns just about minimum wage. So, if the inclusionary programme were tied to minimum wage, Lamonte's full-time employment in the retail industry would qualify him. He would have been able to apply for the inclusionary programme on his own and be securely housed. As it is, he was not eligible for the inclusionary programme on the basis of income.

Orion's mother was also able to acquire an inclusionary unit with a section 8 voucher. This is where Orion and his mother were living when, at 16 years old, he had a precipitating incident and his mother 'kicked him out'. Orion was an interesting case; in his second narrative (see Appendix ## 7.16), he shared his experience of surveillance by the management companies of low-income tenants in the inclusionary programme. Whereas market-rate tenants and condominium owners within those buildings could have any number of guests and could access any entrance or exit at any time, the guests of inclusionary tenants were highly monitored and sometimes followed. He mentioned that his girlfriend, who is Latina and resides in an inclusionary unit with her family, received passive aggressive harassment from the management company employees. He said,

I was there so much, management has begun harassing my girl. They did some petty shit. One time, they printed out her lease, slipped it under the door with highlighted sections.

Back to Lamonte's and Orion's mothers' access to the inclusionary programme for a moment: this combination, inclusionary with section 8 voucher, has meant that the inclusionary programme is producing the newest affordable housing units of any housing programme in the city. This makes this programme incredibly popular with the city council and with many liberal voters in the city, including the members of the housing advocacy group called *A Better Cambridge* (ABC). Contextualising this information with the discussion in the *Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition* chapter, one can see the justification for creating more vouchers to get more people housed in this programme.

### ### 4.3.10 Anchor Homes

Participant Name	Anchor home	Relational Tie to Anchor Home	Rough Sleeping	Notes
Allen	Yes	parent's home	No	
Benji	Yes	Mother's home	No	
Carl	No	no	Yes	
Damien	Yes	Grandmother's apartment	Yes	
Eric	No	No	Yes	But he does trek to Springfield to stay with his mother w/
Felix	Yes	Parent's home	Yes	He slept in his car.
Grant	Yes	Mother's apartment	No	
Hakeem	Yes	Parent's home but doesn't use it	No	
Isaac	Yes	Mother's house	No	
Jamal	Yes	Mother's house, but loses access over time	Yes	He slept rough after he lost access to his mother's home
Khalil	Yes	Uncle's apartment in public housing	No	
Lamonte	Yes	Mother's inclusionary apartment	Yes	He slept in his car.
Marcus	No	Doesn't have an anchor home in Massachusetts	Yes	He slept in his car.
Nasir	Yes	Mother's home in a subsidised program	No	
Orion	Yes	Grandmother's apartment	Yes	He slept in his car
Patrick	No	No	No	He has so far had access to a social network that has su
Quintin	Yes	For a while, his anchor home was his baby's mother's section 8 apartment	Yes	After he and his wife split up he slept in the hallway of pu
Rashaad	Yes	His wife's family home that they own	No	
Sam	Yes	His grandmother's house that she owns	Yes	He slept in his car
Trey	Yes	His mother's house that she owns	No	
Ulrick	No	Not in Massachusetts	No	
Vince	Yes	His mother's public housing unit, that he later inherits the tenure for	No	
Wesley	No	No	Yes	While he was enrolled in school he slept in hallways som
Xavion	No	No	Yes	MIT hallways, behind churches, and work
Zaire	Yes	His friend's house that he owns	No	

**Figure 29 Table of anchor homes by respondent**

Benji considers his mother's home as his anchor home. Just like with Orion's maternal grandmother, Benji's mother's home was not only a location but a relational location. That is, no matter where his mother moved, that social space would be his home because of his relationship to his mother. Meanwhile, his mother had moved several times throughout his narrative. He didn't consider these transitions, initiated and coordinated by his mother, as destabilising. He only named the period he spent at his friend's long-term Airbnb as destabilising, because he had to be there instead of wherever his mother was.

After looking at Benji, I began to look at Jamal's story differently too. Jamal's mother owned property outside of Cambridge, but it was his relational ties to Cambridge and proximity to social resources and other capital that kept him there. But he did always have a legal permanent address, his mother's house. He also stored his large belongings there. Whether he



took care to check or not, the legal documents that were sent through the post went to his mother's property too. The fact that his mother owned that property meant that there was a degree of stability in Jamal's life. It wasn't until Jamal was arrested that he began to experience instability. While his mother still owned her property, the relational tie was weakened significantly because of her moral disapproval of the choices that Jamal had made. After that relational tie was loosened, his quality of life worsened, and his housing circumstances left him pulling more heavily on other social resources. Without an anchor, he drifted about, a body out of place, until he eventually returned to prison.

I began to review the data in table form to assess which of my research participants had access to anchor homes and which of them did not. Eighteen of the 25 had access to an anchor home.<sup>91</sup> Nasir had his mother's home. Hakeem, although he didn't use it, had his parents' property. Grant had his mother's inclusionary apartment. Damien had his grandmother's public housing unit. Both Felix and Allen had their parents' homes, which they returned to despite precipitating incidents.

That left seven of 25 without access to an anchor home. They were Carl, Eric, Marcus, Ulrick, Wesley, and Xavion. Outside of his long-term use of Airbnb, Carl could be considered classically homeless. He had long periods of rough sleeping and squatting. He had no one in his social network to call on for housing support, as his family had moved out of state. Marcus, on the other hand, had moved into the state, and he developed relational ties within the community over time. Ulrick too moved into the state, with no familial ties in Massachusetts. In his narrative, he mentioned that his church home was a saving grace. So perhaps, church homes and other spiritual homes can be considered anchor homes. Wesley didn't seem to think his mother's home was an anchor home, because it was overcrowded and far away from the life he had built here in the city. But neither Ulrick, Marcus, or Wesley ended up a rough sleeper. Xavion did

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<sup>91</sup> The participants with access to an anchor home were Allen, Benji, Damien, Felix, Grant, Hakeem, Isaac, Jamal, Khalil, Lamonte, Nasir, Orion, Quintin, Rashaad, Sam, Trey, Vince, and Zaire.

sleep in the rough. He mentioned that his precipitating incident with his uncle left him without the option to return. He felt too ashamed to ask his friends from school for housing support. He had no anchor home.

I decided to check if there was correlation between rough sleeping and anchor homes. I created a table with one column for the participant names, another column labelled anchor homes and a third column labelled rough sleeping. In this table, 1 equals Yes and 0 equals No.<sup>92</sup> Using the data from their narratives, I inserted whether they indicated an anchor home and whether they indicated that they had slept rough. There is an inverse correlation of -0.2924396699 between having an anchor home and sleeping rough—meaning if someone has an anchor home, they are less likely to sleep rough. However, this number is not statistically significant.

There was a notable exception that stands out in my data. Some participants with anchor homes still slept rough if they had access to a car. There were four research participants who slept in their cars. Felix, Lamonte, and Sam had access to an anchor home here in Massachusetts. When I probed this question with Felix, he said that he needed the time away from his parents; there was an incident that precipitated the period of transience. Lamonte said that he felt safe in his car and didn't feel an urgency to return to his mother's home. There was a precipitating incident, a fight with his mother about his next steps in life and about supporting the family by getting married. Both Damien and Sam said they could always go to grandma's house. The situations where Sam slept in the rough were mostly when he was out late and felt too intoxicated to drive, so he just slept in his car as a safety precaution. Damien often slept in his car because he is formerly incarcerated and wants to minimise encounters with the police.

I wondered what the relationship between anchor homes was to the programmes that this research project focuses on. For example, in the case of public housing, it is riskier to have an anchor home be in public housing for both the person who relies on that anchor home and

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<sup>92</sup> The equation for this was =CORREL(B2:B26,C2:C26).

for the network member who provides access to that public housing unit. In terms of section 8, I looked at Benji again: he went in and out of visibility, or being named on the lease, after the mother acquired the section 8 apartment. I wonder what that meant for his paperwork, for accessing employment or voting or the census. Lamonte's mother's inclusionary apartment remained his anchor home. However, there are added burdens when the inclusionary unit is accessed alongside the use of a section 8 voucher. The pressure is a higher rent burden because the section 8 voucher sets the rent at 30% of the household income. So, keeping him on the lease would mean allowing them to charge her for their combined incomes.<sup>93</sup>

Many of my friends in Cambridge who do not rely on these government programmes consider their parents' house their anchor. They make decisions such as living at home to save money or using their parents' addresses while travelling or studying abroad. These options are not technically available to my research participants, not because their parents don't consent but because of how these programmes are designed. We can see from this data alone, that having an anchor home significantly improves life outcomes and housing prospects. When this is available for these men, like it was for Grant (who lived with his mother after university in her inclusionary unit that she had without a section 8 voucher), they may be able make choices that eventually lead to homeownership, as Grant experienced.

Just think through the role of programmes and policy in these anchor homes. What if we designed these programmes differently? What if we designed these programmes as ladder programmes? Instead of assuming that the children of low-income people will remain minors fixed in time, we assume they will grow up. We assume that they need access to a safe and secure space for them to live while they make decisions about where to live and where to go. If the policies empowered parents and their adult children in this way, this data suggests that they

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<sup>93</sup> Although, there may be exceptions for young adults enrolled as full-time students in university or trade programmes. See the Notice by the [Housing and Urban Development Department](#) on [04/10/2006](#) found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2006/04/10/06-3365/eligibility-of-students-for-assisted-housing-under-section-8-of-the-us-housing-act-of-1937>.

would fare much better than having the policies designed as they are. These anchor homes play an essential role in preventing and delaying homelessness.

An abolitionist tool, pod mapping helps people identify these sorts of social resources. What if we leaned into this and other relational tools to support people in recognising their anchor homes and strengthening their relational ties to make better and more empowered choices.

### **### 4.3.10 Connecting the Threads—The Housing Programmes and Policies**

The practical point here is that so many of the research participants were in fact utilising programmes such as public housing, section 8 units, and inclusionary units for which they themselves were ineligible. They could access these government-subsidised programmes by drawing on their social networks (mothers and romantic partners). We can see throughout this chapter, and in the table above, that it is in fact predominantly the women in their networks that have access to these programmes. This is how I came to find that *to address their basic housing needs, low-income inner-city African-descended men rely on their social networks, networks composed predominantly of women.*

If the policies for government-subsidised housing were different, these men could have been eligible themselves. The problem here isn't entirely the programmes themselves, although these programmes can be better designed, better funded, and better implemented, but the problem starts with the policies that govern the programmes. These policies create burdens. The policies that govern these programmes not only neglect to serve people like the men in my study, but they also harm the residents who reside within the units run by these government-subsidised programmes. These residents are predominantly women.

The policies that govern the administrative operations of these programmes are punitive and exclusionary. We see this punitive logic in the court case HUD v. Rucker (535 US 125 (2002)). In this case, the courts upheld a ruling that public housing authorities have discretion to evict with impunity. The case looks at an elderly African-descended woman who was evicted from her public housing apartment in Oakland, California, for her grandson's drug-related activity, despite not being involved or having knowledge of the activity herself. The stakes of housing unregistered tenants in government-subsidised housing programmes are high, placing a significant burden of risk and responsibility on the women who break the rules to support their housing-insecure children, grandchildren, romantic partners, or close friends. These ties—social, geographic, and relational—illustrate the networks of low-income African-descended people. Just like the middle-class networks described in Mary Pattillo's work, these lower-class communities have strong network ties of relational entanglements and social obligations. My finding concerning low-income African-descended men is that the *networks that house them are composed predominantly of women, who end up bearing an inordinate burden as a result.*

We have seen throughout this chapter and from this data the ways in which, despite restrictive policies, these men have drawn on the members of their social networks. These men accessed these programmes via members of their network. Absent policies that take these men into account, they are still in need of housing; changes in these policies and these programmes may directly address their housing needs.

I'd like to offer here that while inclusionary housing programmes are considered by many to be a corrective to the exclusionary housing policies and programmes of the past, as Matthew Desmond suggests in *Poverty, by America*, I do not share this view. The inclusionary housing programme is a public-private partnership, and in general I am critical of government programmes that finance for-profit corporations. Instead, it is my belief that those public funds

could be more effectively deployed to more poignant housing programmes. For example, government funds could be prioritised for non-profit developers, to develop the inverse programme, where the larger share of 80% or more is used for the development of affordable housing units and 20% or less is for market rate. In my opinion, that is more inclusionary than the current version of inclusionary programmes. When these properties are not owned by for-profit management corporations, this can be considered social housing. Just the same, there needs to be funding allocated to cooperatives and community land trusts (CLTs) to acquire and build more affordable units. More funding needs to be allocated to support people who earn the minimum wage or to housing stabilisation funds for people who lose their employment or experience a life shock. Or even funding for the government to get back into landlording public housing and to properly resource the units so that they are not subpar slums. All of this is to say that we should not be applauding the current version of inclusionary programmes, which drain public coffers without making a meaningful contribution to ending our many housing crises. And yet, we see that people like my research participants continue to be dependent on these programmes.

### **### 4.3.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter we dove into Wellman's framework of social network analysis, which he developed in response to the culture of poverty literature that described community and network ties being lost in large metropolises. Much like Oliver's study published in 1988, in 2020–2023, we can see from the data that social ties exist at the primary level, where kin (like parents and other relatives) remain the main ties that house these men. There are also secondary ties, such as friends and others (romantic partners, platonic friends, mothers of romantic partners and platonic friends) who provide a great deal of support toward the housing needs of these men. Altogether, this project entirely disapproves of the claims of the communities-lost argument. Despite being reliant on government-subsidised programmes, with their exclusionary and

retaliatory policies, tenants retain a wide range of different types of social ties. However, this research reveals that reliance on social ties and networks is punished. Policy governing subsidised housing, and other social programmes, actually works to dismantle social networks. An abolitionist reading of this is that any community ties lost or hidden in the large metropolises are lost by political design.

In the previous chapter, there was a discussion about the 'burden of payment'. The members of the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition were focused primarily on *who* should shoulder the burden of payment, the options being the individual, the government, or the developers. However, ultimately, we found that the community is burdened through the participatory democratic process. And, in this chapter we are introduced to a fifth potential burdened character, members of the social networks of these housing-transient African-descended men.

The consequences for the members of the networks differ depending on their proximity to government structures, resources, and programmes. The surveillance embedded into these programmes, especially government-subsidised housing programmes, is a component that everyone involved negotiates and navigates. This is where abolition figures, in the consequences for misuse of government programmes.

This illustrates a tension in the abolitionist framework. Who should shoulder the burden of payment? In theory socialist abolitionists would agree that the government should shoulder the burden of payment; however, government surveillance is the price paid for reliance on government resources. So, abolitionists advocate for services to be housed outside of government programmes but sustained, in part, with government resources. Unfortunately, the terms and conditions of this sort of relationship make this ideal challenging for organisations that work with the most marginalised populations. So, there need to be abolitionist organisations that function entirely outside of government entities.

It should be obvious now that, outside of effective government programmes that meet the needs of marginalised people, the burden of payment (to address the immediate housing needs of low-income housing-transient African-descended men) falls to the members of their networks. While men figured in these narratives, you can see from the data that a great majority of the members of these men's networks are women. This is connected to a key finding of this research, that the specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income African-descended men needs to be empirically examined separately from other identity categories. Collapsing them with other Black people or other men ignores the specifics of the intersection at which they are socially located.

Many of the women in these networks are low-income themselves and are dependent on government programmes. The policies of government programmes, as outlined in the literature review, are designed to exclude and to punish misuse. This reflects the finding that the complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements work together to produce a de facto exclusion of low-income African-descended men from government programmes. This therefore illustrates the overall finding of this research, that housing insecurity and housing transience as experienced by low-income inner-city African-descended men is politically protracted.

The members of these networks have an obligation to house these men due to relational ties. This results in an inordinate burden to the women themselves. The risks are high. They risk losing their own housing—that is, being evicted and being thrust into homelessness, or worse, prosecution, which is a sentence to social death. This is illustrative of the finding of this research project, *to address their basic housing needs, low-income inner-city African-descended men rely on their social networks, networks composed predominantly of similarly low-income women, who end up bearing an inordinate burden as a result.*



## ## 4.4 The Burden on Men

Whereas the two previous data chapters address the burden on the government, the community, and the networks of these men; throughout this chapter, I illustrate the ways in which these men's narratives reveal the significant burdens they themselves bear. As I have shown in previous chapters, housing transience is a politically protracted phenomenon; I have insisted that housing policies effectively prolong housing insecurity among this population.

This fourth chapter, *The Burden on Men*, engages with the data presented in the previous chapters alongside relevant theories. While the first findings chapter, *Where Do Black Men Live?*, engages to a limited extent with the research question, *What are the experiences of housing transient Black men?*, this final discussion looks at five categories of burdens borne by low-income housing-transient Black men. These burdens are 1) administrative, 2) rental-cost, 3) carcerality, 4) alienation, and 5) invisibility.

In order to analyse the administrative burdens associated with government-subsidised housing programmes, I begin with the concept of administrative burdens as described by Pamela Herd and Donald Moynihan, with the addition of Annie Lowry's concept of the 'time tax' and my own understanding of 'punitive burdens'. Given the skyrocketing cost of housing, it is crucial that this chapter engage with the fact of rent cost-burden. Informed by the narrative data and researcher notes, I note how this cost-burden prolongs housing insecurity. The third category is carcerality. Using existing academic literature as well as the narrative data and researcher notes, I explore how the carceral landscape prolongs periods of housing insecurity and transition and conditions certain behaviours among these men that are perceived as anti-social. The fourth category is alienation. After a brief review of Marxist descriptions of alienation, I refer back to the data and discussion presented in the networks chapter. Drawing on the narratives, I explore the impacts of relational deterioration, the loss of leisure time, and the inability to self-actualize in a Maslowian frame. The final category is invisibility. Here, I

engage with the concept of social invisibility as described by Fernando Braga da Costa alongside Susie Scott's sociology of nothing. I present a discussion on how bureaucratic structures invisibilise the socially weak and marginalise populations. This chapter ends with a summary of the arguments and findings of the project.

### ### 4.4.1 Administrative Burden

The first category I will explore is what Herd and Moynihan have called 'administrative burden'. This refers to the 'costs' associated with learning about, applying for, using, and complying with public services and benefits. Herd and Moynihan describe three types of administrative burdens in public policy. In their 2015 paper with Hope Harvey, they describe *learning costs* as those entailed in the process of learning about public services and programmes; *psychological costs* as the emotional responses to navigating the social stigma of applying for or relying on social programmes, the loss of power and autonomy, and the judgement and surveillance involved with government and the administrative processes required for participation in programmes; and *compliance costs*, or the costs of acquiescing to programme eligibility and policy design.

While learning costs, psychological costs, and compliance costs illustrate the burdens on individuals, I think there are two missing factors here: time and the punitive impact of administrative burdens. To consider the administrative burden of time, I use journalist Annie Lowrey's description of a 'time tax'. The time tax refers to the actual hours and days it takes to deal with the bureaucracy of seeking government-administered aid. Herd, Moynihan, and Lowry also fail to include in their analyses of administrative burdens the punitive costs, or how the process itself is punishment and has real world impacts. Punitive costs are distinct from learning, psychological, and compliance costs. An example of a punitive cost is 'choosing' to get divorced in order to have access to Medicaid (Spinal Cord Team, 2020). In what follows, I will illustrate these administrative burdens on low-income African-descended men using these five

categories: learning costs, compliance costs, psychological costs, time tax costs, and punitive costs.

#### #### 4.4.1.1 Learning Costs

*Learning costs* are the difficulties that crop up in the process of learning about government programmes and services. What we see with my research participants is the learning cost of not knowing—not knowing about programmes (as in Carl’s story), not knowing if one is eligible (as in Benji’s story), not knowing how to apply (as in Allen’s story), or not knowing how to comply (as in Damien’s story). Each of these stories illustrates a learning cost that prolongs the period of housing transience and insecurity. The learning costs of not knowing reveal the knowledge and data gaps. For example, earlier in this chapter, we saw how these men interact with systems and institutions. By focusing on African-descended men, I was able to contribute to bridging the practical knowledge gap about them. A practical application might involve developing effective outreach to Black men. A good way to reach low-income Black men is to focus on employment. Research participants’ narratives reveal that they often learn about opportunities at work. Sometimes this is structural: it’s a part of their job to know about opportunities and services in their communities (as described by Xavion). Other times this is social: they learn about opportunities from their coworkers (as described by Allen).

Ever shifting and changing policies make it virtually impossible to keep up with the social services landscape. As a result, there are few men applying for these programmes, even when they are eligible. This is discussed in Desmond’s (2023) account, where he condemns the need to rely on lawyers and other costly administrative support in order to access social services. The complex web of housing policies works to exclude. We see throughout the narratives that, outside of employment, these men rely on their networks to learn about opportunities and to access programmes, as in the case of Lamonte and his mother. In addition to the burden posed to the men themselves, these exclusionary policies end up putting an inordinate burden on

women in the men's networks. For example, the risk of eviction, and issues of the loss of autonomy, may prevent women from reporting violent incidents.

#### #### 4.4.1.2 Compliance Costs

*Compliance costs* are the burdens associated with following administrative rules and contorting one's life to meet eligibility guidelines. When focusing on African-descended men, compliance costs cut all ways. First, some of my research participants sought to make their partners eligible for existing programmes through greater compliance (as in Quintin's story). During my fieldwork, I found that these men were willing to contort their lifestyles to be more compliant. For example, Allen said he would pick up extra work as a construction worker with his father to make his income reach the AMI when we were talking about applying to the inclusionary programme. During the application process for the inclusionary programme, I mentioned that the easiest units to get are studios and one bedrooms. Khalil's reaction was to say that he never wanted to get married anyway. But of course, he may have wanted to get married or have been open to it if the opportunity presented itself. His declaration illustrates this burden of compliance. Second, the members of their networks also pay compliance costs, as with Orion's grandmother. The burden borne by members of their networks includes the risk of losing their own housing by housing these men. In order to house the men effectively and to minimise their risks, the people who take these risks are typically very responsible and compliant. My research participants relied on the members of their networks to meet their housing needs, network members who themselves often relied on government programmes (as with Sam's grandmother). Third, what compliance means can change government spending. Take for example the provision in the zoning code that allowed the use of section 8 vouchers to qualify for inclusionary units (presented in the Burden on Community chapter).<sup>94</sup> The

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<sup>94</sup> **The Voucher Clause states**, 'The gross household income of an Eligible Household upon initial occupancy shall be at least fifty percent (50%) and no more than eighty percent (80%) of AMI. A gross household income less than fifty percent (50%) of AMI may be permitted in the case of an **Eligible**

government is in effect paying to bring needy people into compliance with burdensome policies. The government pays for ineffective policies. Fourth, campaigns and legislators may become involved in changing what compliance means, as in the shift in the zoning code. Fifth, development and management companies are forced to comply with ordinances once they become the law, even if there is evidence that shows discrimination, such as against section 8 voucher tenants (Garboden et al., 2018). I've noted five ways in which compliance costs were being paid by participants in my study.

Compliance costs played a large role in prolonging the transience of my research participants. Consider the fact that compliance costs also include the choice to be non-compliant. In Grant's case, he and his partner studied the inclusionary homeownership programme for ways to reach their goal of homeownership. They ultimately decided not to comply with the regulations because it didn't meet their ultimate goal of intergenerational property ownership. In Wesley's case, he lived as an undocumented tenant of public housing, invisible to the regulations of public housing. For the most part, the men in my study were not eager to make themselves eligible for different programmes, but members of their networks did that work. Lamonte's mother and her group of friends learned about existing services and supported each other to acquire those services. Quintin's baby's mother sought permanent housing through the continuum of care response system.<sup>95</sup> When I was helping Allen apply for the inclusionary programme, he and his partner both declined to enrol their child in pre-kindergarten despite the fact that it would give their application a boost. They believe in homeschooling their child and didn't want to compromise on that.

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**Household having a rental subsidy allowing it to pay a rent equivalent** to that paid by an Eligible Household with a gross household income within the range set forth above'.

<sup>95</sup> A continuum of care is a system that provides a range of comprehensive services.

### #### 4.4.1.3 Psychological Costs

Participant #	New Name	Mental Health	Researcher Notes
1	Allen	Yes	When he thought but couldn't confirm that he fathered a child and screwed over his baby's mother
2	Benji	N/A	Not discussed
3	Carl	Yes	But he left a meeting while crying
4	Damien	Yes	When his dad and his friend passed away in the same week, he was struggling. He also struggled when he got out of jail. He had to build his confidence back up.
5	Eric	Yes	Depression before he cheated on his long term girlfriend
6	Felix	Yes	The aftermath of childhood sexual violence
7	Grant	Yes	When he was working but not earning very much money
8	Hakeem	Yes	When he was living in the SRO
9	Isaac	Yes	He said he felt like a failure in life.
10	Jamal	Yes	He is struggling with being in jail, with what he did to end up there, and what his future could possibly look like when he gets out.
11	Khalil	No	Depression is for Americans, he doesn't have time for it.
12	Lamonte	Yes	He said, "Everyone has depression these days."
13	Marcus	Yes	He felt some depression after the house fire and during the pandemic. He has recurring bouts of depression.
14	Nasir	Yes	A history of depression and still feels down some times, especially in the winter.
15	Orion	Yes	He just said yes he feels depressed some times.
16	Patrick	N/A	But he was really struggling with his mother.
17	Quintin	Yes	He said of course, especially when he was in jail.
18	Rashaad	Yes	He said he had "no formal relationship to depression." But he feels the full range of emotions.
19	Sam	Yes	Friends were dying of drug overdose
20	Trey	No	He said he felt like he was making steady progress toward his goals.
21	Ulrick	Yes	Several times, like he wasn't accepted to any universities. There were times he felt like he was hitting rock bottom.
22	Vince	Yes	When his mother was sick and of course after she passed away.
23	Wesley	Yes	He struggled to trust people. He also mentioned that he has frequent experiences of suicidal ideation.
24	Xavion	No	He said he has never experienced "depression." He said that he experiences stress and has felt overwhelmed.
25	Zaire	No	He said he has highs and lows but nothing he would call depression. He credits his mental health with having a strong community of spiritual people in his life.

**Figure 31 Table tracking respondent mental health issues**

The *psychological costs* of administrative burdens are the internal responses to navigating government and subsidised programmes. Herd and Moynihan illustrate the psychological costs of administrative burdens. These costs are exemplified in the example of Allen, who as an anchor father, looked into every opportunity to find a home for the imminent arrival of his wife and child. He was excited to join the project because he was having a hard time sorting out his options.

Although I would like to differentiate the impact of such social factors as racism and classism from administrative burdens with respect to my research participants, I found that I could not disentangle the psychological costs. *Structural* racism is a product of bureaucratic design. While many institutions produce racist outcomes; the government being a bureaucracy, its interventions are often a major source of structural racism. Psychological costs associated with structural racism are a type of administrative burden orchestrated by government intervention. But here is what I understood from my research participants. In general, they expressed high rates of poor mental health. Some explicitly mentioned this in their narratives (see Wesley). Others alluded to it (see Felix in the context of his trauma from experiencing

childhood sexual violence). I had explicitly asked my research participants about their mental health, and 19 of 25 reported poor levels of mental health. Again, I cannot say if this was tied to the overall feeling of stir craziness from the COVID-19 pandemic; the immediate hopelessness that followed the rage of police murders in the Black Lives Matter era, as was the case after the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd in 2020; or the general feeling of ennui expressed from feeling stuck and experiencing housing insecurity. Overtaking the levies of paperwork associated with government programmes required a level of emotional wellness that my research participants did not evidence at the time of the project.

There are secondary impacts of these administrative burdens. The men themselves experienced psychological burdens, but so did the members of their networks who support them. For example, Orion explained how the management company printed out a copy of his girlfriend's lease and highlighted certain sections in retaliation for having him as a too frequent guest. Although his girlfriend broke no actual rules, the tactic was taken as a sign that she was being watched very closely. It was an emotionally disturbing incident for her. She shared this burden with Orion. The narratives do not necessarily describe the true grit displayed by my research participants when working to meet their housing goals. For example, how many times did Jamal have to swipe on the dating apps before he found someone who would let him spend the night? Or how did Quintin feel when he was sleeping in the hallway of the public housing projects? Now, these questions are not directly tied to the process of applying for public housing, but this is the indirect impact experienced by these men as a result of not having access to stable housing.

Another psychological cost is the stigma and the loss of autonomy involved with government and subsidised programmes. Hope Harvey (2020) describes the experience of being a 'guest' in doubled-up housing situations. She describes that there is a loss of autonomy in being the 'guest'. However, she neglects to contextualise this within the administratively burdensome, surveillance heavy, and punitive programmes like public housing. The loss of

autonomy is not simply felt—it is real. Everyone who lives in public housing loses some autonomy, whether it is the autonomy to seek higher incomes or the autonomy to extend a hand to a relative or friend who needs shelter. Other scholars like Victor Rios in *Punished* (2011) and Alice Goffman in *On the Run* (2014), describe the heavy surveillance in low-income communities. The sense of surveillance is real. There is a psychological cost to believing that you are being monitored. Whether these men belonged there, like Vince in public housing or Hakeem and Xavion in SROs, or were bodies out of place, like Eric, Wesley, or Quintin, the psychological burden of being out of place without other options is taxing and takes a toll long term. These are some of the real direct and indirect psychological costs experienced by these men tied to their housing insecurity and transience.

#### #### 4.4.1.4 Time Tax Cost

As we've seen, all of these administrative burdens have costs associated with them: learning, compliance, and psychological costs. It also takes time to learn them. It takes time to ensure and perform compliance. As the adage puts it, 'if you have money you can save time, and if you have time you can save money, but if you have neither, you're screwed'. The stresses of these administrative burdens slow down the process of treading through the levies of paperwork. The psychological burdens include the costs paid in time. There are over 21,000 people on the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) waitlist.<sup>96</sup> The CHA waitlist is years long, which can stretch to decades in most instances. Those people are paying their dues in time. It is undeniable: there is an additional time tax on top of all of the other administrative burdens. The overarching point this project seeks to make is that housing insecurity and housing transience, when experienced by low-income African-descended men like my research participants, is a politically protracted phenomenon. That is to say, the very act of being housing

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<sup>96</sup> Found on the CHA website: 'Currently, there are more than 21,000 people on the waiting list, all hoping for an opportunity to secure housing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, one of the most expensive and in-demand housing markets in the country' (July 2023). Retrieved from <https://cambridge-housing.org/cha-presents-stories-of-the-cant-wait-list/>.



insecure and being transient extends the periods of transition, and this is due to the design, the time tax, of government and subsidised programmes. The waiting period is by design. The governments that care about means testing must also be certain of the need—that is, the number of people in need and the costs to address the needs. If the programmes are not being designed to address all of the needs, then they are being designed to meet only certain needs. The process of selecting the deserving from the undeserving is both politically contextualised (Dantzler & Rivera, 2021) as well as self-selecting. The time tax should weed out the people who truly need the programme from the opportunists who seek to take advantage of the grace of the government. Combined, both the selection of who is (and isn't) deserving of government programmes and the administrative burdens, that cost an inordinate amount of time, politically protract housing transience.

#### #### 4.4.1.5 Punitive Costs

When government programmes embed burdens in their administrative processes, as we are reminded by Ingram and Schneider, the intention is punishing the needy. I refer to these processes as *punitive costs*. As Herd and Moynihan explain, there are times when the hurdles are intentionally placed. They give the example of the waiting periods to receive professional healthcare assistance for abortion in states where legislators hold anti-abortion views: The policies themselves are designed to be onerous and burdensome. A period of searching for a clinic and learning about options is a learning cost. Counting the days of one's last cycle can be a compliance cost. The stress of being pregnant unwillingly is described as a psychological cost. And of course all of this takes time. But beyond these costs are other, very real and punitive burdens: the great distances being travelled, taking time off, spending money to get to the location or stay at the location. All of this is designed to punish the person who got pregnant. While this example is specific to biologically female people and reproductive healthcare, there are countless examples in other government policies. Matthew Desmond describes the

numerous administrative burdens in social entitlement programmes in *Poverty, by America* (2023).

As for my research participants, they experienced the punitive costs of administrative burdens in the social programmes that they bumped up against. For example, in Benji's narrative, he explained that he was sometimes on a lease and sometimes he was not. When he was not, this created another layer of administrative burden for him. Not just simply that he could be found as a body out of place during an inspection, but when he was not on the lease, his paperwork fell out of compliance. Not being on the lease meant that he might not be eligible to vote, because he didn't have a legally documented address. He wasn't counted on the census. And of course, he didn't get the benefits that residency affords in municipally governed social programmes, like that of inclusionary housing. These are some of the real negative and punitive impacts of these administrative burdens.

### **### 4.4.2 Burden of Carcerality**

Several of my research participants are returning citizens who are experiencing life on the outside with the burdens of a 'criminal' label. Think of Damien, Jamal, Quintin, and Sam. Others navigate the physical world with the fear of carcerality. Think of Isaac, Sam, and Orion. In conducting this research in the era of mass incarceration and during the abolitionist phase of the Black Lives Matter movement, I couldn't help but consider the burdens that come with carceral and punitive systems. For the purposes of this chapter, I will refer to this as the burden of carcerality.

What I mean by the burden of carcerality is the challenges and exclusion that come with the criminal label. For example, there seems to be a sort of criminal tax or criminal justice debt, where everything costs more for ex-felons than it does for others. In *American Apartheid* (1998), Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton describe the accelerating flight of employers from Black

communities. Joblessness is felt acutely by formerly incarcerated people because it is legal to discriminate against people on the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) or Board of Probation (BOP) record. Jordan Segall (2011) outlines the effects of incarceration on economic opportunities. Given these limited employment opportunities, ex-felons are targets of predation and exploitation. Livingston and Ross (2022) describe the experience of Jumaane, a formerly incarcerated man who was the target of a predatory car loan. The authors detail the process of preying on Jumaane's lack of real options as a formerly incarcerated man to trap him into terrible terms for a truck with an inflated cost. There are seemingly countless examples of the burdens associated with criminality and carcerality.

My research reveals two notable things about the burden of carcerality: 1) It prolongs periods of housing insecurity and transition. And 2) it conditions certain behaviours that are misunderstood without the context of the burden of carcerality. By using the framework provided by the sociology of nothing (Scott), I was able to better understand the choices that my research participants made. I came to understand their actions, not based on what they did, but what they didn't do. In discussions and in context, I came to understand that their inactions were informed by their fears of rent burden or incarceration. The abolitionist framework, especially Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2022) description of carceral geographies, illustrated this particular burden clearly. For example, I came to understand that although Quintin would sleep in the hallways of public housing, he wouldn't apply for public housing even when it became legal. From my perspective, his actions were based on fears associated with administrative burdens and punitive costs. While I can't speak to Quintin's specific fears directly, I know that public housing has a history of entanglement with police. And I know most formerly incarcerated people fear surveillance and police. The police facilitate raids and evictions in public housing with impunity. I have come to conclude that the effect of the burden involved with carcerality is truly its ability to prolong housing transience. This is evident in social policies that exclude formerly incarcerated peoples (i.e. three-strike laws, etc.). At the same time, carcerality both prolongs housing transience and

is the consequence of housing transience. And this deceleration seems to worsen over time. The longer someone stays in the liminal space of housing transience, the more visible they become to the carceral state and punitive bureaucracies. The practices of carceral institutions have the effect of making these populations more precarious, which prolongs transience by giving them fewer and fewer avenues for seeking social support. The social support systems are less accessible to these formerly incarcerated people and these folks become less visible to systems with the resources to support them.

The burden of carcerality conditioned me to think differently about the dangers of sleeping in cars. In the *Where Do Black Men Live* findings chapter, I found that many of my research participants regularly slept in their cars. Sleeping in cars is a phenomenon that goes beyond Black men. However, in the context of Black Lives Matter, I can't help but consider the intersection of cars, carcerality, and surveillance for Black people. In the past decade, the hashtag, #DrivingWhileBlack has trended on social media. Livingston and Ross point out that Black drivers like Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, and Walter Scott were all murdered by police officers while driving. The transience of automobiles has and continues to be dangerous for Black motorists. A car is property in motion. In order to rest in a car, the car needs to park on property. As police protect property and the interests of property owners, a body out of place, like a parked car, is especially dangerous. The body of a Black motorist is presumed to be a body out of place. This understanding, combined with statistics on racial disparities in traffic stops,<sup>97</sup> makes the car a particularly dangerous form of property entangled in carcerality and hyper-surveillance.

The burden of carcerality is deeply entangled in predatory practices rampant in the United States. Referring to the predatory industry that targets low-income and formerly incarcerated people in need of transportation, Livingston and Ross (2022) write, 'Though

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<sup>97</sup> See 'Racial Disparities in Traffic Stops' by Public Policy Institute of California (2022). Found at <https://www.ppic.org/?show-pdf=true&docraptor=true&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ppic.org%2Fpublication%2Fracial-disparities-in-traffic-stops%2F>.

debtors' prisons were abolished in 1833, borrowers who can't keep up with their payments still end up behind bars, effectively criminalised for their poverty, when they are served arrest warrants for a failure to make a court appearance'. Although a car might be a useful mode of transportation and a potential place to sleep, accessing it through these predatory means can land you in jail.

The predatory practices are not just in capitalist industries, they are embedded in the government as well. Page et al. describe the justice system's uses of fines and fees as punitive and predatory. Page et al. (2019) describe how the bail bondsmen target network members, such as mothers and female romantic partners, to extract millions of dollars. These people are disproportionately lower-income and come from communities of colour. This burden is illustrated in Jamal's narrative, where he decides to turn himself in and return to jail because he could not keep up with the probation fees.

The burden of carcerality is reflected in the predatory practices of the carceral state and the conditions it sets for predation in private markets of formerly incarcerated individuals. The effects are, as Morenoff describes it, transience begetting transience begetting transience—the prolonging of housing transitions. Being in perpetual motion has a knock-on effect, it invisibilises that person to systems of power. This is what Pettit describes, that results in undercounting and under-allocation of resources to communities with high concentrations of Black men. It has social effects too. In the previous chapter, we saw that the burden of carcerality can become burdensome on networks. But it also erodes trust and support networks. The true burden of carcerality is in its ability to sow alienation.

### **### 4.4.3 Burden of Alienation**

In Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, he wrote, 'We have proceeded from the premises of political economy. We have accepted its language and its laws.

We presupposed private property, the separation of labor, capital and land, and of wages, profit of capital and rent of land'. Indeed, throughout this project, we have accepted these principles of political economy. Marx himself came to propose the concept of alienation, or estrangement, to describe the phenomenon he observed. He argued that capitalism creates alienation. He describes alienation as the process of submitting control of one's agency to capitalist conditions—an estrangement from oneself and the world around them. While this text is primarily about labour, Marx's descriptions of leisure, agency, and property locate this text in the home and place it in conversation with two essential texts for my thinking, Friedrich Engels' (1872) *The Housing Question* and Abraham Maslow's work on the hierarchy of needs.

For the purposes of this chapter, there are two elements of Engels' argument that are relevant. First, 'nuclear' family formation was established with a clear economic function for capitalist societies—that is, for ensuring that wealth remained in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Families are not created equal; some families have power and agency: they own the means of production. And some families have no power or agency: they labour for wages to increase the wealth of the bourgeoisie. Second, perpetual housing crises are inherent to capitalist systems. The housing crisis stems from the so-called 'housing shortage', which points to the tension within the essential, yet still unanswered, question, *is housing a commodity or human right?*

In Abraham Maslow's paper, 'A Theory of Human Motivation', he introduces the concept of the hierarchy of needs. In it he proposes a five-tier model, often depicted as a pyramid. The five-tiers are physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Throughout these findings chapters, I have indirectly engaged with questions of safety, belonging, and esteem in various ways. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on the physiological and self-actualization needs. By physiological, Maslow refers to basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. So, in asking *where do Black men live?*, I am really asking about the relationship of these men to their basic physiological needs. By self-actualization, Maslow is

referring to the need or the desire that each person has for personal growth, the self and world discovery that every human has throughout their life and hopes will become the product of their life's work. One could say that in this sense, Maslow is in direct conversation with Marx on alienation.

Engels examines the structures of social life in relation to the built environment and describes the ways that power and labour are controlled by these structures, producing inequalities and even social murder. Meanwhile, Maslow describes what happens when people's basic physiological needs are not met—namely, that they become estranged from working toward self-actualization. On estrangement, Marx says

...therefore, man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.

Certainly eating, drinking, procreating, etc., are also genuinely human functions. But taken abstractly, separated from the sphere of all other human activity and turned into sole and ultimate ends, they are animal functions.

I want to argue that being in perpetual motion and housing insecure, these Black men are living in a built environment designed to alienate them from the whole of society, from their spheres of belonging, and from themselves. Throughout this next section, I will be thinking with Engels and Maslow while walking through Marx's four types of alienation from 1) the product of labour, 2) the process of labour, 3) others, and 4) self.

#### **#### 4.4.3.1 The Product of Labour**

Marx asks, 'What, then, constitutes the alienation of labor?' The answer is simply the fact that the man's labour does not belong to himself. Or, it is alienation from the products of one's own labour. In the *Where Do Black Men Live* findings chapter, I presented survey data on the employment status and incomes of all 25 research participants. All are employed, except the

one who labours in prison and the one whose current labour is in education. I think the fact that all of these men are employed is an example of alienation from the product of their labour—not the commodities their labour produces exactly, but the fact that their labour is so estranged from the thing labour produces, wages. In this case, their wages do not allow them to meet their basic need of shelter.

Take, for example, Patrick's case. Patrick is paying over 80% of his income toward housing. He later makes the choice to leave his housing because it is too onerous a burden. Khalil gives up his dwelling to start his business, then he comes to reside within his business. While he is not estranged, he has to live in his labour. Ultimately he makes the choice to sleep elsewhere because living in the place he works does not afford him comfort. Xavion worked three jobs at a time while rough sleeping. His labour has to fulfil various functions and still does not afford him the comforts of a dwelling.

#### **#### 4.4.3.2 The Process of Labour**

The second type of alienation that Marx describes is the alienation from the process or the activity of labouring. I take this to mean that exploitation in the activity of labouring produces a sort of distance between the individual, the labour, the product of the labour, and the consciousness of the individual. Several of my research participants describe what I understand to be exploitative circumstances. A couple of my research participants have at some point engaged in alienated work, in the gig economy (delivery driving, task work, etc.) and online platform work (Uber, Amazon, Task Rabbit, etc.). Carl works his full-time retail job and his delivery driver job for an online platform. Sam at one point acquired a car from Uber and worked as an Uber driver. Carl is being exploited in that the two incomes combined pay enough to pay for his long-term airbnb but not to acquire a registered tenancy. Sam is even further exploited. He says, '... Uber would give you a car if you worked for them. You had to



drive a ton of miles before you could actually earn any money for yourself...I would even sleep in the car'. These two examples from the narratives illustrate the process of alienation.

Another element of alienation that has become clear is the bureaucratic structure that is holding these men back from self-actualization. I'd like to look specifically at gig and platform work. Gig work refers to temporary or freelance labour performed on an informal or on-demand basis (i.e. babysitting, handy work). Platform work is labour coordinated through an online platform. The platform is usually a company, whose innovation is the software or the platform. The platform itself operates as a labour market, matching 'freelancers' to third-parties (Uber, Fiver, Grubhub, etc.). I'd like to think through modern gig and platform work alongside the concept of alienation.

Gig work doesn't exactly mirror the experience of 19th-century factory workers. In fact, gig work gives some sense of agency over work. These workers can choose the days they work, the amount of hours they work, and time of day they work. However, these examples of agency do not suggest platform gig work is exempt from alienation. Glavin et al. (2021) describe platform-based gig work and explain that the managerial responsibilities are delegated to the platform, meaning that there is no individual to hold accountable or to take grievances to. This is an alienation from the bureaucrats. Platform-based gig work creates another form of structural alienation, a modern form. Glavin et al. (2021) found that there is an association between platform work participation and a sense of powerlessness. Glavin et al. even say there are '...stronger associations with powerlessness and loneliness among rideshare drivers compared to online crowdworkers'.<sup>98</sup> Here we find the psychological costs again. They found, '...the structure of the contemporary gig economy can have adverse consequences for the well-being of individual workers through not simply the direct experience of work, but also the damaging psychological residue this structure leaves behind'. The platform work alienates the worker by

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<sup>98</sup> They compare rideshare drivers to other platform-based gig work such as through Taskrabbit.

alienating them from other workers and from the bureaucracy that facilitates their work. The work itself takes its toll and its effects are to alienate the worker from themselves. The men in this project bear these burdens. Carl and Sam ended up taking up platform gig work, and my reading of their narratives illustrate these various burdens.

#### #### 4.4.3.3 Alienation from Others

My findings illustrate the alienation from others that these men experienced at various scales. As we saw in the *Burden on Community* chapter, the fact that there are so few low-income Black men participating in civic life in the City of Cambridge illustrates the alienation of these men from participatory democracy on the municipal level. Alienation from others also refers to alienation from and by the bureaucracies in government. This is what the *Burden on Communities* chapter describes. But it also describes the unwillingness of politicians to allocate the necessary time to low-income housing transient men to hear out their concerns and work for their well-being. It is not politically advantageous because the men are not participating in the democratic process. This appears to be a circular process: The men are politically weak and therefore are alienated from the participatory democratic process. And their alienation from the democratic process further constructs them as politically weak and under-represented in the democratic bureaucracy.

In the *Burden on Networks*, we saw the alienation from others within their networks. We saw that their burdens alienate these men from their parents, as with Lamonte, Felix, and Allen, and from romantic partners, as with Quintin and Hakeem. But another burden alienated Jamal from his mother and sexual partners. In Jamal's narrative, the burden of the prison industrial complex created a moral chasm between him and his mother; his incarceration meant alienation from his mother and the rest of his family. Further, Jamal was alienated from sexual partners and sexual encounters. At some point, Jamal began to rely on dating platforms to find someone

with whom to exchange sex for a place to sleep. This is sometimes referred to as survival sex (Green & Ennett, 1999; Watson, 2011). There are numerous burdens on people engaging in sex work of this kind, among them sexually transmitted diseases. See the academic literature on survival sex and sex work, especially among men who have sex with men (McMilan et al., 2018).

#### **#### 4.4.3.4 Alienation from Self**

Marx describes the fourth and final form of alienation as estrangement from the self. Here is where Marx is in direct conversation with Maslow. The estrangement that a man experiences within an exploitative capitalist system is having to work to survive and nothing more. And it is also the alienation of survival as work. Sex work experts like Shira Hassan describe the work involved in survival sex. What Marx, Hassan, and others are describing here is the work of surviving the capitalist system, its bureaucracies, and its design for social murder of the working class. This is where the real burden on these men can be seen.

Jamal's frantic use of even his body's sexual capacity, and the exploitation and alienation inherent in that process, illustrates this burden. Sam's work for Uber is another example of this burden. He had to work in order to have access to the means to work. And Wesley's exploitation by the university through the financialization of education is a burden that alienates. Ultimately, these men experience psychological costs that are yet another form of alienation from the self.

The prison industrial complex produces alienation, especially from the self. Quintin described prison as a time machine. Damien described being in prison as something that makes you examine your proximity and relationship to all other beings, including yourself and systems. He said he lost a lot of people when he was in prison. Jamal lost his mother because he went to prison. The prison is a space that literally separates the individual from the rest of society. Yet,

even within the prison, several of the formerly incarcerated research participants found themselves in solitary confinement, alienated from other prisoners. Solitary confinement can consist of locking an individual in a cell up to 23 hours a day. The United Nations, along with the world's foremost voices on human rights, civil rights, and public health (including people who have been locked in solitary), all say it is torture. The effect of solitary confinement is physical pain, neurological damage, and symptoms from depression and anxiety to psychosis, and those exposed to it are far more likely to commit self-harm or suicide. Alienation.

### **### 4.4.4 Burden of Invisibility**

Finally, I would like to engage with the concept of social invisibility. The term refers to populations that have been marginalised and have been overlooked by bureaucratic systems and social institutions. Making people invisible is a process. What is clear about invisibility is that while they might be invisible to some bureaucracy, extreme surveillance actually makes these populations quite visible to those who wish to punish them. Populations that have been socially marginalised include sex workers, the unhoused, or anyone who has experienced exclusion from society as a whole. Social invisibility as I present it here may seem like a contradiction, but it simultaneously works to make marginalised populations invisible to some systems and institutions that have the power and resources to support them, and hypervisible to punitive and carceral systems.

I was inspired by the works of three scholars when thinking about invisibility. They are Susie Scott, who established the concept of the sociology of nothing, Fernando Braga da Costa, who writes about social invisibility of workers, and sociologist C. Wright Mills, who coined the term 'the power elite'.

Fernando Braga da Costa is a contemporary social psychologist based in Brazil. Braga did the work of becoming invisible himself. He created a foundation for exploring how invisibility

figures in social life and the process of making invisible. A key factor he describes in the making of social invisibility is what I have come to understand as social marginalisation. This was a familiar description to me, because of Black feminist scholars bell hooks (2000), Kimberle Crenshaw (1995), and many others. I began to understand Braga's work on invisibility as a process of examining proximity to power and vulnerability. This is also how I was taught to think of social location (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2006). Part of the making of vulnerability is the process of making invisible and the process of being disappeared. This is about removing power. Social structures have the mechanisms to remove power.

In Nunes' (2020) overview of social invisibility, he explains that this concept includes socially excluded groups such as homeless people, the elderly, and Indigenous populations. In looking at this list and social location, I went back to intersectionality. I have looked at identity categories and thought about how they are socially located in proximity to power and vulnerability. Take the Indigenous: they are socially invisible. They have no standing in bureaucratic structures. In being socially invisible, they are constructed as socially deviant and politically weak, if not dangerous to the established order.

Bureaucratic structures are granted the authority to remove social power and agency, and they do this on the basis of identity categories. In this process, those people become socially vulnerable and eventually invisible.

I argue that Black men are made socially invisible. Just like every other intersectional category that is made invisible, they are not inherently socially vulnerable. They are made vulnerable and invisibilised by social structures. I want to think about this alongside C. Wright Mills' concept of the power elites.

When I think about the power elites, I think about policing. Not individual police patrol officers, but the entire system of policing that I have, throughout this thesis, referred to as the

prison industrial complex. By that I mean officers, video and audio surveillance, benefits police, school resource officers, all working together so that some people profit and benefit from the repression of policing. Mills' concept of the power elite describes the power that we give the prison industrial complex and the bureaucrats who uphold this system (i.e., individual police officers): the power to invisibilise, to make vulnerable, to make undeserving, to lock in cages, to fine, and to treat with violence. And it's not just power, it's an inherent belief that policing is truth—the unwavering belief that police officers are telling the truth, that audio surveillance technology is able to do what it says, or that forensic science is scientifically sound and denotes truth. That power collectively invisibilizes entire populations. That process of invisibilising is the process of making vulnerable. This leads to alienation from others and self to the point that certain populations are manoeuvring through streets, avoiding certain paths over others, and internalising ways of being that further invisibilize and disempower them.

Throughout this thesis, I have dropped Scott's description of the sociology of nothing in relevant parts. In short, Scott describes the social phenomenon of nothing or non-things in four dimensions of social space: non-identity, inactivity, absence, and silence. These 'dimensions' describe invisibility as experienced by research participants in some crucial ways. I want to think of the sociology of nothing in the context of social structures, bureaucracies, and people. I want to think of the impacts of social structures. This takes us back to Mills. This is the question that he asks about *what is and what ought to be*.

In *The Power Elite*, Mills describes the utility of individualising systemic things instead of looking at structures and those people with power whose intervention creates the social conditions that impact working people. In his work, he looked at union leaders and unemployment.

In terms of scale, there is the individual who commits a crime and therefore deserves to be labelled as a criminal, to have the value of their work limited, to lose access to social benefits, and in some cases to downgrade their level of citizenship by taking away the right to vote. One would think that the individual who commits a crime deserves these things. However, when social scientists begin to look at the phenomenon of mass incarceration, the over-policing of low-income, Black, and marginalised communities, it becomes clear that this is not individual agency; rather, criminalization and mass incarceration is socially constructed and bureaucratized. And the fact that it is happening disproportionately to communities that have experienced enslavement and colonisation is evidence that this is a continuation of the same systems and structures that preceded it. We need to abolish the PIC properly, once and for all.

### **### 4.4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter counters the myth that these men are not accountable; instead, this chapter shows just how much of the burden the men themselves shoulder as a result of ineffective policies and programmes and also their harmful entanglements with burdensome and punitive institutions. The laws that govern social housing programmes continue to shift and change with different administrations. The burden of navigating, enduring and surviving political change is placed on the men themselves. These men, like all marginalised people, become experts at navigating the maze of policies that govern their access to basic necessities. They become reliant on members of their social networks to share information about changes to programmes and how to navigate them (see Lamonte's story). In this way, they become entangled in each other's lives and indebted to each other for the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of resources.

I presented the argument made here during a seminar and was asked, 'So you're saying that people are disincentivised from taking up jobs that will make them ineligible for social

programs, but they may risk housing someone short term in violation of their lease agreement. Why?'

The short answer is that poor people live entangled lives. They are indebted to each other. If the people who make up your social networks are mostly neighbours from public housing, who will you turn to if you are evicted? Public housing tenants. Asking those people *not* to help each other is unrealistic because they need to be loyal to each other in order to navigate the systems.

If nothing else, we have to see that social policies, eligibility requirements, and programmes are being designed to **punish the poor**. We are consolidating the commons. We are making access to and belonging in third spaces contingent on payment. We are normalising hyper-patrolling neighbourhoods and bodies out of place. This is what George Zimmerman, who murdered Trayvon Martin, and Travis McMichael, Gregory McMichael, and William “Roddie” Bryan, who murdered Ahmaud Arbery, said they were doing—performing a ‘citizens watch’ for bodies out of place. Furthermore, we are building up the physical environment to discourage use (slanted benches, divisive arm rests, spikes and protrusions on benches, rocky and uneven sidewalks). The government is speaking of austerity measures to promote disinvesting and defunding social and entitlement programmes (such as food programmes, including SNAP benefits and school lunches; affordable healthcare and prescription programmes; and resources for mental health and substance abuse). We have entangled social services with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. We have invested in building prisons and e-surveillance systems (i.e., audio surveillance devices like ShotSpotter and video surveillance cameras). The built environment has become a trap. All roads lead the poor to prison or death. Considering the policymakers’ imagination, where is it they think they’ve banished the undeserving to? Ananya Roy (2019) offers the framework of *racial banishment* to describe ‘the perverse investment in state-institutionalised human caging’.



The poverty literature of several decades is clear: poor people are navigating ever changing policies in a capitalist system that does not have a clear pathway to stability. These people rely on their social networks to navigate the system. They become experts in their social, political, and physical location. They don't risk becoming ineligible for systems that are less secure than the system they know and understand collectively. The literature on poverty has given us a lot of information on women, but not enough information on how men, especially racialised men, navigate these systems. We need more empirical data on this. As they navigate these systems in invisible ways and through their social networks, these men put a disproportionate burden on the women in their networks to help them survive. The constant changes in policies and programmes over time have the effect of prolonging and drawing out periods of dependency on these programmes in less visible ways. That is to say that the housing insecurity experienced by low-income housing-transient men is politically protracted. As Katz (2013) acknowledges, Black men are among the undeserving poor. It has been very challenging to convince policymakers to allocate resources to address the specific needs of low-income able-bodied African-descended men. All of this needs to be better examined.

The infamous 1965 report, *The Negro Family*, claims that 'ours is a society which presumes male leadership in private and public affairs. The arrangements of society facilitate such leadership and reward it. A subculture, such as that of the Negro American, in which this is not the pattern, is placed at a distinct disadvantage'. In reading Desmond's *Poverty, by America*, we can see that the United States still very much rewards middle-class families, most of which are white. This nuclear family model is reinforced through policies and programmes that underwrite the lifestyles of these families. It is the low-income African-descended men who bear the costs. Black men cannot succeed in a society that sees them as key to their families' success and at the same time, as Moynihan asserted decades ago, the cause of nuclear family dissolution. These men bear the brunt of being part of a disadvantaged subculture, forced to

exist in the liminal space of subsistence. Xavion was rough sleeping. Wesley was sleeping in the dorm rooms of multiple school friends. Felix was sleeping in his car. It is obvious that these men are shouldering more than their share of the burden created by ineffective, classist, and punitive social housing policies.

## # 5 Conclusion

Where do Black men live? How do they come to live where they do? And what does learning where they live—an issue that is often invisible—tell us about how individuals, social networks, communities, and governments operate? In this thesis, I have identified some of the sources of the housing problems facing Black men, as well as recounted the experiences of these men themselves. I have presented the narrative data gathered from Black men about their experiences navigating housing insecurity and transience. Additionally, I have gathered data from their networks and community members about the knock-on effects and the challenges they face when attempting to deconstruct and dismantle the impacts of social constructions in policy design. And most importantly, I have shown the burden they themselves bear.

In this final chapter, first I revisit the abolitionist lens through which this project is framed. I answer relevant questions that can only be understood with the foundation that this thesis offers. Second, I revisit the methods of data collection and analysis. Third, I present a summary of findings. Fourth, I engage in a discussion on the persistent question concerning who will pay for housing, and I share the rationale for this discussion. Finally, I share my plans for future research and conclude with some final remarks.

### ### 5.0.1 An Abolitionist Lens

What do I mean by abolition in the context of this project? I came to abolition by way of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, a geographer. In her book of essays, she explains that abolition investigates and reveals the ways that the state answers crises among certain ‘surplus’ populations, with organised abandonment of people and environments (2022). In this project, through my ethnographic fieldwork and the participatory process, I saw first-hand the experiences of low-income Black men, an abandoned surplus population. I experienced

alongside them how they navigated the systems, institutions, and legal traps laid out by the state while they were experiencing housing crises. In this case, the crisis among my research participants was the fact that they were experiencing prolonged periods of housing transitions. Gilmore's thoughtful examination of the impacts of the prison industrial complex (police, prisons, surveillance, etc.) and its relationship with geographies, as locations, has laid the foundation of what I understand as modern abolition.

Abolish is a verb. So, when I say abolition, what do I seek to abolish? Walcott (2021) helped me see that what I seek to abolish is the entanglement of the state's surveillance systems, the prison industrial complex, and all the institutions that encompass it. Additionally, Walcott links the privatisation of property with punitive practices. He shows that, not only does this punitive system neglect to address the root causes of harm among people in crisis, it willfully abandons people in crisis, relegating them to the prison industrial complex. As an abolitionist, I wonder what would happen if when people asked for help with housing and employment, they actually received it? As it is, when poor people help each other (since there is no help forthcoming from bureaucratic institutions), they are punished. As I carried out this project, I wondered, *why is it wrong for a mother to let her housing-insecure son stay with her when she lives in public housing? Why does she need to hide that fact instead of being able to go to public housing and ask for housing support for her son?* I seek to abolish the punitive logic, practices, and approaches that underpin how the state addresses (or ignores) the needs of people in the places where they live.

Throughout this project, I say that housing transience is politically protracted. What I mean when I use the term politically protracted is that if the policies were written differently, they would yield a very different outcome. If the policies were written to meet crises with generosity, crises would be a temporary experience. Instead, I found that my research participants live in this transitional state for prolonged periods of time. The state offers no reprieve, but often

punishes people in crisis. For example, all of my research participants were employed. They all made at least the minimum wage at the time of this project. So, what if eligibility for the city's inclusionary programme were not based on 50% of the ever-rising area median income (AMI) but was just based on the minimum wage? Then, anyone working full-time would be eligible for this housing programme. Nearly all of my research participants would be eligible. The policies themselves are designed in such a way as to ignore the populations who need them. An abolitionist lens helps us see the layers and layers of policy that have accumulated over time. The result of this accumulation is that the programmes managed by public housing authorities have, for all intents and purposes, the same approaches, mission, and techniques as prisons. These layered policies prolong periods of housing transition and crisis, which is what I mean when I say that housing transience is politically protracted.

### **### 5.0.2 Research Methods & Data**

This project was conducted as a hyper-local case study. It took place in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA), between May 2021 and November 2022, squarely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The overarching research question was *where do Black men live?* To answer this question, I employed two methods, service-based episodic ethnography with low-income transient African-descended men and a participatory action research (PAR) process through the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition (CHJC). From these two methods of data collection, I gathered quantitative data in the form of demographic survey responses and qualitative data in the form of narratives. Additionally, both processes yielded an extraordinary amount of secondary data in the form of collected documents, records, and reports from both the ethnographic and PAR processes.

The ethnographic process allowed me to answer the research question in a number of ways that are illustrated in the previous data chapters. First, informed by Pollio (1997) and Hoolachan (2016), I was able to collect a list of the uses of 'home/house' by these research

participants (legal permanent address, place to receive correspondence, belongings storage, and place to sleep). Second, I was able to gather subjective data—that is, accounts of the lived experience of my research participants themselves. Third, the process left me with objective data which has very much informed my analysis and is significantly enhanced by my overarching conceptual framework of abolition. The PAR process contextualised both the subjective and objective data, especially the political implications of social constructions, in the political landscape. Combined, these two processes enabled me to zoom in and out to be able to see the data necessary to answer my overarching research question in an innovative way. In addition to the overarching question of *where do Black men live*, I ask four related sub-questions. They are:

- *What are the experiences of low-income transient Black men?*
- *Do residential programme regulations contribute to the protraction of housing insecurity among already housing-transient men?*
- *What are the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks that house transient Black men? How are they gendered? How are they racialised?*
- *Who should shoulder the burden of payment with regard to the housing insecurity of these low-income African-descended men?*

In order to answer all of these sub-questions, I used a combination of methods of data collection and analysis. To answer the question about the experiences of Black men, I used episodic ethnography to collect narrative data. To answer the question about the impact of residential programme regulations, I analysed the narrative data and I used the participatory process. To answer the question on the intersectional characteristics and relational ties of the networks of these men, I used service-based ethnography and semi-structured interviews. Toward the burden of payment question, I used the data gathered in the PAR process.

This project begins to fill four gaps in the academic discourses at the intersection of housing, Black, and gender studies. **The first is the methodological gap.** There are a number of studies on Black men, such as Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner*, Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk*, Alice Goffman's *On the Run*, and many more. These, and other grounded ethnographies, seem

to construct the subjects as objects. Their methods of data collection and analysis do not employ a standpoint epistemological framework, which includes the subjects as knowledge producers and holders. In such a framework, the research participants are involved in both the data collection and analytical processes, as well as the writing process. They provide feedback, suggestions, and corrections throughout the entire process. The methodological gap this project begins to fill is employing the research participants as knowledgeable subjects who can inform the project at every stage.

**The second is the data gap.** By embracing these subjects in the process of data collection and analysis, we expand the realm and reach of the data gathered. Their knowledge, through their feedback, as well as their experiences, in the form of narratives, make up the bulk of the data analysed in the findings chapters. Additionally, their suggestions inform the direction and structure of the data chapters.

**The third is a knowledge gap:** this gap is reflected in the lack of narratives in existing housing research that actually come from Black men. This project relies on the actual accounts of low-income housing-transient Black men. Two things can be gleaned from this: 1) The narratives of these men, collected through a service-based episodic ethnographic process, are the foundational data. These accounts informed the PAR process, as described in the second findings chapter, *The Burden on Community*, where the narrative data and the insights were presented to the group toward the aim of constructing a community-designed intervention. 2) While I had initially expected to have transcripts of the interviews, the process of co-constructing the narratives with my research participants became even more involved than mere transcripts. They were able to edit themselves to get across the exact points that they cared to convey. This careful work fills in the knowledge gap about the perspectives of these men to illustrate just how they navigate their precarious position in the housing landscape.

**The fourth gap is the practical-knowledge gap.** By that, I refer to the *process* of collecting actual accounts. The other ethnographies present almost auto-ethnographically. That

is, the ethnographers describe accounts they have witnessed; however, I wanted to highlight the experiences of my research participants. Their involvement in constructing the final product is crucial to presenting what actually transpired from their perspective. Their perspective captures real and practical lived experiences. I am employing this co-constructing process as a method to carefully analyse and present the accounts of these men as grounded data. This has heretofore been ignored, but has informed the development of the PAR process as a sociopolitical intervention.

### ### 5.0.3 Summary of Findings

As detailed throughout, this research has culminated in a number of findings. To address their basic housing needs, low-income African-descended men rely on their social networks. In *The Burden on Networks* chapter, we saw that the members of their networks provided various different forms of support to these men to meet their housing needs. There were those who let the men live with them long-term (Isaac's mentor) or stay with them short-term (Xavion's friend when he had packages delivered). Members of the networks also provided information about opportunities (Lamonte's mother). Others offered their address as a legal permanent address (Wesley's contacts) or a space to get correspondences (Xavion's friend) or mentoring (Zaire's homeowner friend).

In the *The Burden on Networks*, I found that the networks of these men were composed predominantly of women (more than 62%). Women figured in these narratives as female romantic partners, mothers, grandmothers, platonic friends, roommates, and more. And, mothers played an outsized role in these networks. It wasn't just the mothers of these men themselves—mothers of romantic partners and platonic friends were of great support.

The women in these networks bear an inordinate burden as a result of their support for these men. For example, Orion described the hyper-surveillance and intimidation tactic his girlfriend experienced from the management in her inclusionary building. He explains that this



was a result of the frequency and duration of his stays in her unit. Sam described his grandmother's willingness to house him in her public housing unit, despite the potential risk of eviction. Benji's mother invited any of her kids to stay with her wherever she was living, despite the potential risk to her section 8 voucher and multiple evictions (formal and informal) for overcrowding. These women support their families out of solidarity. However, acts of solidarity in this context are punished, rather than supported or rewarded. And so, women end up bearing an inordinate burden by helping these men meet their basic housing needs.

The Networks chapter is grounded by Barry Wellman's (1979) description of social networks and network analysis. To analyse social networks, he offered the framework of community-lost, community-saved, and community-liberated. In this framework, community-lost represents the loss of social ties, community-saved represents persistence of social ties, and community-liberated refers to an expansion of social ties. He developed this framework of analysis in response to the culture of poverty literature that described communities and networks as lost in large metropolises. In an abolitionist reading, as illustrated by my research, the community ties lost in large metropolises are lost by political design. Among low-income and other marginalised communities, the social ties are hidden and become invisible to institutions, though in fact they persist, visible only to those in the same social locations. The invisibility of social ties among marginalised populations fuels culture of poverty discourses about the loss of social ties as a community resource. What my research reveals, however, is that reliance on social ties and networks is literally punished. For all the lip service to the contrary, policy governing subsidised housing, and other social programmes, actually works to dismantle social networks.

In studying these men, I came to see a few more things about their relationships to their homes. For example, in looking at the precipitating incidents to housing transience, I discovered the role of social conflict in their homes. Using my abolitionist orientation, I came to one of the crucial questions modern abolitionists are asking: *what should alternatives to public safety do?*

According to these findings on precipitating incidents, one service should be conflict mediation (also known as accountability processes). There are abolitionists who are doing the work of building alternatives that facilitate accountability processes so that marginalised communities do not have to rely on the police to mediate their conflicts, and this research finds that a long-term benefit to this work could be that it prevents housing transience. Whereas, this research illustrates that the current overreliance on police as the mediators of conflict and as wellness checkers causes more conflict within marginalised communities and may hasten precipitating incidents, as we saw in Felix, Isaac, and Allen's narratives.

Perhaps the most important form of support provided by network members is an affordable place to rent. What I found was that these men were not renting from large management corporations, but from individual homeowners or second-tier network members, friends of friends. And so, the rise of corporate landlords, as Desiree Fields (2014) describes, has been disastrous for these low-income housing-transient men. Tying in another important academic housing discourse, so far in the 21st century the decline in Black homeownership has had a ripple effect on low-income Black renters, and we see that effect here. This finding comes from looking specifically at the experiences of African-descended men themselves.

Another crucial finding is that the specific housing insecurity experienced by low-income African-descended men needs to be further examined empirically. Simply collapsing the experiences of low-income African-descended men with others (i.e., other Black people, other men, or other low-income people) ignores the specificities of their social location. There is a lot to be gleaned from empirical research that centres the experiences of Black men. I suspect that what I have found is only scratching the surface of what can be learned. Their experiences need to be examined independently from these other groups.

There is a complex web of housing policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements that work together and result in the de facto exclusion of African-descended men. As I have outlined, housing and housing-adjacent policies come from federal, state, and

municipal governments, across agencies, and ruled by various authorities, from PHAs to HUD to the Supreme Court (which has ruled against certain PHA actions). The state can fund local housing construction, but a statewide ballot initiative can ban rent control. The city council can create and fund its own municipal voucher programme, but the affordable housing trust can limit those funds to project-based vouchers. Never mind the zoning codes, the QUANGOs, and the city's relationship to the Cambridge Community Foundation. It takes years of dedicated meetings to learn the policies, programme regulations, and eligibility requirements needed to attempt to design an intervention that will effectively address the needs of these low-income African-descended men. These complexities allow de facto exclusion to occur. Working as a community responder, I saw first-hand how much of our time was spent acquiring documentation. Without proof of residency, identification, or payment, a person is de facto ineligible. My research participants' poor credit scores and gaps in their employment and housing histories left them de facto ineligible. As a result, they had fewer options than those who had easy access to identification and other paperwork. Here, their networks mattered too. Those who had homeowners in their networks could easily put down that address with no harmful recourse to the homeowners. However, if their network members were public housing tenants or SRO residents, the use of an address for postal services could be classified as a lease violation or even a crime. Both people, the individual in need and the member of the network, could risk eviction and/or prison time. These stipulations are usually outlined in small text in large contractual agreements with multiple complex elements. So, not only is the web of housing policies complex, but the entanglements of housing programmes with punitive logic result in de facto exclusion at best, and at worst can destabilise through eviction or incarceration.

De facto exclusion means that these men's participation is not explicitly banned. Rather, the operations have exclusionary effects. The public housing authority and the management corporations for the inclusionary programmes issue fines or intimidate residents for hosting

long-term or frequent overnight guests. From their stories and actions, we know that these men were present in these spaces. De facto exclusion can be seen as a type of predatory inclusion. We know that the networks of these men are reliant on government-subsidised programmes and we know that these men rely on their networks. Instead of policies that are built to support these men explicitly, the housing authority and management companies surveil them and punish their network members. So their reliance on the network members who use these services places them in precarious locations. If they are caught (trespassing, in conflict, or involved in illicit activity), they face jail, which may result in them being banned from legal participation in these programmes long-term. In this way, they are de facto excluded from these programmes.

The primary finding of this research project is that housing insecurity and housing transience as experienced by low-income African-descended men are a politically protracted phenomenon. Again, by that I mean, the policies that govern these programmes contribute to the prolonging of periods of housing transition and crisis among this population. In past conversations with elected officials and community members, people expressed a sense that the homeless are not native to Cambridge, that the unhoused rough sleepers and shelter users are not Cantabrigians but rather transplants. And, to some people, this meant that we only had a very limited responsibility to them as non-residents. What this research finds is that there are housing-insecure people who are locals, people born and raised in the city. And, in fact, the lack of effective housing policies and programmes leaves this particular population housing insecure.

This is a summary of my findings so far. Between the federal government, the state government, and the municipal government, there are a number of government-subsidised housing programmes that are meant to serve low-income populations in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Yet, there are still many housing-insecure and housing-transient low-income people in need of housing. This is the case despite my research participants being employed on a full-time basis and earning at least the minimum wage. This is a crisis. There are a record number of people sleeping in the streets of Central and Harvard Square. This phenomenon has

spilled into Alewife and other areas of Cambridge. Cambridge is an affluent city. It seems to have all of the newest trends in modern governance. Why aren't all of these programmes and attempts at intervention working? More specifically, why do we continue to have housing transience among low-income African-descended men in Cambridge? From what I can gather, the challenge lies in the question of *who should shoulder the burden of payment in regards to housing the poor*.

### **### 5.0.4 The Persistent Question: Who Pays?**

I'd like to discuss the persistent question of *who pays*. As previously mentioned, this project employed two methods of data collection: episodic service-based ethnography and a participatory action research process. In both approaches, the question of who will pay surfaced incessantly. *The Burden on Community* chapter illustrated the lens through which this persistent question has been seen and discussed. However, the same question nagged at me throughout the ethnographic process, when my research participants and I actively sought housing. Whether we were applying for government-subsidised programmes (like inclusionary housing for Eric and others, or SROs for Isaac) or on the private market (like with Allen), every rental application asked the question, who will pay the rent? In the ethnographic process, I had to design and construct mechanisms, like the collaboration with Resource Generation through their Move Money listserv, or working with wealthy community members who moved money from their donor advised funds (DAFs) to Community Service Care, the institutional home of this project, to help people pay security deposits and monthly rent. We constructed financial mutual mechanisms to support people with paying their rents; indeed Allen paid half of his rent that way for six months. The question of *who pays*, or who should shoulder the burden of payment, was a stubborn thorn that I could not ignore. As I conclude the thesis, I want to offer a discussion on the thorniness of this question.

Cambridge is a boomtown; it's thriving economically but it's geographically bound. This means that there is no space to grow outward. There are only crevices and buildings reaching up into the sky (and down into the ground). So, building is not going to solve the nexus of housing crises there. Instead, people in power in Cambridge (Harvard and MIT trustees, the city manager, politically empowered homeowners, etc.) choose who gets to live in Cambridge. And they want wealthy people to live here. Wealthy people pay more in taxes and contribute to the legacy of the location. Cambridge is home to Harvard University and MIT. Cambridge has a reputation for being at the cutting edge of social innovation and the centre of capitalist advancements, the leader of modernity. This legacy has fueled its influence and affluence. Cambridge gets to be selective of who lives here. As Cambridge becomes more and more exclusionary, neighbouring cities—Boston, another boomtown and the capital of the Commonwealth—struggle with being the urban centre, as displacement and gentrification run rampant throughout. So, some look to the surrounding suburbs to alleviate the burden. But, many suburbs have histories and legacies as sundown towns, like Belmont and Saugus, and effective sundown towns, like Arlington, which prohibits overnight street parking to non-residents. So, who should get to live here, in Cambridge? And given that there *are* low-income people in Cambridge—who will pay for their housing?

*So, who shoulders the burden of payment?*

In this thesis, we have been presented with five options:

- The individual
- The networks of the individual
- The communities where the individual subsists
- The development and management corporations
- The government

Let's start with the individuals. In contrast to popular belief, these individuals already shoulder an inordinate burden. Socially constructed as dependents or deviants, they are considered undeserving of government resources and social empathy. We can see in the

chapter *The Burden on Men* that they suffer under the weight of trying to meet a foundational physiological need to shelter. They allocate so much time and financial and social resources to meeting this need. These men are sleeping rough in public housing hallways (like Quintin), in unheated houses as a technical squatter (like Carl), and in their cars (like Damien, Lamonte, and more). They erode their networks to meet their shelter needs, as opposed to using their networks to build social capital (Xavion joined a professional organisation and found a guarantor, and Isaac's mentor has had to shelter him for months). It is clear that these men are shouldering the burden of payment with regard to their sheltering. This payment is in the form of money (Patrick paid over 80% of his income to housing) and time (it took Quintin decades to find and settle into his own apartment), and all of them are relying on their social networks to meet their needs. Throughout this project, it has become clear that the burdens these men bear are externally created and politically motivated. These men shoulder the burden of payment.

The members of their networks also shoulder the burden. Absent intentional and effective housing policy designed to intervene in the housing crisis among low-income African-descended men, their networks pick up the slack. The members of these networks are giving money and knowledge, sharing contacts within their networks, and doing so much more. We see mothers allowing these men to live or stay with them for extended periods of time, well beyond adolescence. We see these men boomerang back to their anchor homes. Damien always goes back to his grandmother's house. Benji always lives with his mother. Zaire doesn't stray from his friend and mentor. These networks are solid, but conflict is rife within these networks and inevitably thrusts these men into housing transience and social subsistence. Conflict can cause precipitating incidents—look at Xavion and his uncle, Allen and his dad, and Felix and his parents. But the network members pay the price for their support of these men. They lose, not just the space and materials gobbled up with having these men in their homes, but in the risks they incur. Both Xavion's uncle and Allen's dad worried that their actions might put them and their families at risk of being entangled with the police and the prison industrial

complex. Both Orion and Sam's grandmothers let them stay in their public housing unit, even under the threat of a lease violation, which could get them evicted. The members of these men's networks shoulder the burden of payment.

Beyond the men and the members of their networks, even the larger community ends up shouldering the burden of payment. We can see that the members of the CHJC are challenged by this issue. They incur a burden that is illustrated in the process of designing a winnable campaign that will garner the sympathies of community members. Moreover, each of them are members of networks of housing-insecure individuals. Collectively, they are burdened by the housing insecurity all around them. The members of the CHJC are not complaining about the growing number of unhoused people who are now visible in the streets. The CHJC membership follows the city's budget presentations. We can all see the police budget creeping up each year. It justifies the increases by showing that police presence is increasing among the unhoused. The police are ordered to step up their patrol of the public housing projects and the surrounding neighbourhoods each year during the warmer months. They are being asked to be utility workers, to fill in when there's a shortage of youth workers, school teachers, and administrators for key service providers in the city. Who pays the salaries of the police? The community, through taxes. So we all shoulder the burden of payment, some of us several times over—as taxpayers, as housing justice campaigners, and as network members of these men. Not to mention that these men are tax-paying residents themselves, burdened thrice over. But, who *should* shoulder the burden of payment?

We the people are responsible as citizens for paying taxes and making up the government, by acts of voting, participating in civic life, and running for elected positions. So, I begin with the responsibility of the government to its citizens. Is it the responsibility of the state to keep its citizens safe and to produce productive citizens? If so, shouldn't the government develop, fund, and sustain initiatives to meet the needs of citizens? In other words, *shouldn't the burden of payment fall within the responsibility of the state?* I have struggled with this question.



Here is what I see. Cambridge, like most places in the United States, responds to housing-burdened individuals, especially those who are surviving poverty in public, with punishment. For example, unhoused community members are supervised in the public squares by uniformed police officers. The ecosystem of community care, composed of corporatised and grassroots non-profits as well as community-based initiatives, are under-resourced and over-burdened. Rather than focus on the supply of beds and services for this population, the public and their government representatives are immersed in a debate about who is deserving. By deserving, I mean, *who should be allowed to live in Cambridge*. I am not so sure it makes sense to rely on the state entirely to meet the needs of housing-burdened people. I say that, not because I don't believe the government *ought* to be responsible for its people, but that the government doesn't seem to treat all of its citizens equally. This is of course an understatement. Isabel Wilkerson (2020) has gone so far as to charge the United States social and government system with creating and maintaining a social caste system. All of this is to say that the government doesn't weigh its responsibilities to all citizens equally, and housing has a lot to do with that.

Let's look at democratic participation as an example. There is a continuum of fixedness and transience, where homeowners are the most fixed to a location and the unhoused are the least fixed to a location. Homeowners are not just more likely to consistently participate in the democratic process in that location, but they are the targets of democratic process in that location. Candidates will allocate more time and resources to seek their vote. In contrast, renters, couch surfers, and the unhoused receive significantly less investment, both in time and resources, from political candidates. The fixedness of the housing circumstances of these citizens accounts for this situation. Once political candidates are elected, they focus on the interests of their electorates, who are overwhelmingly people whose housing circumstances are fixed (homeowners) or stable (gainfully employed renters). And, in an affluent city like Cambridge, despite its reputation as a liberal city, those with fixed circumstances adopt more

and more punitive positions regarding what those who are the most transient deserve. So, democratic participation is illustrative of the role of housing in the uneven response of the state, made up of elected representatives, to various populations.

The burden of payment is paid twice over by these men if you consider the costs to their democratic participation. Consider the role of time in civic participation. I was asked several times, where are the Black men in the PAR process? They simply didn't have the time to participate. Why not? The CHJC has been meeting fortnightly for years to learn and design a political intervention. Meanwhile, these men need to work. The currency of our time is time itself. My research participants earn an hourly wage. Take Patrick, who is paying 80% of his income in rent. So, for example, if Patrick missed just four eight-hour shifts in a month, he might not be able to pay his rent. Just the same, in order to save money to pay for school, he has to take extra shifts at work. He has to allocate a larger share of time to work just to meet his basic shelter needs. His time is more valuable when spent at work than it is when spent doing anything else. What incentive does he have to spend any time on civic engagement?

There is the time that is spent waiting for bureaucratic institutions too. Oftentimes, my research participants would spend time travelling to offices to submit paperwork or to acquire paperwork to apply for things. We would take the bus to Boston city hall for a birth certificate. We would walk to the public library to print out the paperwork for a social security card. Or we would take the train to wait in line at the RMV to get a replacement or updated driver's licence. If we submitted the paperwork for a passport at the post office, we would wait weeks for it to arrive before we could make a photocopy to submit to the inclusionary programme as identification. In the meantime, we would do things like find a second job, not in the gig economy, something with a pay stub so we could show proof of income. So we would spend time emailing temp companies for job placements. We would run credit checks and background checks to see what came up. We would have to look at the gaps in housing histories. We would ask around for a place to stay or for a lease agreement to show proof of address. With Khalil, a small business

owner, we waited four months for his taxes from the previous year to be done. When we finally received the numbers for his income, it was less than we expected, and he didn't qualify for the inclusionary programme. And after we did all of that, after waiting to be selected for a unit, we would have to create a plan for acquiring the security deposit, which would take more time.

In November 2021, there was a municipal election. Several of my research participants simply couldn't figure out where to vote because of the mismatch of their legal permanent address with their documented proof of residency. Instead of voting, many opted to just skip voting altogether. When I asked why, several of them cited news articles where people were arrested for voting in the wrong district.<sup>99</sup> So, not only did they have to spend more of their time working to earn enough to pay their outsized rent and therefore not participate in civic life, but if they mistakenly participated, any error could land them in prison. These men and similarly low-income and disenfranchised people like them, shoulder the burden of payment twice over.

### ### 5.0.5 Abolitionist Logic and the Burden of Payment

When I apply an abolitionist logic to the question *shouldn't the state shoulder the burden of payment*, I don't land on one neat response. The first issue is of course that abolitionists are not a monolith. People come to abolition from a range of political perspectives. There are socialist, libertarian, and anarchist abolitionists, and many more. Socialist abolitionists might contend that it *ought to be the responsibility of the state* to house its citizens, especially its most precarious citizens. Whereas libertarian and anarchist abolitionists might disagree and suggest that it is the responsibility of communities and networks to ensure the housing security of individuals. I have come across several socialist abolitionists who are resigned to the fact that the state doesn't accept the responsibilities it should and therefore we cannot rely on the state

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<sup>99</sup> Take the case of Crystal Mason in Texas (ACLU) found at <https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/crystal-mason-thought-she-had-right-vote-texas-sentenced-her-five-years-prison>. Or the case of Pamela Moses in Tennessee, found at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/feb/03/fight-to-vote-tennessee-pamela-moses-convicted>.

to perform these functions. I have come across anarchist abolitionists who want to build the community capacity to accept resources to distribute them within communities, referring to community land trusts as an example. Even libertarian abolitionists believe that given the government's current form, communities ought to take over as much of the responsibility as possible for maintaining our communities. Within abolitionist discourse, we do not have consensus on the role of the state. However, everyone seems to hold a realist view. That is, the government ought to shoulder the burden of payment but in its current form and function, we cannot rely on the state solely to meet the needs of burdened individuals and networks.

But what about the development and management corporations? What responsibilities do they have to shoulder the burden of payment? Interestingly enough, through public-private partnerships, these companies seem to be the only ones who *profit* from burden. For example, through the inclusionary zoning programme, they receive zoning perks to build bigger and taller. In spite of this, these companies still offset the cost of the 20% of middle income earners in the inclusionary programme by charging exorbitant luxury prices to the 80% of tenants in inclusionary buildings. They don't just recoup, they profit. To house the inclusionary programme, the rest of the building has to become even more exclusionary. Another example comes from the CHJC. Remember we discussed the proposal to widen the window of eligibility by lowering the income range (from 50% AMI to 30% AMI). In the discussion about how to go about constructing a winnable campaign, CHJC members assumed that we would lose a campaign to bring in lower income earners into the programme if we didn't account for the meagre profit loss of the development corporations. That is, because the inclusionary tenants pay 30% of their income, having lower income tenants would mean that there would be a loss of in rent revenue for the management. To construct a winnable campaign, the members argued that any campaign needed to account for the income lost—that is, the profits of these corporations. We assumed the government would have to cover the difference in their profit margins, despite the benefits they already receive—i.e., the zoning incentives. The development and management

companies assume no burden of payment, although their representatives would say that they shoulder the burden of managing rent-burdened tenants. That is, their burden is the people themselves. Meanwhile, they literally profit.

No matter how you look at it, the government does pay—whether they pay the development and management companies to develop and participate in the inclusionary programme, or they pay the police officers exorbitant salaries and bonuses to do things that they could pay literally anyone else to do (and pay them far less), or they pay to build and maintain prisons and jails, or they pay for body cameras or ShotSpotter audio surveillance contracts or emergency rooms or morgues. The government shoulders the burden of payment for these ineffective policies and programmes. And since the government's dollars are our tax dollars, we all pay to maintain a poor and inefficient system. The government shoulders the burdens of ineffective, classist, and punitive social housing policies. Rather than continue to partner with private interests, they need to make more alliances with non-profit and social housing entities focused on furthering the interests of the marginalised.

Merging the concept of transience and the logic of abolition, this is how de facto exclusion occurs. Where the land is more valuable than the people who occupy it, the government is organised to abandon the population by banishing them to transience. Once in motion, the individual stays in motion until acted on by another force. The abolitionist logic is that the other force is the prison industrial complex. The force that is enacted on the body in motion is either engagement, prison, or violence that results in death. So, where do Black men live? This research finds that Black men live in a state of perpetual motion. If they are lucky, they have an anchor, some place to go when they run out of options. In this project, I found that those with an anchor home fared better than those without one.

Using an abolitionist framework, I explore the ways that policies and regulations work to designate some as deserving of social resources while excluding those deemed undeserving. Moreover, my abolitionist imagination shows me that some bodies are designated undeserving

of social resources that can allow them to self-actualise, like schools and green spaces. They are socially constructed as dependent and deviant, or a burden to the state. Then, they are persecuted for being a burden, and it is seen as not only justifiable to under-allocate public resources for their self-actualization but righteous to under-allocate resources to meet their basic needs.

Those who are excluded, the undeserving poor, must fend for themselves. In constant motion, the transient work to meet their basic need for shelter, while at the same time keeping a low profile in order to circumvent the prison industrial complex, ever-present and ready to pounce at any misstep. In motion, these men bear more than their share of the burdens.

### **### 5.0.6 Future Research**

In conducting this project, I came across a number of very interesting threads that I might take up in future. They are 1) the inclusionary zoning policy landscape, 2) zoning, data, and surveillance in the digital age, and 3) public policy lessons from uses of Airbnbs by low-income housing-insecure Black men. In the following paragraphs, I present brief descriptions of each idea and the line of inquiry that led me there.

#### **#### 5.0.6.1 Inclusionary Zoning Policy Landscape**

In writing about the practical implementation of the inclusionary rental programme in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I became very critical of the programme. I was first critical of the name, *inclusionary*, which juxtaposes historically *exclusionary zoning* programmes with this programme, *inclusionary zoning*. But right away, it was clear to me that you cannot have *inclusionary zoning initiatives* without *exclusionary practices*. My thinking on this is described earlier in this chapter. But by that I mean, that inclusionary zoning doesn't undo the harms of historical exclusionary initiatives; rather, inclusionary programmes rely on the private market to

resolve the affordable housing crisis. From the examples of my research participants and popular media, as well as Emily Hamilton's (2019, 2021) work described in the literature review, I became exposed to the variations of inclusionary zoning's implementation in each area.

I propose doing audit research of inclusionary zoning initiatives. Rather than looking at their impacts, like Hamilton and others do, I propose a first level of analysis that would compare their variations. For example, what is the difference in the percentage of new builds in each implementation across different cities and towns with inclusionary zoning initiatives? What is the variation in the number of minimum units across different implementations? I would like to compare programmes across the Northeast, from Maine to Virginia, where there is a concentration of inclusionary zoning ordinances.

The second level of analysis would look at the demographic uses of the programme, using census data. I want to know the genders of inclusionary heads of households, as well as the percentage of units with children as members of households. I'd like to know how long people live in inclusionary units.

The last level of analysis would be at the programme variations themselves. I assume that all these programmes use area median income (AMI) for eligibility. I'd like to see if others use other metrics for determining eligibility, such as minimum wage (city, state, or federal) or another metric. Many metropolitan areas saw a rise in their AMI during and after COVID: what does that mean for inclusionary residents? Did the programmes in suburban and peri-urban rings experience an increase or decrease in their AMI? What are the policies of each programme for residents if there is an increase in AMI? What happens if, or once, people have payment arrears? What is the policy if the AMI rises and an incumbent tenant doesn't experience a pay increase to meet the new level—is the rent level static? At what rate does the

rent increase? What are the rates of processing evictions through these municipal-level programmes?

I would like to undertake the crucial work of developing a massive inclusionary programme database and conducting an implementation audit across different cities and towns with inclusionary ordinances.

#### **#### 5.0.6.2 Zoning and Surveillance in the Digital Age**

One of my research participants, Orion, told a story about surveillance in the inclusionary programme (see Appendix ## 7.16). In telling this story, he set me a task, to examine surveillance of individuals, the tenants, by corporations, development, and management companies, in the inclusionary programme. A preliminary look at this as a potential project allowed me to see that this is a mammoth task.

There appears to be a power scale in housing policy—from the lowly precarious individual to the legally fortified large corporate development and management companies. Undertaking this project requires answers to the following questions: *Who gets policed in housing policy? How does the technosphere figure in housing policy surveillance? When zoning practices, concerns, and norms are designed for the physical world, what happens when residential permits in the physical world are connected to enterprises in the digital realm?* A quick glimpse exposed a grey area in the zoning code whereby property management companies with residential-only zoning permits are making deals with third-party vendors to exchange data for currency in the technosphere. The relationship between the zoning code and the physical world is not properly regulated, if at all, at present. The property management companies are actually making their profit through the collection and distribution of tenant data in the technosphere.



Undertaking this project requires an analysis of two levels of data collection. The first level would be ethnographically working with inclusionary zoning tenants. What are their experiences of surveillance both in the physical and digital worlds? This would require attending events in their buildings and collecting materials such as advertisements, reports, and leases. The second scale would involve semi-structured interviews with employees of the third-party companies that host events in the inclusionary buildings. The objective would be to find their motives and profit nexus. This project would also require obtaining copies of their permits to distinguish between mixed-use permits, residential- and commercial-use permits, from single-use permits and residential-use permits. It would also require reviewing the legal distinctions for what is and is not allowed under each type of permit. Then, I would interview employees of the managing and development companies. The objectives would be 1) to learn about their surveillance policies against tenants, distinguishing condo owners, market-rate renters, and inclusionary tenants, and 2) to collect information on the objectives and relationships between the management companies and the third-party corporations.

Armed with this information, I would present my data at the local zoning board meeting to ask about their interpretation of the existing laws and how things might change both in the enforcement of laws that target the management and development companies, as well as how things might improve in terms of the freedoms of inclusionary tenants. I would report my findings back to Orion for his thoughts and produce a paper.

### **#### 5.0.6.3 Public Policy Lessons from Uses of Airbnbs by Low-Income Housing-Insecure Black Men**

The most interesting phenomenon I came across during my fieldwork was the use of Airbnbs by my research participants. While Airbnb has been making the news for its downward trajectory, there are some interesting lessons that can be gleaned from *how* these low-income

African-descended men are using Airbnbs. These lessons can be learned by policymakers and government housing agencies such as public housing authorities (PHA) to design and implement a housing programme in the 21st century to meet the needs of some of the most marginalised and hard to reach populations.

I would want to visit a few more cities, with high take up rates of Airbnb residents who identify as low-income, Black, and male. I would conduct some interviews, primarily focused on snowball sampling to gather the participants. The objectives of this research would be 1) to learn about how these men are using Airbnbs, and 2) to ask how public policy might implement programmes that could help them meet their housing needs in the way that Airbnb seems to.

Twelve of the 25 research participants in this study used Airbnbs long-term. First, I could already see that the fact that Airbnb is digital makes it easy for them to use. They can book a room right on their phones. Second, the fact that Airbnb is prepaid makes it a good option for people. Imagine if there was a prepaid SRO programme? Third, the fact that they can choose their income level and comfort level: imagine if there were different option types for people to select from. For example, people can choose from SROs, rooms in homes, or whole apartments. People can select how long to stay for. This would make housing first initiatives easier to implement. I would like to conduct further research to write a programme brief. Then, I would like to work with PHA on a demonstration programme. Finally, I would like to support that demonstration programme by helping to develop monitoring and evaluation plans for the programme in the hopes of developing a model and policy templates for replication and scaling.

### **### 5.0.7 Concluding Remarks**

In *Poverty, by America*, sociologist Matthew Desmond focuses on the intersection of race, class, and gender (to a lesser degree) but focuses his argument on the privileged, or in Katz's words, 'the deserving'. Desmond makes the argument that as a society we have

allocated government resources to the affluent and middle classes, which are overwhelmingly white and male. These are the people America believes are deserving. Ingram and Schneider (2011) explain this phenomenon. They expand it further to show that these groups don't see themselves as 'claimants or dependents', because the policies that privilege them do not have the same administrative burdens and stigma attached. Instead, they construct themselves as entitled to the privileges because they play a vital role in the country's economic, security, and legacy goals. Meanwhile, they construct the undeserving as breaking the social contract, which President Kennedy famously and simply described when he said, '*Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*'.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, despite Desmond's own portrayal of Cambridge (2023) as an affluent city where Harvard keeps the champagne flowing, the reality is that there are rough sleepers in Harvard Square, Central Square, North Cambridge, and beyond. There are evictions in the private rental market as well as public housing, SROs, and shelters. The shelters are in fact overflowing. The carnage of inhuman treatment is here too. How many people from my high school are now in jail? Sleeping rough? Addicted to substances? Dead from the recent epidemic of the poisoned drug supply? For this project I found at least 41 low-income Black men in Cambridge who have had to drag themselves from place to place to find some place to sleep at night. And yet, the city solicitor has repeatedly invoked the anti-aid amendment to prevent the allocation of city and state funds to non-profit service providers that

make up the foundation of the programmes in the community care ecosystem and safety net.

Altogether, this resembles what Gilmore has termed 'organized abandonment'. In other words, the under-allocation of resources, and the attendant political neglect, is planned. From

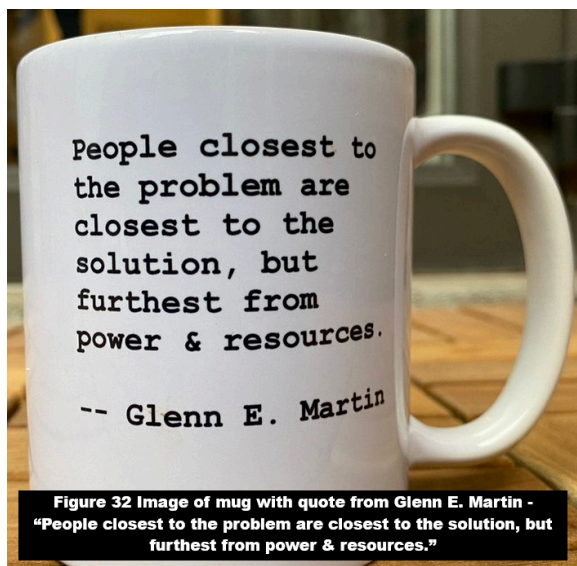


Figure 32 Image of mug with quote from Glenn E. Martin - "People closest to the problem are closest to the solution, but furthest from power & resources."

there, all roads lead to prison and/or death. In Cambridge, we have underfunded schools, especially in the programmes that are populated largely by students from low-income families. Like everywhere else, those neglected youth become neglected adults who have far less than they need to meet their needs. And this can lead to antisocial behaviour. If antisocial behaviour is met with surveillance, punishment, and criminalization, then the poor end up in prison. And, if antisocial behaviour is met with neglect, it inevitably results in death.

When the poor design campaigns, programmes, and businesses to meet their own needs, either the programme fails from under-investment from financial institutions or the initiators end up in prison for misuse of funds and resources. There are only two options: prison and death. It doesn't matter whether we are exploring education, healthcare, pensions, or some other type of social programme. The poor are undeserving of social resources and only have the option of prison or death.

As a poor person, I have come to the hopeful position of abolition. We cannot reform this carceral system, we need entirely new systems, structures, and logic. This new system needs to be built from another ethos, another logic. When I say abolish policing and prisons, I cannot disentangle the criminal system from its use to punish property crimes, its very origins. And, as long as housing remains a commodity, it is not a right. As long as property remains an asset, under our current system, bodies out of place will be met with prison or death (see Ahmaud Arbery, Ronell Foster, Willie McCoy, and many more) (Thompson, 2021).

Countless Black men have fallen victim to systems that kill or criminalise them for being out of place. When racial capitalism, the idea that *racialized exploitation and capital accumulation are one and the same*, denies them employment, housing, and options for their future, these men will continue to need social networks and the social commons. As expressed in the literature review, there is a systemic shrinking, marketising and criminalising of the commons. This is being done intentionally by policy and being designed to serve the interests of certain deserving and privileged populations. Those left surviving poverty in public are being imprisoned or killed.

To navigate this landscape of prison, social death, and actual death, these men rely on an underground railroad made up of members of their social networks. An under-examined aspect of how people are surviving poverty is the use of their social networks and living between multiple households. They are surviving housing insecurity invisibly and transiently—using their networks to live as unregistered tenants of public housing, section 8, and inclusionary units as well as residing in unzoned apartments and Airbnbs. The result of those coping mechanisms is invisibility.

When I started this project, I wanted to look at housing to explore the census undercounts of African-descended men. While I have not explicitly studied demography or the sociopolitical consequences of the census enumeration, this project nonetheless points at this issue—housing transience among low-income African-descended men—as a potential area to be examined to better understand the phenomenon of their undercounting. They are invisible intentionally or unintentionally. The result is under-allocation of federal resources and congressional representation. In essence, this is how organised abandonment occurs. It takes place from the bottom up, as planned. It is the narrowing in options for legal and authorised ways to meet a person’s needs until they are left with choosing when and where to be visible or invisible. When, inevitably, they are found to be visible when they ought to be invisible, their options become prison or death.

In my informal interview with the head of the Housing Stability Office, she said, ‘If you can’t afford it, you can’t live here’. For a while, when you couldn’t afford to live in Cambridge, you might move to Everett, Brockton, Lawrence, or Mattapan. You can see this pattern in Jamal, Khalil, and Orion’s stories. As these places became more sought after and expensive, people moved further out to Worcester, Providence metro area, or even Springfield. You can see this in Eric and Quintin’s stories. But these places want higher income earners too. So where next? Some people move out of state, like Carl and Sam did, and like Orion’s mom threatened to do. This is transience. It doesn’t start at the national level. It starts within the community, and once

people have been displaced and drained of resources, like the displacement and disbursement of the members of the networks, then as Pollio explains, people lose relational ties and they leave the area. Transience begets transience and ties become fewer and perhaps weaker, making people more vulnerable and at-risk for homelessness.

So, *where do Black men live?*

They are dispersed amongst the hidden poor. Their legal address may not match their postal address, which may be miles from their belongings, and far from where they sleep. Where they sleep may change from night to night. They are in motion, transient. If they are lucky, they may have an anchor—someone like their mother, grandmother, or even the mother of a friend to turn to when all else fails. If all goes well, they become expert at being visible in some spaces and invisible in others. But they aren't just choosing to be invisible, they actually become invisible to the very institutions designed to allocate money, power, and resources to their communities. So now, we are back to the very beginning of this project. The institution designed to allocate such resources to communities and to address social problems is the Census Bureau. They want to know, *where do Black men live?*

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# # 7 Appendices

## ## 7.1 Participant #1 - Allen

Don't judge me! I come from a strict muslim household. Black muslims. My grandparents converted two generations ago. We're definitely from here.

But as muslims, we can't drink or do drugs. We can't do anything that takes your spirit out of your body. Anyway, when I turned 18, I got into a fight with my parents, my dad really. Mom was always understanding, you know. I had been testing the limits with my dad for a while. I was going out. I was drinking and smoking. More smoking than drinking. I never really liked how drinking made me feel. My dad thought I was being reckless. I got in trouble, they took my keys away. I went out anyway. I would get back in through the window. We lived on the second floor. I figured out how to scale the wall and I left my window cracked, so I would be able to open it. My brother never snitched. But one day a neighbor must have seen me, thought I was breaking in or something. They called the police. My dad had to deal with the police in the middle of the night. He knew it was me. We got into a huge fight. My dad kicked me out.

I was a freshman in college at the time. I was a commuter student, lived with my parents. One of my university friends, another muslim kid, let me stay with him. He lived in the projects. His parents had gone back to Africa for an extended visit with the family. They left him in charge of the household. A few other friends from school were staying there too. All of us were muslim. He had to know he could trust us, you know. His sisters were there and he was responsible for them. We would have parties on the weekends. We were drinking and smoking. We were talking to girls.

After a couple months of this, I decided that he had strayed too far from Islam. I had to quit drinking alcohol. So, I did. But to be fair, weed is in a sort of gray area-- at least that's what I told myself back then. But I knew I needed a change. So I straightened up and finally asked my parents to move back home. And they let me.

I was still in school and I got a job working retail. I saved enough money to move out for real. I moved in with roommates. I got into a routine. School, work, home. Every now and again, my

friend would throw a party and I would go. One night, my housemate had his 'girlfriend' over for a party. This "friend" was cheating on her and mistreating her. We became really cool, his girlfriend and me. I was trying to be good. I wasn't drinking or anything. So we would spend time just talking at these parties. After a few months, we became very close friends. One night, at one of these parties, we ended up sleeping together. She broke it off with my "friend" after that. And we started sneaking around the friend's back. I mean, I didn't tell him that we were hooking up-- you feel me? All of the sudden she 'went off the radar'. I didn't know what happened.

After she disappeared, something didn't sit right with me. I started to feel bad. I got back into smoking again. I was smoking a lot at that time. Her absence and the way things went down, it was weighing on me. Something was wrong, you know. Anyway, I got into a fight with this same friend over some other girls. We got into a fist fight. I needed to move out after that. That was a real turning point.

I was in bad shape at that time. I moved into a basement apartment with two roommates. I didn't really know them. I dropped out of school at that time. I started working as an uber driver. I had gotten a car from Uber. Which was a rip off. The Uber car required that I drive a certain amount of hours in order to keep the car. Between the gas payments and the maintenance, I couldn't keep up payments. I was also working as a bouncer at a nightclub. I lost that job because I was too nice, too friendly. I lost the car, which was a significant portion of my income. I couldn't afford the rent anymore.

This was my lowest point. I stopped hanging out with all of my old friends. I stopped going out to parties and things. I stopped going to university. I lost everything in my life. And I missed her. I started looking her up on social media. For a while I didn't see any new posts. But then, after a while I saw that she had a baby. I lost it! Was this baby mine? Was I the reason she left? She had dropped out of school too? She went back to her mother's house out of state.

I started smoking like crazy! I smoked everyday. Any spare money I had, I bought weed. I fell into a deep depression. I couldn't go to family events. Other people were getting married and having babies. Yo, you couldn't say the word baby around me. I would just die inside. The baby could have been mine. I'm not gonna lie, I couldn't keep a job. I was staying here and there -- family, cousins, old high school friends.

I had a retail job. One of my co-workers told me about airbnbs. I moved into an airbnb with him. We shared a room for months. I was able to get a second retail job. I made enough money to

afford my own airbnb room. My friend found a place for me. It was under his account. I paid my friend. But I wasn't doing well, you know. Things didn't last for me when I was in that state. One night, I had to get it off my chest.

My father actually approached me. The entire family noticed that I was in rough shape. They were concerned. I had to get it off my chest. I confessed everything to my father. The drinking and smoking. Losing all of my friends. The depression and the guilt. I told him that I think I fathered a child out of wedlock. I told him everything. I thought he was going to be angry, but instead he told me to go find my daughter and be in her life. He said he was proud of me. That he raised a son, who became a man who couldn't shirk his responsibility. ---*Exhale*

My family bought me a plane ticket and I went to visit her. Turns out it was my daughter. She named her in my family's tradition. When I got back I made a plan to be the best dad and to be present in my daughter's life. I vowed to keep my job and to do better. I started sending her money regularly. I visited several times. In going to see my daughter, I started spending time with her mother again. I missed her. So, I proposed and asked her to move back here. She agreed.

Our little family lives here now.

## ## 7.2 Participant #2 - Benji

No, I live with my mom. I've always lived with my mom.

Yeah, I was living with my mom when I turned 18 years old. I mean, not just my mom, my family.

At the time, we were renting a three bedroom apartment in Boston. I live with my mother, two brothers, two sisters, and my grandmother. It's pretty normal in my community to have a large family living together.

Yeah, we're Black muslims.

My mother and father are divorced. That is pretty unusual, but that is what it is.

My mom is on the list to receive a section 8.

We have had to move a lot. Boston is gentrifying. The neighborhood where we grew up is not affordable anymore. Our landlord forced us to move. They raised the rent by a lot. We couldn't afford it anymore.

**Researcher: When was this?**

This was back in 2017. I was like 19 or 20 at the time.

Yeah, I believe I was on the lease at that time. Not sure who else was or wasn't on the lease though. But I was.

**Researcher: Where did you move to?**

Well, after that mom got section 8. We all moved to another three bedroom house in Boston. This house was owned by a Black family. They accepted the section 8 voucher. I was on the lease.

I remember things got tight though. At some point my oldest brother moved back in with the family and brought his wife and children too. It was too tight for my sisters, at that point both of them moved out. But then we ended up having to move because the owners, a Black family, they sold the house. We had to move again. We lived there for about two years.

I remember mom was stressed. We didn't have much time to find a place that time. So we ended up moving to another apartment, but this time with only two bedrooms. It was too small for everyone and it was falling apart. This time, my mom, who had the section 8, was on the lease and my brother and his family

were on the lease. I wasn't on the lease this time. But I still stayed there and used the address as my legal address.

It got wild actually, the whole family got kicked out. Yeah, we was evicted. But not through the police or anything like that. They just kicked us out. No details given. I think we violated the fire code, too many people and all. The landlord didn't do any work on the house. He didn't need any trouble, so I think he didn't want to get in trouble with the fire department for overcrowding.

Yo, thank god for COVID! Things got kind of rough for a bit. We were staying here and there. When COVID first hit, we had to split up. Last year, I was staying here, in Cambridge, with a friend at his airbnb. He needed help with the payments and I needed a place to crash. But early this year, (2021), we finally got a new house. This house is a 5 bedroom place. Both my mother and brother were listed as the heads of household on the lease. This time, I'm on the lease. I'm not sure why.

It is my mother, one of my sisters and her two kids, one brother and his wife and their two kids. I have another brother who stays there when he's in town, but he lives out of state part time, and of course, me.

## ## 7.3 Participant #3 - Carl

You're asking some real personal questions.

My family got evicted from our apartment in Boston. Everyone decided to move out of state, everyone--- including my parents. I had just started university, so I decided to stay. I moved in with a friend. I lived on the Orange line. It was great because I could get to school and work. I found that I needed to take on more and more shifts at work. I needed to pay rent, the train pass, food, and I needed to save up for tuition. I didn't get enough financial aid and I didn't have anyone willing to cosign a loan for me. The more I worked, the less actual school I did. When I got home from work, I just went to sleep. I tried to keep up with the school work but I couldn't manage it. And when I found that I didn't have enough to pay the next semester and my grades were pretty bad anyway, I decided it didn't make sense to go back.

I had a girlfriend at the time. She had been going through a similar thing. So she decided to move out of state. I decided to go with her. When we got there, we were staying with some of her relatives, while we were looking for a place together. It all got to be too much pressure. Looking for a job, living in cramped quarters, and being college dropout failures. We ended up breaking up. I came back to Massachusetts. I was able to stay with a friend who lived in Chinatown. I was couch surfing for a while. Moved around staying with different friends. There were a couple of nights when I slept on a bench. You know, when I couldn't reach anyone.

I found out that my aunt's old house had a lien on it. It was all boarded up. She didn't ask me to move in there, but better me than squatters. I had the keys and everything. No rent to pay. There was electricity but no heat. It was really cold. I had water, but not hot water. I pretty much lived in just one room of the house because it was too cold. I stayed there roughly one year. I couldn't do a second winter there. A friend told me about Airbnbs. I had money. I did uber eats for income. I had enough money to buy my own bike.

My friend found me a room in a three bedroom apartment. The guy who was the host also lived there. The third room operated more like a traditional airbnb. The guests were often short term, people who were in town for an event or something. I got a second job working retail. Between the two jobs, I was able to make enough money to pay for the airbnb each week. I was staying in Boston, but working in Cambridge. It was too far to travel, so I looked for an airbnb in Cambridge.

The airbnb had everything I needed. I brought my clothes, my bike, and my computer. I'm on Tinder, I mostly meet up with people at their places, not mine.

Researcher: *Tell me about the place. What's it like?*

The house has an unfinished basement where there are three 'bedrooms' that the landlord rents out on Airbnb. Right now, I'm the only tenant. People come and stay for different lengths of time. No, there is no 'kitchen'. There used to be hot plates but there was an incident with a former Airbnb person, the cooker stopped working and they had not been fixed or replaced. There is a sink, but it is an industrial sink. Like a big laundry sink. It's kind of dirty. There is a small refrigerator. There is a shared bathroom with a shower and everything. I don't really use the kitchen area, I mostly eat out. Yeah, I've seen mice and things. That's why I don't eat there, I don't want mice or rats in my bedroom. I pay about \$600 a month. In 2021, where else can you pay that? I have everything I need. I had a bed, a spot to hang my clothes, and things. I keep my backpack with my computer on me at all times.

You know, early on in the pandemic, I lost my retail job. And then, I didn't get much Uber eats work. It picked back up, but for a while the work dried up. My airbnb host didn't kick me out. He let me stay there throughout the entire pandemic. Once Uber eats was back up and running, I was able to work enough to pay him back everything I owed. I'm all caught up now.

*What is your plan going forward?*

You're asking all these personal questions.

## ## 7.4 Participant #4 - Damien

Where do I begin? It's a lot.

I mean, I don't want to get into all of it but some shit happened and I ended up getting arrested. I was going through some shit you know. My dad died. Things were complicated with him. My friend died. That hit me really hard. Both things happened in the same week.

Long story short, I was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong kids who were doing some dumb shit and I ended up in jail. And then I go out. People were really supportive, you know. They gave me books and things-- like this doesn't have to define you. But I had a lot of shit going on. So I ended up in jail again. And then again. This time I did some real time in prison.

When I was in jail people were not as supportive as before. I think they thought that this was going to define me, you know. I did some real reflecting in there. I had the time. I lost a lot of people.

By the time I got out, I went back to living with my grandmother. But everyone was there. Too many people were there. I wasn't trying to be there. I wanted to make moves. But I had a record, you know. So it was hard. I ended up starting my own business. I started painting homes and doing handy work. Even though I had done some years in college, I could only do gig work. But it was fine. I was making some money and I was saving up.

I got a car. Started doing delivery work. You know, more gig work. All this time I had my things you know. I'm a writer. I write poetry and rap. I make music and stuff. So I was getting exercise through my work. I had space in my car. I had a family at home. I had my art to keep me sane. I had everything I needed. Not everyone could say that.

I heard about this place that was hiring drivers. I heard from my girl's mom. I mean, she wasn't my girl at the time, but we were still hooking up. But she's my girl you know. Anyway, I found out about this place that was hiring for a full time position. They were offering good money too. I walked up over there and said I wanted the job. I have a good driving record. I liked the work they were doing. So, they hired me. It was good. I was driving a truck, so I had my solitude.

I'd been working there for a while when my new girl suggested we move in together. I still had the record, so it would have to be on her name. But yeah, we moved in together. Things were



going good for a while. But then she would get mad when I would pick up extra gig work. I was still doing deliveries after work for extra cash. She thought I was cheating. I don't have time for that to be honest. At this point in life, I'm not looking for drama. I prefer to hang out with my boys over getting involved with multiple girls, you know. But she didn't believe me... or at least that's what she said. I think it was really that she wanted to move on to the next step and I wasn't ready for that. But we kept on fighting. One night, it was after I dropped off a friend, she told me not to bother coming back. So I didn't. I went straight back to my grandmother's house.

I hadn't changed my address or anything, I was just staying there. It felt good when it was good but I don't want drama. I'd rather be with my grandma. I didn't go back. Anyway, yeah, I was still working as a driver for this non-profit. It was good. I started listening to podcasts and audiobooks while I was driving. At that time, I decided to start meditating. I was trying to find peace and make good moves in life.

My little cousin heard about this other job training thing. The position was in healthcare. It would be helping people. I always did like biology in high school. When he needed a ride to the place to sign up, I drove him there. I heard more about it and I signed up too. It was kind of perfect cause, I listened to the lectures while I was at work. If I needed to take notes, I just recorded myself on my phone. I would pull over to make notes and shit. It was perfect. I studied and passed the test. I was able to get this new job and make a little more money.

I have turned a new leaf. It's been seven years since I got out. Its poetic cause now there is no part of my body that has ever been in jail. Just the memories of who I was. I'm ready to keep climbing, keep making moves. Time to get out of my grandmother's house and build my own space.

## ## 7.5 Participant #5 - Eric

*Eric walks in and nearly lifts up the researcher with his hug.*

What do you wanna know? I was a "neglected child," according to the Department for Children and Families. I've been evicted from public housing. I've been homeless. I've been a squatter. I've even been very close in proximity to crack addicts and drug dealers. But I take every good opportunity that comes my way. I got transferred from a fast food franchise, to another location. I needed the change.

In early 2008, through a church friend of my girlfriend's mother, I found a room in a semi finished basement. I was able to rent it out for \$600 a month. There were three bedrooms down in the basement, there were two others living down there; both rooms were occupied by recent Caribbean older women immigrants who didn't speak English. The family who owned the house was also Caribbean immigrants, but they had been in the country for over a decade.

First of all, the house was a 10 minute bus ride to work or a 30 minute walk. The basement had a full bathroom with a nice shower. There was a little kitchenette, with a microwave, a sink, and a hot cooktop. There was a little living room area. They would cook delicious meals on that little cooktop and save me some. That's how I got introduced to Caribbean food. And, my little room was perfect. The room came with a bed, a nightstand and a dresser. I got myself a tv and it was all I needed. All my things were there.

No, no. I had no lease. I mean, what is legal? I lived there. All my things were there. I slept there. No, this address was never on my ID. I think my mother's place was still the address on my ID. No, I didn't really get mail. I'm not sure where my mail went, now that you mention it.

It was a great time for me. Did I tell you I went back to school? I enrolled in community college at the time. I got a second job working at a big box store. I was making good money, I could pay for my two classes at the community college. Things were good with my girlfriend at the time.

I mean, what didn't happen? The family ended up selling the house in 2009. Businesses were downsizing or closing down. I lost my job at the big box store. And then the restaurant had closed down. I couldn't afford school anymore, so I dropped out. I started putting everything on credit cards. I racked up some debt. I ended up staying with my girlfriend a bunch during that time. She had been living with her mother in another city.

After a few months, I was able to find a job at another big box store. I was getting paid minimum wage. My girlfriend's mother introduced me to a guy who had an apartment. I moved in there. But let me tell you, this place was not fit for living. The landlord never fixed anything. There was no heat. In massachusetts! The plumbing was exposed and patched up. It looked like something a child did. Nah, I didn't drink that water. I was afraid to shower with it. The place was a mess. I'm pretty sure the folks downstairs were on drugs or selling drugs. I had nothing to do with the people downstairs.

I didn't have a lease. I needed a place to stay quickly, remember? I didn't have much of a choice. But I learned some things during that time. I had been paying my rent and everything, nothing was getting fixed. It was a mess. This dude was a straight liar and a cheat. I went down to the library and found out that I didn't have to pay him. I could use my rent money to fix things myself. So I bought myself a heater, instead of paying rent. He tried to step to me, I told him straight up, that I know my rights. And if he tried to do anything to me, I would tell everyone in the building that they didn't have to pay him either. He left me alone.

I got a second job. I didn't pay him for four months. That was how long it took me to save up for the first, last, and security deposit to move out. It was hard to find a place because my credit was shot from that time I spent unemployed and charging everything to my credit card. You know, my bus pass, food, and everything. But finally, I got my first apartment. The lease was in my name and everything. It felt like that Tupac song *Dear Mama*,

I love payin' rent when the rent's due  
I hope you got the diamond necklace that I sent to you  
'Cause when I was low you was there for me  
And never left me alone, because you cared for me  
And I could see you comin' home after work late  
You're in the kitchen, tryin' to fix us a hot plate

No roommates, it was a one bedroom. But it was well outside the city, about 45 minutes away. I loved it!

I found out some crazy shit at that time. You know my mother had used my name on bills and didn't pay them. Not only did I screw myself up, but my mom screwed with me. And my brother screwed with me. But the landlord gave me a break. He was a Black man too. He had been there before himself.

During this time, I went back to school, but not community college. Some friend's told me about these training programs. I did a bunch of bootcamps and apprenticeship programs. I got a work placement. Things were finally settling in. I got my first job in IT. The money was GOOD! My girlfriend who had stayed

with me through the hardest times, was ready to move in together. And I was ready too. We started looking for an apartment together in the city. And we found one.

## ## 7.6 Participant #6 - Felix

We're the definition of a nuclear family. My mother and father are married. Still married and still living together. It is just me and my brother. Although, my cousin came to stay with us for a while, when we were growing up. I'm the oldest.

We're middle class I guess. Both of my parents are college educated. Both have graduate degrees. I've never known my parents to be unemployed or anything like that. They own the house and everything. They are also very strict christian. They would say, "We are a Christian family, in Christian household."

After graduating from high school, just like most people around me, I left and went to school. I lived in the dorms. I came home between terms and during the summer break. I completed my undergraduate degree. I've back to my parent's house full time. That's where I lived, it is still the address on my driver's license.

I was weighing whether or not I wanted to go to graduate school. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do yet. But I was young and I had no responsibilities yet, so I was going and living my life for a while.

There was an inciting incident. That's an interesting way to put it.

As I said, my parent's house is a good Christian household. I could live there as long as I was abiding by that basic tenet - be a good Christian. And if I couldn't be a *good* Christian, then don't get caught being a *bad* Christian.

What happened was that I crossed the boundary. My going out and coming back in, you know, that state, getting fucked up and stuff, we started butt heads. We started getting into arguments, my parents, well mostly my dad and me.

Things really kicked off when I wanted to introduce the family to some knowledge that I came across. They saw it was anti-Christian.

(He laughed).

I called a family meeting. I wanted to give a presentation. The presentation was what I thought the family needed to prioritize going forward. So, I had become interested in African history and indigenous African spiritualities, right. Well, that was the first problem.

But I started the conversation by confessing something, but I just needed to know where I was coming from, I didn't want to start anything. Rather, I didn't want to start what I started. Right. So, what happened was...

I confessed that I was sexual[ly] molested as a child. I didn't want to go into it because the person who did it is still part of the family you know. No, it wasn't my cousin, that's not the point. The person is still around and I didn't, I still don't, want to make a thing of it. Anyway, I just said this to make my point about faith and spirituality and where I was going in life and how I wanted the family to support me, but instead... it became a thing.

We got into this big argument. I fucking stormed out. I had to leave. I left.

I stayed at a hotel for about a week. I slept in my car for a few days. I just needed to get away. Luckily, around that time, some friends of mine who were still in the dorms invited me over, so I went back to school and stayed with them for a few weeks. I went to visit some relatives. I applied and got accepted to one of those rooming houses, yeah an SRO. I stayed a few months.

While I was living there, I decided to go back to school. I worked on my application and got accepted. I needed discipline. I went to the library everyday and went to the gym. When I got accepted, I told the family and the message got back to my parents. I got a call from my mom inviting me back.

My father said, "you can stay here as long as you're in school." I enrolled remotely. I attended virtual classes. But I hated living there. I tried to avoid the house as much as possible. I wasn't even going out anymore, I just couldn't be there you know. I started staying with my girlfriend a bunch. She and her brother had a place in Boston at the time. So, I would just drive over and stay over there. I even kept clothes and toiletries in the car, that's how much I was avoiding my parents' house. Eventually, I graduated and got a job doing exactly what I studied. I'm so fortunate.

I got a promotion very quickly. I was earning good money. I saved up and got my own place.

*(An audible sigh)*

I love my place. Not even so much the apartment, just the fact that it's mine, you know. It's mine and mine alone. My girl stays there from time to time, but it's mine.

My driver's license still says their address and I still get my packages there, but I got my own space you know.

And the moment I moved out, I became a vegetarian. Really, I'm almost vegan. But I love ice cream, coconut ice cream is good, but it's not the business. So that's tough, but I still have Oreos, you know. Ice cream is definitely the hold out.

I'm definitely not a Christian, don't tell my parents. I've become more spiritual, you know. I'm about mindfulness but I'm almost about connecting to the ancestors and clear on letting go of the past. I forgive him. I forgive him. Forgiving him has been so good for the family. It's not so tight with my parents anymore. I've changed. I'm actually the real me now. I needed space to find me.

I'm starting to think I want even more distance though. I've outgrown the proximity to my parents. I want to let go of the pretense. I'm not a Christian. I'm not a meat eater. I love African history. I visited the continent for the first time last year, I loved it.

I've grown.

## ## 7.7 Participant #7 - Grant

Nah, things have been smooth. I mean, don't get me wrong, I'm not Jay-Z, yet... joking, not joking. But, I can't complain, you know.

I'm just regular Black. The vanilla of Black, American.

When I turned 18 years old, I lived with my mom, of course. She lived in an inclusionary unit in the city. Yes, my legal permanent address. I went to university out of state. I lived in the dorms, of course.

I should say that I married my high school sweetheart. Yes, yes. We're cute, I know. We went to the same university. In the last year of college, we moved in together. We got an apartment off campus together. But I still considered my mom's place, my home home.

Actually, I did change my legal address to that address. It just made some school things easier.

After graduation, we got married. We moved in together. But that brief period before the whole marriage thing and the moving in together, I was back at mom's place. My mom hooked us up. She helped us sign up for the Cambridge Development Department program for renters. It took a while before we got it, so for a while we lived out of the city in a rental apartment. We were paying market rate. It was rough. We were both broke. We got jobs working at non-profits. Eventually, they did call us. We got the spot. We moved back into Cambridge.

My girl is ambitious. So, basically, the moment we got the place, she started looking up the city's homebuying program. She was heated when she saw that if we bought through the city that if we died, our kids couldn't keep the place. You know, what's the point. Not gonna lie, she was taking the lead on this whole house buying thing. Don't get me wrong, I went to all those classes with her. I wanted to buy a house too. But she was coordinating the efforts, if you know what I mean.

Anyway, we both ended up getting better jobs. Our rent went through the roof! On top of that, COVID happened. We were in this tiny little box, both working from home. Yo, I was taking zoom meetings from my bed. Not a good look. So, we were planning on moving anyway. The whole thing just came into a head.

We decided it wasn't possible to stay in Cambridge anymore. So we went to look in other areas. We were looking in Watertown,



Belmont, Brookline, Newton, Medford, Arlington, yeah everywhere!!!! We found places we liked. We made a budget. We went to the bank to talk to the Mortgage guy. We told him where we were looking. And he was like, "why not look in Mattapan or Dorchester?" No shade on Boston folks, but we really are not Boston folks. We wanted to stay in the areas we know. So, we said, no thanks. And then he sent this email to my wife saying no way "ya'll" are getting a mortgage for Cambridge. Naturally, we're like "fuck this dude," so we went elsewhere with our money.

In the end we ended up buying a little farther out than we had hoped, but we are homeowners.

## ## 7.8 Participant #8 - Hakeem

My parents came here from Africa looking for a better life for me. In a way, I followed their example but I took my own path.

When I turned 18, I was living at my parents' house. My parents had just purchased a house outside the city. It didn't change my life much because I graduated and went to university. I was living on campus. I was dating this girl and at 19 she was pregnant with my baby. We both wanted the best for this baby, so we did the right thing, I moved in with her. I dropped out of school and got a job. At the time, she was living with her grandmother.

I regret a lot about those times.

**Researcher: What do you mean?**

I mean, I could have done more. I should have reached out to my family, asked for help.

We moved in together, like a family. We found a cheap apartment on the south shore. It was what we could afford at the time. But it was too far-- too far from work, too far from family and childcare, and friends. Our lives are here in Cambridge. We didn't even last a year out there. We ended up breaking up. But at the time, she managed to get a section 8 voucher. She got an apartment in Cambridge with our son. They still live there. I ended up staying at the south shore apartment through the end of the lease.

My money was stretched thin when I was paying the bills out there alone. I didn't have the first, last, and security deposit. I moved into a room that I found on Craigslist. This place was the home of another father and son. They were renting a market rate apartment. You know the situation. A single Black father, he needed to supplement his income with another tenant. I wasn't on the lease or anything. I did get a PO box in Cambridge at that time. But I had my little room.

But the thing was that I didn't have the space to host my son. I only got to see him every once and a while. I wanted to provide a home for him, you know. I stayed at that place a while--- the house was sold and we all had to move. I found another place, it was a bit nicer but still didn't have much space. My son had no place to sleep if I wanted him to stay the night.

It was weighing on me, how little time I was spending with my son.

I applied to an SRO. It was down the street from my son's house, where he lived with his mother. That way, at least I would get to see him regularly. After a while, I got in. So I moved there. After I moved there, I saw my son more often but it felt terrible to be there for me.

I mean, it is basically a dorm room for creepy adults. Yeah, I was down the street from my son, but I still couldn't provide my son with a home. I had some very low points when I was living there. This was by far the worst I felt and vowed to have my son live with me as much as possible.

I left the SRO, I couldn't do it anymore. I found a room in an apartment of a single mother. It was right up the street from my son, so it accomplished the same thing as the SRO. I didn't have a lease or anything. I think she had a section 8. The condo owner was great too. He liked having a stable tenant there. This was the first place that I moved to where I could bring my son to stay with me. My baby's mother and I worked out a schedule where he would stay with me half the time.

I remember, we went to Ikea so I could show him our future bunk bed. I was scared he wouldn't like it. I still remember how excited he got when I told him. He ran up the steps and claimed the top bunk. It was one of the happiest moments of my life.

It felt good. It felt like I was advancing.

Living there was great. I got to save up. I was back in Cambridge in a comfortable way. But I wanted more. I finally saved enough to pay the first, last, and security deposit. I moved out and got an apartment under my own name. I wasn't in the city anymore but I built enough trust with my son and his mom that she felt comfortable with sending him to me even in another city. I had a roommate, a high school friend.

At that place, my son and I settled into a routine. He was still living with me half the week, it was awesome. I had a decent job at that time. I finally got my first salaried position. Life was good. But as time went by I wanted more. I wanted more room for my son. I wanted to advance further. I got a girlfriend and things felt solid with her. So I moved out.

I got a lease all on my own. This is the first time in my life I got to live alone. I found the place through a co-worker. A two-bedroom. My son finally had his own room. It felt like I finally got the right apartment... It was perfect! Initially, I think my son was apprehensive about not sleeping in our bunk bed, it made me sad too. But then he grew to like his own space a lot.

There was a moment that I felt so accomplished. I saw my son reading in his room with a night light. In his own room, in my house. I've done it. I'm a real father now.

## ## 7.9 Participant #9 - Isaac

When I was in middle school, right before rent control ended, my mom did one of those first time home buyers programs. She bought a house. We've been living here ever since.

I have never moved out. I have lived with my mother my entire life. What a damn shame, I'm a grown ass man.

Yes, this is my legal permanent address and I actually live here.

When I turned 18, I enrolled in university, but I was a commuter. I never lived in the university dorms. From when I turned 18 until I turned 33, I lived with my mother uninterrupted. I mean, there were the occasional weekend trips with friends and girlfriends, but I lived with my mother throughout that time.

I mean, shit happens, I'm a Black man in America. I didn't graduate from college. It got expensive. Mom wanted rent. I had bills to pay, I had to get a job, I did. Other shit happened too. Friends died, lost jobs, Black lives matter and all that. All that to say, I lived with my mother because it was consistent. No matter what, I could just go home.

**Researcher: What happened when you turned 33?**

It started out real good actually. I decided I wanted to work in IT. I've always been into books and computers. Always. So, I did my research. I did a bunch of IT bootcamps. Finally, I got in and successfully completed a well known IT internship program. I was feeling myself, so I went out to celebrate in the square. Got drunk. Got into an argument with a bartender. I ended up getting arrested for refusing to leave "an establishment" after being asked.

Biggest mistake of my life. I got arrested! After the arrest, which is still on my record, I fell into a deep depression. I fell off the IT track. I was unemployed. I didn't have health insurance. I didn't have access to mental health care. This arrest as well as the subsequent depression put a major strain on my relationships. My relationships with friends, former girlfriend, and most importantly with my mother.

We would get into these fights. "Why you wasting your life?" "Be a man, get a job. Get off your ass." All of this made it difficult for me to remain living there.

About a year later, I suffered a panic attack in public. I was taken to the hospital by the police. Someone saw me, called the

police. I was detained by the police before they realized that I was having a panic attack. They eventually called for an EMT to transport me to the hospital. I was still unemployed at the time. I had this \$1000 hospital bill. I had no way of paying it off. At this point, I had been diagnosed with diabetes. All cereal and alcohol.

That shit has been removed from my record, thank goodness. But yeah, I was detained by the police again. That is not a good look.

**Researcher: What brought on the panic attack?**

In all honesty, the panic attack had been partly a feeling of a lack of direction and lack of advancement in life. I just felt like there was no place to go. No place to just sit and breathe. And then I couldn't breathe. And then I was dying. I felt like I was dying. But that feeling made me think about my life, is it worth living?

I kept on thinking about the stuff with my mother.

One night, there was an incident. It was a few months after that panic attack. I needed a job, so I got one working at a fast food restaurant. I made no money, but it got me out the house and I could pay for the basics.

I was earning minimum wage, which was \$11 per hour back then. For context, my monthly phone bill was about \$60, the T pass was about \$80. This means that for just these two bills alone, I had to work over 12 hours. And then there was food and rent and medication.

Mom got mad at me because I wasn't contributing very much to the household financially, despite having a job. We had a bunch of mini-fights. One night, we got into a huge argument. During the argument, I brought up the fact that her ex-husband used to beat me. The fight escalated. She threatened to call the police and then she called the police.

When the police arrived, we were in the middle of our shouting match. The police beat the shit out of me in front of her, despite her protests. Eventually, I was arrested and taken to jail.

It was a community elder and a female mentor that bailed me out. I 'stayed' with my sister, she lives in the projects over by the park. I stayed there for two or three weeks.

There is a community house where a lot of local young men hang out. I know too many people who have stayed there. I have a

good relationship with the man who runs it, so I went there for help. He let me stay there. I stayed there from September through January.

Throughout that entire time, I just slept there. I went to my mother's house everyday. I needed to shower, get my things and would even eat there.

I'm back at my mom's house again.

## ## 7.10 Participant #10 - Jamal

My mom bought a house all the way out in [Brockton]. I mean, good for her but fuck, Brockton. So, of course that was my legal address and everything but my life is not in Brockton. You need a car in Brockton and I didn't have a car. My life was in Cambridge, so I did everything I could get back to Cambridge.

I spent the summer after college just hanging out with my friends in Cambridge and crashing on people's couches. Once I got my first real job, it was definitely not in Brockton. I needed to move closer to Cambridge. So I kept on couch surfing.

I got really lucky, this kid from high school, his mom owned her place. She hooked me up with a place for a decent price. I brought my good friend in, she wanted to move out of her mother's project apartment. The two of us got the keys and we moved into our first place ever.

To be honest, I thought after graduating from college that I was gonna make big bucks and live the sex and the city life... but in Cambridge. Instead, I was struggling to pay my rent, my bus pass, and stuff.

I should say that this is when I started using dating apps a lot. I was working a lot and I didn't know how to meet people, so the apps. I was on POF, Tinder, and Grindr.

I got a better job and I was making more money but the job was more demanding. I spent even less time at home and I would try to squeeze in going out with friends and stuff. It wasn't enough money though, I got my driver's license and I was trying to save up for a car. So I got a second job at a fast food restaurant.

But then my roommate and I started smoking weed everyday and I started to blow my money on weed and booze. Long story short, I ended up losing my job. What was it, I was high at work. I showed up still drunk from the night before. I was showing up late and not getting everything right. I deserved it. But I couldn't afford my life in Cambridge anymore, so I moved back with my mom out in Brockton.

I got another fast food job. But you try taking the T in from Brockton everyday. I went back to couch surfing with friends in Cambridge. It was fine for a while, but it got uncomfortable. I really needed my own space. I found myself spending nights on dating apps looking for hookups. Someone else's bed was always infinitely more comfortable than a couch or blow up mattress.



But things were still very unsettled.

Long story short, I was at the wrong place, at the wrong time and I ended up getting arrested. I spent some time in jail. When I got out. I had a record. Try getting a job with a record. On top of that, my mom was heated at me. She didn't let me stay there.

Lucky for me, my friend in Boston hooked me up with a place to stay. I was there for six months rent free. I got a job, a local restaurant. I was able to get caught up with my bills and everything. But after a while I started drinking a lot. I can say it now, I'm an alcoholic.

I went from being a college graduate with a whole future ahead of me, to being a homeless criminal and an alcoholic. My friend got fed up with me and her roommate was pissed. So they kicked me out. Then I lost my job. I found another one. I lost that one too. And found another one. It was a cycle. Either I would get fired or for one reason or another I would quit.

I started running out of friends who would let me stay with them. My family was sick of me. I was ruining their name. I was a homeless bum. You could see me in Harvard square with a backpack on. Don't get me wrong, nobody knew. I didn't smell or anything but yeah, I was homeless.

I tried everything! I slept at a few different shelters, mostly in Boston. You know, because people didn't know me out there. But let me tell you, a shelter is the last fucking resort. When I was working, if I had enough money, there was this hotel that I stayed at.

When I was broke, I would get on the apps- Tinder and Grindr. I would go online fishing for some d\*\*\* for the night. If I found one, I would be good. You know, it is a place to take a shower. I would woo 'em, cook dinner for 'em, a good d\*\*\* down and get some good sleep. And breakfast in the morning too, gourmet.

At one point, I got into a bit of a routine, I had some people who called on rotation. I would know that on certain days, there was this person or another. I could save and get the hotel on the other days. I had a backpack, a PO box, and a regular job at a fast food restaurant. I also had this part time job, on call for shifts through this guy in Boston. I started saving up for a car again.

I finally got this job where the owner liked me a lot. He hooked me up with the car and an attic apartment.



## ## 7.11 Participant #11 - Khalil

Yes. Yes.

I was born [Caribbean].

I was still back in [Caribbean], when I turned 18. My dad, who had been living in the US for a while, was able to get me a green card before I turned 18. But I only came to the US after I turned 18. That's right.

I was not living with my father when I came. No. I was living with my sister. She was older and had her own family. Yes, in Cambridge. But this was a very different Cambridge to what it is now. There were a lot of immigrants here at the time. My sister was just living in an apartment [in the Port neighborhood], no section 8 or anything. Just an apartment.

After a few months or it could have been a year, I can't remember, but she left and moved to [Medford]. I don't know why she moved. Maybe they were going to raise the rent. Yes, this would have been around 97 or 98.

Yes, I left Cambridge with her. I moved in with her to her new place in [Medford]. I lived there with her and her family.

I was in America. I had to make progress toward my goals. I went to school. I went to [Suffolk University], in Boston. It was very expensive, so I didn't finish. After that, I went to school for cosmetology. I got a certificate and started working. I thought I would save up to finish my degree at [Suffolk University], but when I saw how much money the owner [James] was making, I decided I wanted to be a business owner instead. I started to focus on that.

I also was making good money for myself and I was a young man. I didn't want to stay at my sister's house with her kids at that time. So I moved out. During that time, there were a lot of [Caribbean] businesses. At these businesses, people would post announcements and things. A friend of mine, a man, told me about another Caribbean man who was looking for someone, a tenant. It was a Caribbean man and his son. I moved in with them. We lived in [Somerville].

I think I lived with them for about three years. I left because the building was falling apart and the super didn't do anything to fix it. At that point I couldn't stand to live there for another winter. It was too cold. There was no heat. They never fixed anything. No one even answered when we called. I moved.

I moved to a basement apartment in [Malden]. I saw an announcement at [a Caribbean shop]. The apartment had two bedrooms, a kitchenette, I think it is called. It didn't have a big sink and it didn't have an oven, but it was fine for me. It had a bathroom. It was perfect for me at the time.

Yes, I had a lease. It was under my name. I remember being very happy when I signed the lease. The rent was about \$700 a month. This time, I was able to rent out a room. I rented it to another man for about \$300. No, I didn't add him to the lease. I didn't want any trouble if it didn't work [out].

When I was living there, I was able to get a license to teach cosmetology. I started making very good money after that. At this time, I had saved up and bought my first car. And just because I could, I wanted a nicer apartment. I decided to move. I moved to another place in [Malden].

This time, I found a three bedroom apartment. I was the leaseholder again. The building was owned by a [Caribbean] woman. She knew my boss. I think they went to the same church. She felt comfortable renting to me because she knew I worked hard and had a good job. This time, my two cousins came to live with me. No, I didn't add them to the lease. No.

You know, I wouldn't have left that apartment. I loved it so much. But there was a fire there. In another apartment, not ours. The landlord kicked everyone out because the building was being renovated. So, I moved to [Everett]. I moved in with one of my cousins and a friend. I was the only one on the lease again.

We stayed for over a year in this apartment. It wasn't very nice, but it was fine. My room was very big, I remember. We left because the landlord wouldn't fix nothing. There were mice. There were leaks. I moved out to a place in Everett, two bedrooms. I rented the second room to my friend. This apartment was too expensive.

We left after a year and moved to a cheaper place in Malden. At this time, I started to think about starting my own business. I started saving.

When the lease came up, I didn't renew. I decided to start my business. I sold everything - my bed, everything except my car. I found a place to start my business in Cambridge. I mean, I was working in Cambridge the entire time. I have only ever worked in Cambridge as long as I have been in America. I sold everything and went to stay with my sister while I was getting the business going.

You need money to have a business. I gave it all of my money. I made my business address my permanent address.

My sister lived in Medford, too far from Cambridge. I decided to sell my car for the business. So I couldn't get from Medford to Cambridge easily. My uncle, who lives in housing, said I could stay there. So I moved in with my uncle. I wasn't on the lease.

My life is my business. So I just needed a place to sleep. I could also sleep in my business too but I didn't.

After the business started making money, I started to pay my uncle some money for rent, about \$400 a month.

I'm ready now. I need my own place again.

## ## 7.12 Participant #12 - Lamonte

I mean, I was born here. I grew up here.

There was this time when we moved to Somerville for a little bit and then to Boston, but my mom didn't like it so we moved back.

Mom got a section 8, she still has it. I remember when she got it. I was like 7. We had been living with lots of people and stuff, but then she got it and we were able to move out. We lived in this apartment in Central Square. It was the first time we had so much space. I remember just looking around a lot.

So the thing about my mom is that, her and her friends eat information. If someone learns about a food pantry, they would all make plans to go there together. If someone hears about a program, they would all apply for it. I remember when they learned about this place that helps you sign up for summer camp, every year they put it in their calendars to go there together to sign us up for camp.

I don't know when they learned about the inclusionary program but they all signed up. Mom's usual crew. And I know that it was because we got a section 8 voucher that we were able to qualify for the new apartment in the inclusionary program. I think I was about 13 at the time. And then we moved from Central to North Cambridge. It was like a new planet, so far from everything.

When I turned 18, I was living with my mom of course. I was going to high school, of course. But my mom is old school. We started getting into these fights all the time. All of the time. We would fight about everything. She wanted me to go to college and then she wanted me to work to help with the bills.

I got a job by the way. I do give her some of the money I make. But... she didn't really know what she wanted. She would just say things and expect me to do it or to do something. That wasn't where I was at. So we got mad at each other.

Anyway, I decided to go stay with my dad. He lives in [Medford]. Yeah, I think my dad has a section 8. All of them be having section 8. They all did it together.

What happened was that my dad started on me too. After graduation, I wasn't sure what my next move was gonna be. But I wanted to spend time with my friends. I was working and they were working. Some people were going to college, some people

were moving across the country, some people were gonna travel. We wanted to spend time together before everything changed.

I had also saved enough to get my car. And I had to admit I wanted to enjoy my freedom. I didn't have to go to high school everyday. It was summer. It was great. But we did start drinking and smoking [weed] a bunch. My parents were not happy with my choices.

The fights were happening with my dad too now. Immigrant parents are saying some wild shit. Both of them have a lot of stress with the family back home [in Africa]. Both my parents were working and sending money back home. There is a lot of stress with the visa situation with the family in Africa.

So they wanted to know what I was gonna do. Is it college? A job? The army? So we were fighting because I didn't know yet. At that point, when I fought with one, I would just go stay with the other. I was going back and forth. There was a point when I got tired of fighting.

There was a fight with my mom. She wanted me to marry someone back home to bring them here. I was like, I can't get married right now. I'm not ready for that kind of shit. But she wasn't having it. I left and went to my dad's, he was like I got you a job working for my friend. I'm like, no, I don't want to do that. I'm still weighing my options. So I left.

I just slept in my car that night.

I started doing that. I started sleeping in my car. It was easier and closer to everyone.

**Researcher: "Why would you prefer to sleep in the car, rather than to go to your mother's home?"**

I don't know, that's me.

So one night I parked near [shop], the one... Anyway, my friend's mom saw me sleeping in the car. She woke me up and had me come sleep at her place. She told me I could stay here.

It's been months now. My friend is at university. I'm still staying here. Now I'm thinking about my options. Friend's mom is helping me work it out.

## ## 7.13 Participant #13 - Marcus

As I said, I moved here from the midwest. But when I was 18, I lived with my mother. She owned her own home. Then I moved into the university dorms for undergrad.

My mom's house was my house all throughout undergrad. I did move off campus one year, but that was when I started my masters. I rented a place with my girlfriend but my primary residence was my mother's house.

We moved in together because we had a baby together, my daughter. Before that, she lived with a roommate. When she got pregnant, she moved back home with her mother. But then we made the decision to move in together.

We broke up. I had to move out. I got my own apartment, a rental, in another nearby city. None of this was in Massachusetts.

At that point, I had completed my masters. I got a great job working in my field. Things were good.

Almost a decade ago now..

Wow, it's been that long.

About a decade ago, I was offered this amazing opportunity. I worked at this brilliant summer camp over here. I fell in love with the Boston area. I wanted to live in the city. I was here for about three months. I went back home. I settled my things and moved back here in about October.

I found a room for rent with [another man of color] in Newton. I don't think we discussed papers or leases. There were three rooms there. This [man of color] was the guy I dealt with. I definitely was not on any lease. But there was this white guy. I think he might have been on the lease. I remember there was some issue between them. I stayed there for about six months.

I didn't come here to live in Newton, you know. Nothing wrong with Newton. But I came here to get involved in community things. But I found myself in Newton. In this area, there were more administrative hurdles to clear to lease a property. First, last, and security deposit, that was thousands of dollars. All of that, combined with much higher rents and a sub-par credit score meant my options were limited. And I didn't have a job in the area yet. It was rough.

Luckily, once I did get settled and I made some contacts, I was able to find something. I moved into a co-op in Boston. I liked



the way the house operated. I liked the collective agreements. There were eight of us living in that house. And I wasn't the only person of color. There were some Latinx folks and some Asian folks. I think some people were on the lease and some weren't. Some people just stayed there and some were members of the coop.

It was a radical space. I liked that. It was through those folks I got deeper into organizing.

The landlord kicked everyone out after all the original people had left. Sometimes, they didn't pay rent. I got on the lease after a while. I was adamant about signing the lease 'cause I didn't want no bullshit.

And, in order to get my deposit back, I had to clean out the entire house. There were years and years of accumulated clutter from at least eight people at time. There was a lot of stuff.

I don't think it was a real eviction. There was no paperwork. I don't think this would have shown up on anything. I wasn't evicted. After a while, when the original people left, things weren't very organized. So, I decided to develop my own relationship with the landlord. He was a nice guy. I started paying my portion of the rent to him directly. When we all had to leave, he gave me a reference.

I moved into an apartment in Allston.

For a while I was relying on Uber and stuff as my primary income. I'm an activist. I needed the flexibility. So, if the police murdered another person, I needed to focus on that, you know. But I still have rent to pay and all of that. So, driving for Uber allowed me to still pay my bills but also focus on the things that needed my attention.

But then the pandemic hit. I didn't want to catch COVID again and again, so I took a break from driving Uber.

Luckily a friend recommended me for this job. It was perfect. I could make a difference working for this non-profit. It was a salaried position. So, I stopped driving for Uber altogether. I took the job.

At that time, remember, I was living in this basement apartment with a bunch of activist people. The house caught on fire. We all had to move out. The community held a fundraiser for us. I used my cut of the money as first, last, and security deposit on my own place.

I was living by myself for a while, but then my girlfriend moved in. Now we live together.



## ## 7.14 Participant #14 - Nasir

That is how I came to be a vegan.

Researcher: Tell me about your upbringing?

I was born in [Africa]. After moving to the United States with my mother and younger brother, we were sort of bouncing around from house to house. We were staying with people. When we first arrived, we moved in with a relative, my aunt. After some time, let's say we were obliged to find other accommodations.

So, that is how we came to bounce around and around. We struggled moving from place to place for a while until we were able to find a program that was run through the housing authority.

Researcher: Like a project based voucher program?

I don't know. Sorry.

There was this one time, my mother was dating a guy who was around a lot. I don't think he fully lived with us or anything, but he was around a lot. I didn't like him at all. He was abusive to my mom. It took her a while, but she got out.

Yeah, when I turned 18, I was still living with my mother and brother. In the same apartment through the program. Yes, I was definitely on the lease.

I went to university. I lived at home. It really didn't work out. I dropped out because my mom needed me to work to earn money to help with the bills and support the family. You know, we have to support our family back home too.

I tried to work and go to university at the same time, but it really didn't work. I was just wasting money to pay for school. I dropped out for good. Dropping out of school doesn't feel good. Everyone I went to school with was graduating and I was dropping out. I gotta admit, this was a hard time. I wasn't depressed or anything like that. I don't get depressed. But I wasn't my best.

Also at that time, I worked at a bunch of different non-profits and afterschool programs. It was fun. I had a good time. I learned to play some musical instruments. I made a lot of contacts.

Time was just flying by. I realized I needed to do something. I had always been into computers. I heard about some online

training programs to get into the tech industry. I signed up for some bootcamps. I'm definitely someone who learns by doing. So this style of learning worked well for me.

I was doing very well in these programs. I started taking them very seriously. I left my other jobs, I just focused on these training programs and internships. There were some that had stipends or paid internships. I did those. That way I could still help out a little bit.

I must have done five or six, like months long, intensive training programs. Without a university education, I became a software engineer. I got my first job in the tech industry.

I got my first high income job in the tech industry and was able to move out of my mother's apartment. I can do that and still help her out. That's how much money I was making.

When I first moved out, I moved in with my girlfriend at the time. We rented from a condo owner. The owner was a person of color, maybe southeast asian. Great guy!

Yeah, there was a lease. We were both on it.

I moved all of my things there and even changed my legal address. Yup, got my mail there and everything. I was not moving back in with my mother.

Around that time, my brother was having some trouble. My mom was stressed out with him. He couldn't hold down a job. He wasn't helping out at all. So it really fell on me to help her, even though I wasn't living there. I think if I was living with them during this time, things would have been very bad.

We ended up having to move because the owner needed to move back in, so the lease was not renewed.

We got another apartment together, my girlfriend and me. Same area as before.

Come to think of it, yeah, the landlord was another person of color. Same deal, we both got on the lease. Changed my address, the whole nine yards.

When the lease came to an end, we were offered an extension, but we were having some trouble and decided to break up. It was amicable. She's a great person and I still care about her. But we didn't want to live together as just roommates. She wanted to keep the apartment. I didn't want to leave, but I had to. I moved. This time, I moved alone.

At this new place, the landlord is 'a white guy'. I got a lease all by myself. That is where I live now.

Now, I'm all about taking care of my body. Again, that's why I'm a vegan. I go hiking, kayaking, and all that.

## ## 7.15 Participant #15 - Orion

I was born in Cambridge. Never really moved out of Cambridge, except kinda that one time.

When I was born, my mom needed a place to stay. So, from what I heard, we stayed in the projects with my grandma. I'm not sure if mom was on the lease back then. I just know we were 'staying' with her.

We couldn't have been on the lease, now that I think about it. Yeah, because we didn't stay in the projects long. Eventually, we moved out. You know where we lived? Everybody knows that colorful house on Pearl street. Yeah, we lived there. It was not a good situation. Inside, that place is falling apart. But at least we had a place to stay.

Things were getting better for a while. Mom found a place, near the projects in central square. But that house got sold. And the "new management," raised the rent on us. They started to do repairs and renovations. One week we wouldn't have access to the kitchen or the next week we would only have water from 7-9pm. Stuff like that. After they did a little thing, they would raise the rent.

I think it was a section 8 apartment. Let me text her. Yeah, yeah. She said she did have a voucher.

It was that (the section 8) and the fact that we're Cambridge people. That is to say, we have a big family. We have a lot of city connections. That's how we were able to get the section 8 voucher. We did not suffer because we had people to rely on.

So, there was that one time we moved out of the city. I started getting in a lot of trouble at my school, around that time. My school situation was affecting my housing situation. And there was definitely a ghost in that house. Anyway, the school expelled all of my friends. They kicked everyone out. All of my friends are gone. And I started acting up. Anyway, we didn't last too long at this new place, the owner sold the house. The house was in poor condition anyway.

We ended up moving back in with my grandmother in the projects. No lease, no nothing. I remember because we had a problem with the school at that time over papers. So, I kept going to school out of the city, using the address where we had been living. But we didn't stay there long, we stayed with grandma for about a month or so.

And then there was a miracle. Mom was able to move us to one of those nice places.

**Mother (over the phone):** Yes, it was to an inclusionary unit with the section 8 voucher. And that shit came just in time too. Because if I didn't find a place, we were gonna move down south with my aunty and my grandmother.

Yeah, because we had gotten this place, I was able to enroll in Cambridge public schools again. It was when we moved back to Cambridge and I was back in school that I met all of my friends that I have now.

Okay, so in high school. I started hanging out and started smoking weed. This was also when I was diagnosed with ADHD and was prescribed medication. I started getting in trouble and having run-ins with the police. I was getting suspended from school a lot.

**Mother (over the phone):** I couldn't fuck with him at this time.

I was bumping heads with mom a lot during this time.

**Mother (over the phone):** I was concerned for housing.

She kicked me out. I needed money, so I started selling weed at this time. I went to stay with my grandmother.

Yo, I felt like a bum for so long. I was feeling depressed. Like, what are you doing, bruh?

Let me tell you about my dad. First, he's white. He went to college. He has a graduate degree. At the time, he was living in a studio apartment. He worked his way up and was now working a good job.

I should say, I respect my parents. Both of them. Mom is a coupon genius. I never liked my mother for money. She wanted me to eat the school lunch.

It didn't feel good to be on my grandmother's couch. But moms was still tired of everything. So I moved in with my dad.

One day the school security searched my bag and found some weed. You know, the drug industry was the original gig economy.

Yo, Cambridge Schools are not different from public housing. I didn't feel like I was prepared for adulthood.

I ended up staying with my dad for about six months before the incident with the school. I was suspended. It wasn't a lot or

anything, just some weed for me - and it was decriminalized in Massachusetts at this point. But anyway, dad kicked me out. And dad also made sure I wasn't invited back to grandma's house.

It was senior year of high school, I had been kicked out of mom's place, dad's place, so I went to live with a friend. His family lives in public housing. I didn't go directly to living with my friend though. Someone told me about airbnbs, but that she is expensive. I couldn't afford it for very long, so I went to stay with my friend.

This summer, I got a job. I'm a lifeguard. I save lives. Its crazy one day, I was putting my shirt on and I read it, "life guard," I decided then and there that I needed to save my own life and guard me and my interests. This job made me grow up.

CHA didn't help!  
Rindge gives up on you.

**Researcher: Where are you staying now?**

I am currently staying with another friend's family. They own their house. They let me stay here whenever I need.



## ## 7.16 Participant #15 - Orion (Part 2)

My girlfriend lives in one of the inclusionary units in deep NC. She lives with her family. They love me. I stay being over there. I was there so much, management has begun harassing my girl. They did some petty shit. One time, they printed out her lease, slipped it under the door with highlighted sections.

I came by one, I got stopped by the concierge or whatever he was. My girl had to come down to talk to him before he would let me in.

My boy told me about this guy he knows. So, this guy was hooking up his girl with his medical marijuana supplier. I think it was from Colorado. His supplier ships the weed in a box to Massachusetts. Normally, he would send it to his mother's place. But his girl wanted some. So, he had it delivered to her address. But it was his prescription, not hers. The box came under his name, not hers. But she lived there, not him. So when the box came, someone snitched. Obviously it was someone who knows this shit. Snitches! They called the police. When he came to get the box, this dude got arrested for WEED, weed my nigga, WEED. This shit is legal.

And then she was evicted because she violated her lease. I guess he wasn't allowed to receive mail there, that is how management defines what it is to live there.

Yo, tell me how that's fair. He got arrested on a technicality. She got evicted on some bullshit. Now, they're both fucked. For WEED! That shit is legal.

Mind you, peep this. I went to visit my girl, she had this bag of popcorn. She was all excited right. Cause she picked it up on her way into the building. Yo, it turns out Comcast had some promotion event in the lobby. They were "giving out" bags of popcorn and you got a coupon for a "free" on demand movie. Miss me with that bullshit, nothing is free. So, I told her read that coupon, you gonna see how you're paying. Sure enough, it said something like you give Comcast and management the right to your streaming data if you use this coupon.

Mind you, I know the rules. She lives in a building with no stores or offices— other than management in it. How can they be selling shit? Even if it's your data and they sell that shit online. They got that data from a residential building. No way that shit is legal. But who's watching them? Nobody! Ain't no policing the corporations. It is so much easier to evict some broke idiots who got someone to mail some legal ass fucking weed to them, then it is to fucking catch the real law offenders, these fucking corporations and shit.

## ## 7.17 Participant #16 - Patrick

Well, the situation with my mother was... is strained. I'm no longer allowed to live there with her. I am on my own now.

Yes, I have a job. I work at the casino as a security guard. I was able to find a little apartment. The landlord is a very nice guy. Great guy. Very understanding, I mean he gave me a chance when he really didn't have to.

Yeah, I mean it is a small one bedroom or like a two room studio situation. I live alone. I make around \$37 or 38 thousand a year from my security job. I'm enrolled at Bunker Hill. It's slow going but I need to pay for it somehow, so I have to work. I have to live somewhere, so I need to work to pay for both rent and school. So that's what I'm doing.

My rent is like \$1400 per month, which is very good for the area. But the problem is that I don't have very much money for anything else, you know. I have a car, so that has costs with that. Of course. If you do the math, after taxes and stuff, I pay like 80% of my income to rent. The rest goes to school, my car because I need it to get work and school, my phone and food. That's it.

The plan is that I would find another place to live, someplace cheaper. I'd pay like \$800 a month. If I could do that, I could take more classes each semester and I'd be able to finish faster and move on to Umass. You know, the sooner I graduate with a bachelor's, the sooner I can get a job that pays like \$50 or more.

I can't afford this place right now. I'm really struggling right now.

## ## 7.18 Participant #17 - Quintin

My girl was pregnant with our first child at the time. So we moved in together. The only place we could afford was on the south shore. Our lives were here and everyone we knew were here. So each needed to have a car. Cause, who was gonna watch the kid? We couldn't be over there for very long. It was never gonna work. My girl looked up the rules. She found out that if she was in a shelter, with the baby, she could get moved up in the process for a section 8. So, she left for the shelter. It took a while but she did get that section 8 voucher. And the shelter was at least in the city. So during the day she could work while the kids were with her relatives or mine.

*Researcher: What about you?*

I got locked up. For selling drugs marijuana mostly, but also pills to the college students. It was the pills really. I spent over a year in jail. I miss the birth of my first child. When I got out of jail, I was paroled to my grandmother's house. I couldn't find a job. I couldn't keep up with the fees. I had no choice, I got the only job I could get, I sold drugs. Not long after that I got caught again and I was back in jail.

You never think you're gonna be one of those jail type niggas. But then you find yourself in that cell. Nothing to do but think. I am that. That Black man in and out of jail. I was in for about a year. It was only weed that time. My baby mom let me get paroled to her place.

*Is that allowed? Doesn't she have a section 8?*

I mean, I don't know. But that is where I went. I don't think corrections was talking to housing like that. It wasn't the projects. We contacted the landlord, he was just a man. He owned the property. He said it was cool. So, I went there.

My girl and I got legally married. We had another baby that year. I got a job as a prep cook in a restaurant. Things were going alright, until they weren't. My girl was pregnant with our third child. One minimum wage job wasn't buying enough diapers. I looked for another job, couldn't find one. It was around that time when things were tough on everyone. So, my girl suggested that I move some weight. Not a lot, but just enough to get us some money until we came up with another plan.

When I tell you I didn't want to do it. I was the most unlucky nigga in the world. Everytime I touched some weed, the police found me. I was not trying to go back to jail. I called everyone I knew begging for a job. I went on websites looking

for off jobs. We had no choice with five mouths to feed. I did a drop. Got caught, ended up in prison. Again!

I got out about a year and a half later. I was paroled to a halfway house. You know a rehab for former prisoners and other people. Got paroled there cause my girl was mad at me. I was mad at her though, I didn't want to do it. I wanted out of the drug game, you know. When my time came to leave the halfway house, I went to a shelter. My grandma had passed. I missed that. I missed my kids. I heard rumors that my wife had been with someone else. I was mad. But what could I do, I was that nigga in and out of jail. I had no place to go. I was staying at a shelter in Boston. There were nights when I couldn't get in. You know, missed the cut off or had a night shift. I couldn't pass up work.

A guy I worked with at the restaurant told me about a hotel. It was \$50 a night, no questions asked.

**Researcher: \$50 times 30 is \$1500. Why not just rent an apartment?**

[Quintin laughs] First off, I can't pass a background check. I definitely didn't have the first, last, and security deposit. And there were nights when I didn't make the \$50, and I couldn't stay at that hotel. I ended up getting back with my girl. She took me in because I was wasting all the money I made on that hotel and my parole fees.

**Researcher: What are the fees for?**

You know, parole officer fees, drug tests, ankle monitoring costs, court fees.

I ended up selling drugs to try to get caught up on the payments, but I'm the most unlucky nigga. Got caught again. Back in jail for another year.

Being in jail is like a time machine, when you get out you have to explore to learn about the times. Things had changed over that year. Things were crazy! My wife ended up moving to a new apartment. She let me stay there, but she was done with me. I couldn't stay there with our relationship being what it was. I made arrangements with a custodian to let me get a copy of the keys to the projects. Just the front door, nobody's apartment or anything like that. I used to sleep in the hallway and stairwell of these projects.

My cousin hooked me up. I ended up staying with a cousin's friend for a little while. I rented a room. No lease or anything. Things were getting good again. I finally got a job. And that is when I found out that my baby mom put me on child

support. I got a second job. I would work 50 some times 60 hours a week. I would get paychecks of like \$20 or \$50 if I was lucky. I couldn't pay my rent. I couldn't pay any bills. I got a third job, selling drugs. Got caught, back to jail.

When I got out, I found a spot in an SRO. The rent was around \$625 a month. I got four jobs. I was taking home about \$250 per week, I was working like 80 hours, though. I made enough to pay my rent, my phone, and ate at work. I was still legally married, but I met a girl. We started going out. She let me move in with her. I dropped down to working just three jobs. I started doing an apprenticeship program. I've been trying to join the union.

## ## 7.19 Participant #18 - Rashaad

Yep, born here in the US. But not in Cambridge, in Lowell.

I grew in public housing, yup, in Lowell.

It's complicated, but I was living with my mom...stepmom, in the project when I turned 18. Just like every millennial I know, I graduated from high school and went to college. That's what you do.

Here's what happened, though. I went to [UNIVERSITY]. A for-profit university. I wasn't the best student, but I love art and computers. So, I thought if I studied something that involved art and computers, I would do pretty well. I went to learn computer graphics. The only address I had at the time was mom's place in the projects. That was the address I put on all my documents at the time. It didn't matter because I took out loans, just like everybody else, and lived in the dorms.

I was not trying to go home at all. I was living in Boston. It was great. I was living my best life. Home was chaotic at that time, but I'll get to that. But I didn't even go home for the holidays. I just stayed at school. When summer came, I went back home to my mother's apartment.

The thing is that she had taken me off of the lease during the year. In order to stay there, I needed permission from them. I remember I went to the housing authority. They asked 'how long was I planning on staying?' I was allowed to stay in the summer, but it was chaotic, so I tried not to stay there too much. I hung out with friends and things as much as possible.

I stayed at that school for four years. I met great people and it was fun but my grades weren't great. I had tens of thousands in student loans and a bunch of bad grades. After that I decided to cut my losses and leave school, without the degree. Most people at that school were on the same boat.

After I left school, I went back to my mom's place. I stayed there without a lease. I stayed there a year. I couldn't get a decent job as a college drop out. I did eventually get a job, as an overnight sales clerk in a 24 hour store in Cambridge. But things were a bit rough at that time because my brother had a baby. All three of them needed a place to stay. It got too cramped. My mom offered my room to them, so I had to be the one to leave.

I went to stay at a friend's house, a friend from university. My friend was paying rent to live in his grandmother's attic at the time. I was able to stay there without having to pay rent.

I wasn't added to the lease there. I didn't sign anything. I only stayed there a few weeks or maybe a couple of months.

After that, I went back to my mother's place in the projects and slept in the living room. It was around that time, while I was still working at the 24 hour store, when I got reconnected to her again. We had gone to the same college. We had a bunch of mutual friends. We started hanging out and then started dating.

She's from Cambridge, so she knew about things that were happening in the city. She shared a few job posts with me and I applied. I got a job with the city. When I got that job, I was still staying at my mom's place and commuting. We talked about it and she suggested I move in with her.

She lived, lives, in the house her parents own. She grew up in this house and has never left. Her parents moved to another place outside of the city and left the kids the house. Her siblings got married and had kids. One by one they left or made other arrangements. She had a whole ass house to herself by the time we moved in together.

No, I have never signed a lease. But this is where I been living for years now. I get all my mail here. I do pay rent. Yes, we pay rent to her parents. They charge us far less than what this is worth, I'll tell you that. I know how much other people are making over here.

We've been married for years now. We're still living here. We have no plans to move out. Cambridge is great. We love it here.

## ## 7.20 Participant #19 - Sam

I mean, I'm an open book. What do you wanna know.

We can't really start at 18 because I moved out of my mother's house at 16. At the time, I was living with my girlfriend. We broke up and then I moved in with some friends. I lived with my friends until about 20, I was about 20.

Then, I moved in with my girlfriend, later my wife. At that point, I had my son. We moved a couple of times. But then shit got rough!

She is too much to deal with. And I was in a bad place. People around me started dying. You know, overdoses and shit. We were together for about 4 years. Yeah, 4 years and then she moved. That fucked me and liberated me at the time. I went and lived with my grandmother for a bit. She lived in the projects. So that shit was real hush hush.

I moved out again. I moved in with friends. More people started overdosing. It was like an epidemic. Everyone was on that shit and people were dying. I had to admit, I was real shook. I could die too.

This was around the time when Uber would give you a car if you worked for them. I mean it was hard. You had to drive a ton of miles before you could actually earn any money for yourself. You had first earn the right to keep the car. But it was all too complicated with everything happening with my friends. Too many people were dying and shit, I just decided to drive. I would drive for Uber. I let them take me wherever they were going. I would even sleep in the car. I actually got to see some interesting places that way to be honest.

Uber took their car back.

That's around the second time I went to jail. Some bullshit possession charge. The first time was for domestic violence. Yeah, I'm not proud of it but I did get into a fight with my ex-wife and I did hit her. I mean she beat the shit out of me first. I lost control. She wouldn't let me leave. But there was no excuse I fucking did hit her. I'm bigger than her. I hurt her badly and I deserved something... I'm an abolitionist now. But I fucked up. I shouldn't have hit her. I'm working on that. But anyway.

I went back to living with my grandmother. She's the real OG, you know. She held me down. We used to cook together and shit. It was nice. And you know, she knows everyone. She was always looking out and getting me the hook up.



She hooked me up with this job. I was good for a bit. Saved up for a bit. I met this girl and it was nice. It was good. We both saved up enough to move in together. We got a place together in Brighton / Allston - LOL I legit don't know the difference. That's how you know I'm a Cambridge kid.

Yeah, it was good. It was good while it was good. Until some shit went down with son. He was locked up in juvi for a while. And then he got out and was on house arrest at the house with us. He started doing dumb shit. He almost set the house on fire. The police was all sniffing at our shit. The landlord was not happy with all of this shit, you know. DCF was there, the cops were there, the fire department. We started fighting a lot.

We were both stressed out by the situation.

Eventually we both went our separate ways. I left the apartment. I just left her there with her kid. I didn't want to screw her over. Around that time, I had just got a new job, so I was still able to help her out, but I didn't live there anymore. I lived with grandma G, you know.

They had moved her, she wasn't in the projects anymore. But she still let me stay with her.

Yeah, that's where I'm at now.

## **## 7.21 Participant #20 - Trey**

My parents are immigrants from [caribbean].

Of course you know, I grew up right here in Cambridge. What you didn't know is that when I was a senior in high school, my parents purchased their first house. We left Cambridge for Medford. I was still able to graduate from Rindge because it was my senior year.

I graduated just one year after you.

When I turned 18, I lived with my parents in a house that they owned. But then I went to university and lived in the dorms. Of course I went back to my parents for holidays, but I lived in the dorms.

After graduation, I moved back to my parents house. I got my first job, doing youth work for a nonprofit. That was about 13 years ago, wow. I worked hard and loved what I did. I got promoted, my pay rose. I switched organizations, I got even more money. Steadily increased my pay and titles.

Throughout that entire time I lived with my parents. I never moved in with a girlfriend or anything. Of course I stayed the night with someone here and there. And I went on short vacations with friends, but I lived with my parents.

**Researcher: Did you ever have any issues with your parents?**

No, no issues with my parents. I mean, I was working. I helped with the bills, I cleaned up after myself. I contributed to the house. Things were fine.

Yeah, I lived there for about eight years before I moved out.

**Researcher: What happened three years ago?**

When, I answered a request on a local online platform. I moved in with this guy, who is now my roommate. He is physically disabled. He has a lot of mobility restrictions. But he was ready to be independent from his family, so they arranged for him to have a roommate, as an attendant.

It's a great deal for me. He is a cool guy, we've become good friends. And I'm compensated and I pay no rent. I make money while I sleep. No, I didn't sign a lease. I think his parents must own the house.

This is where I live now. I switched my address, all my things are here, I sleep here. Yup, I got my mail there. Everything. It works

because I can still help my mother with the house bills, even though I don't live there.

It's great because at that point, I had already gotten my latest promotion. I was making good money at work. And I was making money, instead of spending money at home.

## ## 7.22 Participant #21 - Ulrick

I was born in the midwest. My mom and dad owned the house where we lived. Mom's college educated, my dad was a military man.

When I turned 18, I graduated from high school. I was waitlisted at one university, I got into no others. I took one semester off, while my uncle sorted out the situation. In November I found out I was accepted to an HBCU out of state. In January I enrolled. Things were going fine in school for a while. A couple years in, I started struggling with mental health issues. I no longer wanted to become a teacher, I wanted to become a preacher. I couldn't focus, so I dropped out.

I went back to my mom's house. I made a new plan. I enrolled in bible college. I was staying in a room above my uncle's garage. I commuted to school. Things were going much better, but my mental health continued to decline.

It reached a new low. I hadn't thought about it, but a friend asked me if I was depressed. That was the first time I thought about it. I was depressed. Don't get me wrong, bible college felt right. But I needed to get to a healthy mental state. I took a break from school and moved back in with mom. She allowed me to stay there until I got back on my feet. I got a part time job working at an SRO. I was practicing my preaching and living the life of a preacher. Things felt right. I was on the right path. My mental health improved.

Things were looking up. I got a girlfriend. I went back to school. Got my first salaried position working for a utility company and kept the position at the SRO on the side.

I was doing too much. I needed the money, I needed the direction that school provided, I needed to feel needed at the SRO, I needed to feel loved by my girlfriend, but I was doing too much.

School got too expensive, I was paying out of pocket to reduce the number of loans. So, I dropped out, officially. I was making enough money, so I got an apartment on my own. This was the midwest after all, not like here. It was still expensive but I didn't want to live with a stranger. At the end of the year, my girlfriend moved in. We made it work.

Things were going well at work with the utility company. They offered me a promotion and the opportunity to move to the city to work on a major project. They offered a significant raise. They'd even paid for an airbnb. I stayed in the airbnb for five months. I liked living here in the city. I was done with the midwest. But my girlfriend was still over there. My girlfriend

moved in her sister to help with the bills, but the apartment and all of the bills remained in my name.

At the end of the contract, the company gave me the option to stay here. I liked the opportunity, so I took it. I moved to the city and had this salaried position. Unfortunately, the pay didn't cover the price difference between here and there--- they were no longer paying the airbnb. I moved into a live-in hotel, outside of the city.

*Researcher:* How did you find this hotel?

I found it online. I stayed there for over a month while I was searching for a place. Before that, I also slept in my car. In the five months I had been here, I found a church. I got benevolence from my church.

They helped me with the first, last, and security deposit. I tapped the "benevolence" of the church at least twice, maybe three times. In those early days, I needed support paying the utilities and rent. My fiancée decided to move here with me. She left the midwest apartment to her younger sister there. The younger sister ended up getting booted out after a series of wild parties and she trashed the apartment. We lost the security deposit. Luckily it wasn't an official eviction, they just declined to renew the lease.

Lucky for us, my fiancée found a job quickly. We found an even better apartment. Found out while moving that my credit was shot -- the utility bills that were unpaid by my sister in law. All is right in the end. I got married and now, my wife and I are looking to purchase our first home together.

## ## 7.23 Participant #22 - Vince

I grew up poor, like projects poor.

I remember one time, there was something we had to pay for to have at the graduation. My mom didn't have the money. We weren't talking to my dad at the time. Anyway, a few friends from school decided that we were going to steal something to get it. Keep in mind that I was a good kid. I never got in trouble. I was accepted to a small liberal arts college in Vermont. I was going to college in the fall, so I was a different kind of desperate to go along with this. Anyway, we went to [West Cambridge]. There was a lady at a park. She left her purse and was walking around. I grabbed it and started running. I don't know when or how the cops got there so fast, I didn't see them. They tackled me and hauled me off. I'll never forget that. I was in the back of a cop car. I was so scared I wouldn't be able to graduate or go to college. Luckily, the cop knew my mom. They gave the purse back to the lady. They drove me down to the mission. In the parking lot, we talked. He let me go. My mom whooped my ass that night but it didn't ruin my life.

Yeah, I lived with my mom when I turned 18. My dad lived not too far away. I think he owned that place. I don't know, he could have been renting too. I never thought to ask. It could've been my stepmom's house too. I really don't know. But no, he didn't live in the projects. He lived in the same neighborhood though.

I used to go back and forth. I had my own bedroom in both places. But you know how it is, people would come and need the room or whatever. There were times when I would stay over at his place. I stopped doing that once I got into this big fight with my stepmom though. After that, they rented out my room. But, yeah, I lived with my mom in the projects.

It was my mom, her boyfriend, and me living in the place. Housing didn't know that her boyfriend lived there at the time.

As I said, as soon as September came, I was out. I went to Vermont for school. I lived in the dorms that year, only came home for Christmas. I took out crazy loans to pay for it all, but it was worth it. The experience was amazing, it changed my life.

I met so many cool people. It was there I learned about drugs and things. Growing up in the projects, you know people do drugs. Seeing people strung out and stuff, it's hard to choose that for yourself. I never did drugs. But I got to college and all these rich kids were smoking weed and doing mushrooms. It

wasn't the same thing. I tried it all. It was great! I loved it. The experience was more worthwhile than the curriculum. I was learning so much, I couldn't focus on marine biology. My grades slipped and I ended up on academic probation.

In my defense, this was the first time in my life I had everything. I had all the food I could eat. I had personal space. The air out there was amazing! I would go for walks just to breathe. I needed to be there for a year just to be before I could balance studying with the culture shock. I was too distracted. Don't get me wrong, I know those kinds of kids in Cambridge too, but they didn't mess with me like that. Being in college, was a different thing, you know.

At the end of the year, I went back home to the projects. A bunch of things happened that summer. You should know that my mom was always sick. She was obese with diabetes and high blood pressure. That summer, she had been diagnosed with cancer. Things at home got real. At some point, her boyfriend had moved out. I guess they broke up. My mom needed my help. Considering what I was really doing at school, how bad my grades were, and how much it cost, I decided to drop out. Moved back home, to the projects, permanently.

There was a lot of paperwork for her benefits, but I also needed to work to help pay the bills. I was working two minimum wage jobs at the time. But my mom also needed more help at home. So my aunt moved in to help. Considering the amount of work that I was doing and all of the paperwork, we put me as the head of household for Housing. I hated that time.

At some point my aunt had to leave. She was sleeping in the living room at the time. She got a place of her own. I had been seeing this guy at the time. He needed a place to live. So I decided to rent out half of my room. That money went a long way. It helped with the bills, you know from the monitors, hospital bed, and all the medicine. We didn't tell Housing about it.

She ended up passing away. I was already the head of household, so I gotta stay. Housing didn't know about my roommate because there was already so much going on. There were all kinds of nurses and people over here. After she passed though, things slowed down. I quit one of my jobs. I needed to take a breather.

It was then I started taking more hours at the other job. I worked at this non-profit. I started taking on my tasks and things. They gave me a promotion. I got a salary, instead of being paid hourly like before. I made more money than everyone in my family.

So I'm trying to get up out the projects now.



## ## 7.24 Participant #23 - Wesley

I should say, I was born in Boston. I knew people in Cambridge.

Anyway, I've always been different. My family never had money. We've been broke. My clothes were a little old, worn. We shopped at the Garment District dollar a pound. Not in a hipster type of way, in a "you broke as hell, this is where you get clothes" type of way. Anyway, I was ugly, fat, and dark skinned. At the time I didn't know, but I'm also gay and I'm a bit autistic. So, I was different. Always been kind of different.

Anyway, halfway through high school, my mom got a good job outside of Cambridge... and Boston. She took it. So we moved way the fuck out there. We got a house. She was renting at market rate. So, I was living with my mom when I turned 18.

After I graduated from high school, I got accepted to a prestigious art school program in Cambridge. I got some scholarships, but not enough to cover everything. So, I got loans to pay off the rest of the tuition, but I didn't have a cosigner. I couldn't get more loans to pay for the dorm. So I enrolled as a commuter student. But I couldn't stay at mom's house, it was too far. I would take the train in. I spent most of my days on the train. Even worse, sometimes I would miss the last train and get stuck in the city. So, some of my school friends would let me stay in their dorms.

I feel super grateful to my friends for this hook up. But because you don't have key card access, you have to wait for other people to do everything. You have to leave when they leave and return only after they return. It is annoying for everyone involved. Needless to say, year one was not my best year. My grades were not great. I was put on academic probation.

Year two, a few of my friends were willing to move "off campus." So, we got together and got an apartment in Boston. Like, deep deep Boston - end of the orange line Boston. We had to take a bus to the train and switch from the orange to the red line. But we did have a three bedroom apartment. We split the rent six ways.

I should say, that because I was on academic probation, I lost my scholarship. So, I needed to work to pay off my tuition in installments. And I worked out a deal with my mom where she paid half of my rent each month. So I needed to get two jobs to pay the tuition installments, the other half of my rent, all of my portion of the utilities, and everything else. You know, my T pass, food, and basic toiletries. (heavy sigh)

My grades got worse! I couldn't find enough time in the day to do everything and study at the same time. At the end of term three, I was on academic probation again, and facing expulsion. By the end of the academic year, I was expelled. On top of that, I was trapped in this lease, I could not just move back in with my mother after failing. I had to stick it out through the end of the lease to pay my portion of things. On top of that, I still had tuition arrears that I owed the school. So I needed to pay that off too.

When I got expelled, I had started seeing this guy. He was great. He came from a fucked up background too. They lived in the projects. They needed some extra money, so offered me the opportunity to move in. It felt good. It felt kind of normal, after failing so badly at school, I was finally able to do something normal, like have a boyfriend, and move in with him.

But the situation wasn't exactly normal. He lived in public housing. So, I couldn't be added to the lease. He lived there with his mother and her boyfriend. Her boyfriend wasn't on the lease either. But the four of us made the rent and everything between the SSI checks, the boyfriend dealing on the side, the two of us working.

Umm, I wasn't on the lease, so I couldn't get mail there. I got mail at my boyfriend's father's house and I know some nice white people who let me get packages at their house. I also store my big things with them too.

His mother ended up passing away. He ended up inheriting the lease. He was the head of household now. The boyfriend moved out. The rent went way down.

But after a while, we broke up.

It was complicated.

I was his first ever boyfriend.

I love him. I still love him. I almost wish I was his second or third. No one ever stays with their first. It's been years now. He is ready to move on. He wants to go explore. He doesn't think he can do what he wants to do with me tagging along.

I don't want to weigh him down either. So, I need to move out.

I had a good job for a while. I was saving. I was going to head out, but then COVID happened. And I lost my job. And I ended up blowing through my savings just to make ends meet. Like my rent is \$350 a month, all inclusive. But then my phone was \$85. I left my old plan now, I'm on metro for \$50, but you get the point. It's really expensive to be poor.

On top of that, with the break up, being unemployed, and everything, I've been really depressed. The only time I feel better is when I waste money on things like taking a drive out to park outside the city to get some fresh air. That costs money. Everything costs money. I'm feeling low. Just real low.

I'm finishing up this IT bootcamp. There is going to be a paid internship placement at the end. I'm looking forward to having income again. I can get my savings back up to get ready to move out.

## ## 7.25 Participant #24 - Xavion

Yeah, yeah --- very excited.

I mean, both of my parents were addicts and were in and out of jail. When I was a teenager, I moved here to live with my uncle. It's much better than where I come from, trust me. I went to high school here, made a bunch of great friends. I did well in school. I studied hard and I was ambitious, but I was also a teenager. I was going out with my friends and sometimes it looked to my uncle like I wasn't serious.

I like that, *the inciting incident*. I mean, I would call it a *clash of masculinity*. You know, I was a teenager, I couldn't have my uncle disrespecting me. It was just after I had graduated from high school. I was going out with my friends a lot. We were getting drunk and staying out all night. You know the summer between high school and college. I was testing my limits and celebrating my achievement. My uncle did not see it that way. He saw me acting like my parents. He thought I was going to end up like that. So he threatened to send me back there. I couldn't have that you know. I had plans. I was serious. But nothing I could say would convince him. So, he kicked me out. Or I might have left. I left.

I left but I had no plan. I had no money. I had nothing. But I wanted to stay in the city. So, right away I got a PO box. I needed to make sure I got mail in Cambridge. I got a friend to agree to let me get packages at her house. That was clutch because whenever I did get a package, I would get to hang out there and eat a big dinner and pretend like things were normal.

Luckily, it was summer. So, I began scouting out places to sleep. I started looking for places to sleep in the winter too. I had to get prepared. I slept everywhere! I slept behind a big church. I slept in the woods and on park benches. Don't tell anyone but I even slept in MIT classrooms. There were times when I stayed with friends. I didn't want anyone to know I was homeless. And nobody knew I was homeless.

I was working that entire time. I had three jobs. Having three jobs meant that I was getting paid to be warm, you know. I needed different kinds of jobs too because they needed to fulfill a role in my life. I worked at a big company in an entry level position part time. I needed to think I had a future and I needed to be able to tell people yeah, I'm working here. That way, other people knew I had a future too. But I also worked at a restaurant, because I had to eat. I worked for a non-profit to keep me humble and connected. I learned about a bunch of programs. Eventually, that was my saving grace. I applied to every opportunity that came, discreetly of course. Every morning, I went to Starbucks at the bus stop. On my way

to work at the big company, I would wash myself and brush my teeth. But I always looked good when I walked in and I always got my coffee and breakfast sandwich, so I didn't act like the other homeless people.

Yeah, this went on for about six or seven months. Yeah, it wasn't until January that I got the good news. January in Massachusetts. Yeah, I was ready to sleep in doors for real. I never called my uncle. I didn't tell anybody. My parents couldn't help me anyway.

Yeah, I got into an SRO. It saved my life to live there. I had a place to sleep every night. Yeah, there was that. And there was direction and motivation. In living there, there were lots of different types of people. I mean, I always kept my head down and kept to myself. I was working toward my goals, you know I had plans. My goals were my motivation. I saw that some of the other people who lived there had given up on their goals. They stopped making plans. Living there, it made me aware of my choices. I'm so glad I never turned to drugs. I never developed an unhealthy use of alcohol. I could see what I didn't want to become. I knew too well what it would do.

I also found that there were people who lived in the SRO alongside me who were in real need. Their needs were far greater than my needs. You know, people with mental health disorders, addiction, people who were desperate. So I would share what I had. You know, in terms of food and things. If I had extra. I would leave food in the shared spaces for people who had need.

While living there, I made a number of strategic connections. I attended university. I had taken that one semester off. But then I was able to save to go to school the following semester. I also worked multiple jobs. I was saving up and building my network. I was not hanging out and wasting his time. My uncle was onto something there.

One day, one of my contacts came through. He found an apartment for me and signed as a guarantor. We worked out a plan. I pay what I can each month and he paid the difference. Yo, I finally got my own place. I got a lease under my own name--- just me, the whole apartment, a studio apartment. It's mine, all mine. I kept the PO box. But now, I could vote, the bills were under my name, I qualified for other programs that I didn't qualify for before because I didn't have the right ID or property proof of address. I'm good now. Just working to finish this degree.

To be honest, I'm grateful for that period of homelessness. If that didn't happen, all of my goals wouldn't have happened.

And, looking back, there is a kind of freedom in being homeless. I don't know.

## ## 7.26 Participant #25 - Zaire

I should start out by saying that I am blessed!

I graduated from Cambridge public schools. I got accepted to a bunch of universities. I wanted to get as far away from here as possible. I wanted to live. Just as I was leaving for university, my father lost his job. This was right after rent control. They [the rent] had gone way up. My mom's job alone couldn't do it [pay the rent]. So we got evicted. But my parents told me not to worry. They told me to go off to school and focus on my school work. So I did. I went to school. Made friends. Went to stay with them and their families during the holidays. But it did weigh heavily on my mind that my family was struggling while I was living it up.

**Researcher: How did you pay for school?**

Yeah, it was a different time. I got financial aid. I got the pell grant. I was poor, you know. I made up the difference with a few small student loans. That's how I was able to afford living on campus. In the four years I was in college, my parents moved three times. School became the constant, not home.

During my first semester, my family got evicted from their apartment. It was a combination of things that can be summarized as violation of lease agreement. The primary reasons were we had undocumented tenants, we were overcrowding the apartment, we owed back rent.

I'm the youngest of seven kids. At the time, my parents took in five children from my oldest brother. Keep in mind this is a two bedroom apartment. My oldest sister was also living with my parents, she uses a wheelchair. There were a total of nine people staying in a two bedroom apartment. The whole family ended up moving out of state. They were able to find an apartment in a new city in another state, but still in New England.

I was home during the summer holiday, which must have been my junior year. My family was evicted again for a second time. This time it was a sheriff's eviction. During that time, I was able to stay with a friend in a basement apartment near school. The eldest nephew left at that time too. Everyone else was left scrambling. Eventually they were able to find places to stay with friends. This is about when I got a PO Box.

My family found a shoddy place to live. A terrible landlord that didn't fix anything and didn't care about anything. My dad

lost his job again and my parents fell behind on payments again. During my senior year they were evicted from their third apartment; another at-will eviction. The family was scrambling for about a month?

**Researcher: What do you mean by scrambling?**

They were split up. A couple of the kids were with cousins and aunties who were living in the area. My mom and sister moved in with my second oldest brother and his girlfriend. You know, it was like that. I was in the dorms at that time. My mom got help from a program through the Urban League. They were able to find a place. The family got stable after that. I never moved back in with them again.

I moved in with a school friend. This friend was a bit older and had purchased a home. He offered me the opportunity to live in a basement apartment rent-free in exchange for his help with some carpentry work to fix up the house. My dad had been a carpenter, he was in the union and everything back in the day --- before we moved. So I took the opportunity.

This was a classic New England triple decker. The landlord lived in one unit and rented out the other two. I lived in the basement alone. No lease, but complete freedom and security. There were times when my nephews came to stay with me or I went over to help watch the kids. I got a job and was able to help my mom out with a few dollars every now and again. My friend, also my landlord, let me borrow his car too. It was great to have that. He lent me cash and stuff too. He always insisted I pay him back, either in cash, housework, or construction work around the house. He's a good guy, you know. He helped out a lot of people.

Without his help, I wouldn't have done it.

**Researcher: Done what?**

I graduated from university. I had a place to stay. I lived in that basement apartment for years rent free. I learned a lot from him about how to run a household. And eventually, he convinced me to buy my own place. He walked me through the process. I'm a homeowner now. I paid off the mortgage aggressively. I own my house outright.

It has been over twenty years, but only last year did I actually give up my PO Box. When I finished paying off my mortgage.

I told you, I'm blessed.





## ## 7.27 Project Demographic Survey

# TBR Direct Housing Aid Clinic - Long Term Bespoke Service Black Men Demographics Survey

Title of the research project: Where do Black Men Live: An Examination of the Experiences of Low-income Inner-city Housing Transient African-descended Men At-risk for Census Undercounting

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You are being invited to take part in a research study that examines the social and structural barriers that result in housing transience among low-income inner-city African-descended men

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, if you would like more information, or if you have any questions, please contact the research team using the email addresses listed at the end of this document.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. Race / Ethnicity

- Black/ African-American / African-descended
- Other

3. Age

- Under 18 years old
- 18 - 29 years old
- 30 - 49 years old
- 50 - 64 years old
- Over 65 years old

4. Educational Attainment

- Less than high school / No GED
- High school diploma / GED
- Some college
- University Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other

5. Household Income

- Less than \$30,000 annually
- \$30,000 - \$50,000 annually
- \$50,000 - \$75,000 annually

6. What is your profession? Do pay taxes on your general income?

9. Have you slept at any of the following places:

- Shelter
- Live-in hotel / Long Term Airbnb
- Single-room occupancy unit (YMCA, Rosie's place, etc.)
- Other

10. Have you ever slept in a public space (like a park bench, bus station, etc.)?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other

11. Have you ever felt like you were using all of your resources to maintain a stable housing situation?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

7. What is your current housing situation?

- Live alone
- Live with romantic partner
- Live with friends
- Live with parents or siblings
- Live with uncle, aunt, or grandmother
- Live with other relative
- Other

8. Have you ever been housing transient (not have a stable and legally tenancy for two weeks or more)?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. Have you slept at any of the following places:

- Shelter
- Live-in hotel / Long Term Airbnb
- Single-room occupancy unit (YMCA, Rosie's place, etc.)
- Other

10. Have you ever slept in a public space (like a park bench, bus station, etc.)?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other

11. Have you ever felt like you were using all of your resources to maintain a stable housing situation?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

12. Do you use multiple addresses and location as your legal permanent address, where you receive mail, where you store your belongings, and where you sleep?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13. Do you believe you were counted in the 2020 US Census?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

14. Have you ever been incarcerated or been registered in the Criminal Justice System?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other

## ## 7.28 Research Participant Recruitment Email

To Whom It May Concern:

Seeking research participants to take part in a research study that examines the social and structural barriers that result in housing transience among low-income inner-city African-descended men.

The aims of this research are: (1) to find out how to better count undercounted African-descended men; (2) to learn from African-descended men about their own housing circumstances and their own housing goals; (3) to establish housing transience as a politically protracted phenomenon; (4) to learn about the networks that house African-descended men; and (5) to connect housing transience as a phenomenon to the census undercounting of African-descended men.

The research will involve between 20–30 **African-descended male participants**. You would be required to:

- Sign a consent form
- Complete a demographic survey
- Complete a housing timeline
- Have a housing goal you'd like to work on

The research will be conducted by pre-doctoral researcher Stephanie Guirand. She is a researcher who is enrolled at the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths, University of London.

In love & community,

Stephanie G.

(\*\*) \*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\*



## ## 7.29 Demographic Survey Responses

#	Name	Sex	Race	Age	Education	Salaries	Profession	Current Housing Situation	Housing Transie	Housing Transie	Slept in public sj	Using All resources for hou	Multiple address	Census	Criminal Justice
1	Damien	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Driver	With roommate and romanttc	Maybe	Other	Not really, by ha	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Yes
2	Nasir	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	Software Engineer	Live alone	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
3	Quintn	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Cook, yes	Live with romantic partner	Yes	Other	Yes, public housi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Benji	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Security Officer, yes	Live with parents or siblings	No	Other	Yes	Yes	No	Maybe	No
5	Carl	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Customer service, yes	Roommates at extended airbn	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No	No
6	Eric	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	IT Analysis, yes	Live with romantic partner	Yes	Other	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
7	Felix	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Graduate Degre	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	Behavior Analysis, yes	Live alone	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Yes, car	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
8	Grant	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	University Degre	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	Account executive, sales, yes	Live with romantic partner	No	Other	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
9	Hakeem	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$100,000 +	Sr. Educational Technologist, yes	Live with romantic partner	Yes	Single-room occi	No	No	Yes	Yes	Maybe
10	Isaac	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	Less than \$30,0C	IT (in training / unemployed), N/A	Live with parents or siblings	Yes	Shelter	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
11	Jamal	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	Less than \$30,0C	Cook, not currently employed	In jail	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Khalil	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Hair stylist/ Master barber, yes	Live with uncle, aunt, or grand	Yes	Other	No	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
13	Rashaad	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Custodian, yes	Live with romantic partner	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
14	Trey	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	University Degre	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	Youth services, yes	Lives alone to some degree, bi	No	Other	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
15	Ulrick	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	(Campaign) Organizing Director & Pastor, y	Live with romantic partner	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Maybe	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes
16	Marcus	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Community organizer, yes	Live with friends	Yes	Shelter	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
17	Wesley	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	Less than \$30,0C	Valet, IT in training (has untaxed tips)	lives with former romantic par	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
18	Xavion	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	University Degre	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Recent college graduate, yes to paying tax	Live alone	Yes	Single-room occi	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	No
19	Vince	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	University Degre	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Technical director, yes	Live alone	Maybe	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
20	Allen	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Retail employee	Live with parents or siblings	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Yes, missed a tra	Yes	Yes	No	No
21	Zaire	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$50,000 - \$75,0C	Technical director, yes	Live alone	Yes	Other	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
22	Lamonte	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	High school	Less than \$30,0C	Retail employee	Staying with friend's family	Yes	Other	Slept in car	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
23	Orion	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	High school	Less than \$30,0C	Life guard and other jobs	Staying with friend's family	Yes	Live-in hotel / Lo	Slept in car	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Patrick	Male	Black/ African-Ai	18 - 29 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Security Guard	Live alone	Yes	Other	Slept in car	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
25	Sam	Male	Black/ African-Ai	30 - 49 years old	Some college	\$30,000 - \$50,0C	Cook	Live with romantic partner	Yes	Yes	Slept in car	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Yes

## ## 7.30 Keyword Analysis Table (Partial - 3 Research Participants)

New Name	Keywords / themes	Sentence	# of Mentions
Allen	Parenthood / fatherhood/ children / family	My father actually approached me. The entire family noticed that I was in rough shape. They were concerned. I had to get it off my chest. I confessed everything to my father. The drinking and smoking. Losing all of my friends. The depression and the guilt.	Parent = (to) Father = 1 Child/ren= 1(my) daughter = 4(our) family = 1
	Drugs/ Alcohol/ Smoking / Weed/ Marijuana	But as muslims, we can't drink or do drugs. We can't do anything that takes your spirit out of your body. Anyway, when I turned 18, I got into a fight with my parents, my dad really. Mom was always understanding, you know. I had been testing the limits with my dad for a while. I was going out. I was drinking and smoking. More smoking than drinking. I	Drugs= 1 Smoking = 7 Weed = 2Marijuana = 0 Alcohol = 1(being) Drunk = 0

	never really liked how drinking made me feel.	
Airbnb/ Long-term hotel / boarding house	I had a retail job. One of my co-workers told me about airbnbs. I moved into an airbnb with him. We shared a room for months. I was able to get a second retail job. I made enough money to afford my own airbnb room. My friend found a place for me.	Airbnb = 3 Hotel = 0 Boarding house = 0
Religion/ Muslim / Christian / Prayer / Church / Mosque	Don't judge me! I come from a strict muslim household. Black muslims. My grandparents converted two generations ago. We're definitely from here.	Muslim = 5 Islam = 1 Prayer = 0 Mosque = 0
Romantic partners / sex / slept together / girls / women / girlfriend / wife / marriage/ married	One night, my housemate had his 'girlfriend' over for a party. This "friend" was cheating on her and mistreating her. We became really cool, his girlfriend and me. I was trying to be good. I wasn't drinking or anything.	Girls = 2 Girlfriend = 2 Sleeping together = 1 Proposed = 1 Married = 1
Staying / living / passed through / passed out/ spent the night / chilled / crashed	The baby could have been mine. I'm not gonna lie, I couldn't keep a job. I was staying here and there -- family, cousins, old high school friends.	Staying = 3 Living = 4 Passed out / pass through = 0 Spent the night = 0 Chilled = 0 Crashed = 0
Family / parents / siblings, brother, sister, cousin, aunt/ uncle / grandma / grandmother / grandpa / grandfather	One of my university friends, another muslim kid, let me stay with him. He lived in the projects. His parents had gone back to Africa for an extended visit with the family. They left him in charge of the household.	Family = 7/ parents = 4 / siblings = 0, brother = 1, sister = 1, cousin = 1, aunt = 0 / uncle = 0 / grandma = 1 / grandmother = 0 / grandpa = 0/ grandfather = 1

	Roommates / lived with / stayed with	I was still in school and I got a job working retail. I saved enough money to move out for real. I moved in with roommates. I got into a routine. School, work, home. Every now and again, my friend would throw a party and I would go.	Roommates = 2 / lived = 3 / lived with = 1 / stayed with = 0
	University / college / undergrad / freshman/ school	This was my lowest point. I stopped hanging out with all of my old friends. I stopped going out to parties and things. I stopped going to university. I lost everything in my life.	University = 2 / college = 1 / undergrad = 0 / freshman = 1 / school = 6
	Eviction / evicted	N/A	Eviction / evicted = 0
	PO Boxes / Post Office Box	N/A	PO Box / Post office box = 0
	Basement / Cellar	I was in bad shape at that time. I moved into a basement apartment with two roommates. I didn't really know them. I dropped out of school at that time. I started working as an uber driver.	Basement = 1 / Cellar = 0
	Incarceration / Criminal Justice System / Jail/ Prison / locked up	N/A	Incarceration = 0 / Criminal Justice System = 0 / Jail = 0 / Prison = 0/ locked up = 0
	Housing / Housing Authority/ Public housing/ housing / the projects	... let me stay with him. He lived in the projects. His parents had gone back to Africa for an extended visit with the family.	Housing = 0/ Housing Authority =0/ Public housing = 0/ the projects = 1
	Section 8 voucher	N/A	Section 8 voucher = 0
	Rough sleeping / squatter/ homeless /	N/A	Rough sleeping = 0 / squatter = 0/ homeless = 0

	car / car sleeping or sleeping in car	I started working as an uber driver. I had gotten a car from Uber. Which was a rip off. The Uber car required that he drive a certain amount of hours in order to keep the car. Between the gas payments and the maintenance, I couldn't keep up payments. I was also working as a bouncer at a nightclub. I lost that job because I was too nice, too friendly. I lost the car, which was a significant portion of my income.	car = 4/ car sleeping =0 or sleeping in car = 0
	Inclusionary / inclusionary housing	N/A	Inclusionary = 0 / inclusionary housing = 0
	SRO / Single room occupancy unit	N/A	SRO / Single room occupancy unit = 0

	Parenthood / fatherhood/ children / family	N/A	Parenthood = 0/ fatherhood = 0/ children = 0/ family = 0
	Drugs/ Alcohol/ Smoking / Weed/ Marijuana	N/A	Drugs = 0/ Alcohol =0 / Smoking =0 / Weed =0 / Marijuana =0
	Airbnb/ Long-term hotel / boarding house	The airbnb had everything I needed. I brought my clothes, my bike, and my computer. I'm on Tinder, I mostly meet up with people at their places, not mine.	Airbnb = 8/ Long-term hotel = 0/ boarding house =0
	Religion/ Muslim / Christian / Prayer / Church / Mosque	N/A	Religion = 0/ Muslim = 0 / Christian = 0/ Prayer = 0/ Church = 0 / Mosque = 0
	Romantic partners / sex / slept together / girls / women / girlfriend / wife / marriage/ married	I had a girlfriend at the time. She had been going through a similar thing. So she decided to move out of state. I decided to go with her.	Romantic partners =0 / sex = 0 / slept together = 0/ girls =0 / women = 0/ girlfriend = 1/ wife =0 / marriage =0/ married =0

Staying / living / passed through / passed out/ spent the night / chilled / crashed	When we got there, we were staying with some of her relatives, while we were looking for a place together.	Staying =3 / living = 1 / passed through = 0/ passed out = 0/ spent the night= 0/ chilled = 0/ crashed = 0
Family / parents / siblings, brother, sister, cousin, aunt/ uncle / grandma / grandmother / grandpa / grandfather/ relative	My family got evicted from our apartment in Boston. Everyone decided to move out of state, everyone--- including my parents.	Family = 1 / parents 1 / siblings = 0, brother =0, sister = 0, cousin = 0, aunt =1/ uncle = 0 / grandma = 0/ grandmother =0 / grandpa=0 / grandfather=0/ relative =1
Roommates / lived with / stayed with	N/A	Roommates =0/ lived with = 0/ stayed with= 0
University / college / undergrad / freshman/ school	I had just started university, so I decided to stay. I moved in with a friend. He lived on the Orange line. It was great because I could get to school and work.	University=1 / college =1 / undergrad =0 / freshman =0/ school=3
Eviction / evicted	My family got evicted from our apartment in Boston.	Eviction =0/ evicted=1
PO Boxes / Post Office Box	N/A	PO Boxes =0 / Post Office Box=0
Basement / Cellar	The house has an unfinished basement where there are three 'bedrooms' that the landlord rents out on Airbnb.	Basement =1 / Cellar=0
Incarceration / Criminal Justice System / Jail/ Prison / locked up	N/A	Incarceration =0 / Criminal Justice System=0 / Jail =0 / Prison =0 / locked up =0
Housing / Housing Authority/ Public housing/ housing / the projects	N/A	Housing =0 / Housing Authority=0/ Public housing=0/ housing =0 / the projects =0
Section 8 voucher	N/A	Section 8 voucher =0
Rough sleeping / squatter/ homeless /	She didn't ask me to move in there, but better me than squatters. I had the keys and everything.	Rough sleeping =0 / squatter =1/ homeless /
car / car sleeping or sleeping in car	N/A	car =0 / car sleeping or sleeping in car =0
Inclusionary /	N/A	Inclusionary =0/

	inclusionary housing		inclusionary housing =0
	SRO / Single room occupancy unit	N/A	SRO / Single room occupancy unit = 0

	Parenthood / fatherhood/ children / family/ daughter / son	I was a “neglected child,” according to the Department for Children and Families.	Parenthood =0 / fatherhood =0/ children =1 / family
	Drugs/ Alcohol/ Smoking / Weed/ Marijuana	I’m pretty sure the folks downstairs were on drugs or selling drugs. I had nothing to do with the people downstairs.	Drugs = 2/ Alcohol =0/ Smoking = 0/ Weed =0/ Marijuana =0
	Airbnb/ Long-term hotel / boarding house	N/A	Airbnb =0/ Long-term hotel =0 / boarding house = 0
	Religion/ Muslim / Christian / Prayer / Church / Mosque	In early 2008, through a church friend of my girlfriend’s mother, I found a room in a semi finished basement.	Religion =0/ Muslim =0 / Christian =0 / Prayer =0/ Church =1/ Mosque =0
	Romantic partners / sex / slept together / girls / women / girlfriend / wife / marriage/ married	My girlfriend’s mother introduced me to a guy who had an apartment. I moved in there. But let me tell you, this place was not fit for living.	Romantic partners =0 / sex = 0/ slept together=0 / girls =0/ women =0/ girlfriend=5 / boyfriend=0/ husband=0/ wife =0/ marriage=0/ married=0
	Staying / living / passed through / passed out/ spent the night / chilled / crashed	I ended up staying with my girlfriend a bunch during that time. She had been living with her mother in another city.	Stay = 3 / living =5 / passed through =0 / passed out=0/ spent the night =0/ chilled =0/ crashed=0
	Family / parents /mother/ father/ siblings, brother, sister, cousin, aunt/ uncle / grandma / grandmother / grandpa / grandfather	I found out some crazy shit at that time. You know my mother had used my name on bills and didn’t pay them. Not only did I screw myself up, but my mom screwed with me.	Family =3 / parents = 0 /mother =5/ mom = 1 / father =0 /siblings =0, brother =0, sister =0, cousin =0, aunt=0/ uncle=0 / grandma =0 / grandmother =0/ grandpa =0/ grandfather=0
	Roommates / lived with / stayed with	No roommates, it was a one bedroom. But it was well outside the city, about 45 minutes away. I loved it!	Roommates =1 / lived with = 0/ stayed with= 1

	University / college / undergrad / freshman/ school	During this time, I went back to school, but not community college. Some friend's told me about these training programs. I did a bunch of bootcamps and apprenticeship programs. I got a work placement.	University =0/ college =3 / undergrad =0/ freshman = 0/ sophomore =0/ junior =0/ senior=0/ school =3
	Eviction / evicted	I've been evicted from public housing.	Eviction / evicted =1
	PO Boxes / Post Office Box	N/A	PO Boxes / Post Office Box =0
	Basement / Cellar	The basement had a full bathroom with a nice shower. There was a little kitchenette, with a microwave, a sink, and a hot cooktop.	Basement =3 / Cellar =0
	Incarceration / Criminal Justice System / Jail/ Prison / locked up	N/A	Incarceration =0 / Criminal Justice System =0 / Jail =0/ Prison = 0/ locked up =0
	Housing / Housing Authority/ Public housing/ housing / the projects	I've been evicted from public housing. I've been homeless.	Housing Authority =0/ Public housing =1/ the projects =0
	Section 8 voucher	N/A	Section 8 voucher =0
	Rough sleeping / squatter/ homeless /	I've been homeless. I've been a squatter.	Rough sleeping =0/ squatter=1/ homeless =1
	car / car sleeping or sleeping in car	N/A	car / car sleeping or sleeping in car =0
	Inclusionary / inclusionary housing	N/A	Inclusionary / inclusionary housing = 0
	SRO / Single room occupancy unit	N/A	SRO / Single room occupancy unit = 0

## ## 7.31 Network Analysis Table

Participant Name	Network Analysis Categories	Tier 2 Category - Institutions	Tier 3 Category	Relational Ties	Biological Sex	Race - if known	Race of Actor - if known	
Allen	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
Allen	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
Allen	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
Allen	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
Allen	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
Allen	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			African-descended		
Allen	Co-member	Religious Network	General			African-descended		
Benji	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
Benji	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
Benji	Co-member	Religious Network	General			African-descended		
Carl	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
Carl	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
Carl	Kin	Relative	Aunt	Aunt	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
Damien	Kin	Relative	Grandmother	Grandmother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
Damien	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
Damien	Other	Romantic Partner	Mother of	Mother of romantic partner	Female	European-descended	European-descended	



<b>Damien</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Damien</b>	Co-member	High School	General			Diverse		
<b>Eric</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Eric</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Eric</b>	Other	Romantic Partner	Mother of	Mother of Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Eric</b>	Other	Roommate	Female	Roommate	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Eric</b>	Neighbor	Community	General			African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Felix</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Felix</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Felix</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Felix</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Felix</b>	Neighbor	Community	General			African-descended		
<b>Grant</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	
<b>Grant</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Grant</b>	Neighbor	Community	General			Diverse		
<b>Grant</b>	Co-member	High School	General			Diverse		
<b>Grant</b>	Co-member	University	General			Diverse		

<b>Hakeem</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Kin	Child	Male	Child	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Other	Romantic Partner	Grandmother	Grandmother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Other	Roommate	Male	Male Roommate	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Other	Roommate	Female	Female Roommate	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Other	Roommate	Male	Male Roommate	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Hakeem</b>	Neighbor	Community	General			Diverse		
<b>Isaac</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Isaac</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Isaac</b>	Kin	Relative	Sister	Sister	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Isaac</b>	Neighbor	Community	General			Diverse		
<b>Isaac</b>	Co-member	High School	General			African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Female	Platonic Friend	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Mother of	Mother of Platonic Friend	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Female	Platonic Friend	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Co-worker	Employer	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Jamal</b>	Co-member	High School	General			African-descended		
<b>Khalil</b>	Kin	Relative	Sister	Sister	Female	African-descended	African-descended	


<b>Khalil</b>	Kin	Relative	Uncle	Uncle	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Khalil</b>	Kin	Relative	Cousin	Cousin	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Khalil</b>	Other	Roommat e	Male	Roommat e	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Khalil</b>	Neighbor	Communi ty	General			African-de scended		
<b>Lamonte</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Lamonte</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Lamonte</b>	Other	Platonic Friend	Mother of	Mother of Platonic Friend	Female	European -descend ed	European- descended	
<b>Lamonte</b>	Co-memb er	High School	General			African-de scended		
<b>Marcus</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Marcus</b>	Other	Roommat e	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	European -descend ed	European- descended	
<b>Marcus</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Marcus</b>	Neighbor	Communi ty	General			Diverse		
<b>Nasir</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Nasir</b>	Kin	Relative	Brother	Brother	Male	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Nasir</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Female	Female	European -descend ed	European- descended	
<b>Nasir</b>	Other	Landlord	Male	Landlord	Male	Asian-des cended	Asian-des cended	
<b>Orion</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Orion</b>	Kin	Relative	Grandmo ther	Grandmo ther	Female	African-d escended	African-de scended	
<b>Orion</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	European -descend ed	European- descended	

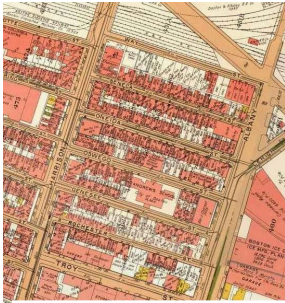
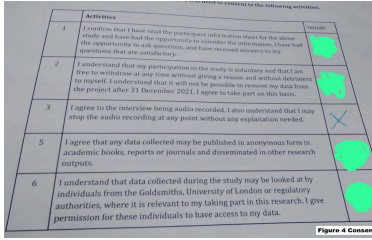
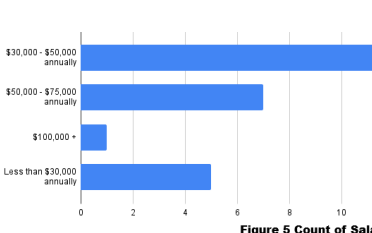
<b>Orion</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Orion</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	
<b>Orion</b>	Other	Platonic Friend	Mother of	Mother of Platonic Friend	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Patrick</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Patrick</b>	Co-member	High School	Teacher	Teacher	Female	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	Mixed Race: African and European-descended	
<b>Quintin</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Platonic Friend	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Quintin</b>	Kin	Relative	Grandmother	Grandmother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Quintin</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Quintin</b>	Kin	Relative	Cousin	Cousin	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Quintin</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			African-descended		
<b>Rashaad</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Rashaad</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Rashaad</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Rashaad</b>	Co-member	University	General			Diverse		
<b>Sam</b>	Kin	Relative	Grandmother	Grandmother	Female	Latinx	Latinx	

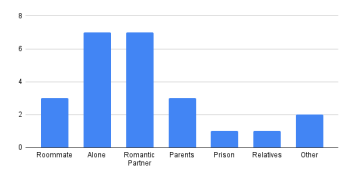
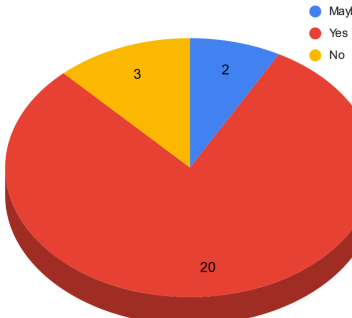
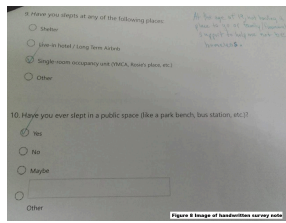
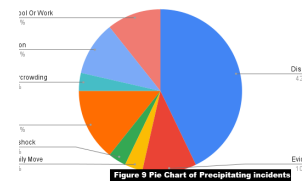
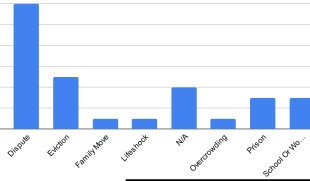
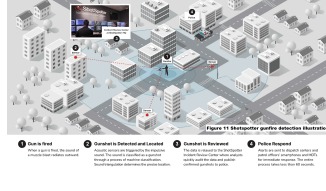

<b>Sam</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Sam</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	Latinx	Latinx	
<b>Sam</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	Latinx	Latinx	
<b>Sam</b>	Co-member	High School	General			Diverse		
<b>Trey</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Trey</b>	Other	Roommate	Male	Roommate	Male	European-descended	European-descended	
<b>Trey</b>	Co-member	High School	General			Diverse		
<b>Trey</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			Diverse		
<b>Ulrick</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Ulrick</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Ulrick</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Female	Romantic Partner	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Ulrick</b>	Co-member	Religious Network	General			African-descended		
<b>Ulrick</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			Diverse		
<b>Vince</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Vince</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Vince</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Male	Romantic Partner	Male	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Vince</b>	Kin	Relative	Aunt	Aunt	Female	African-descended	African-descended	
<b>Vince</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			Diverse		
<b>Wesley</b>	Co-member	University	General			Diverse		
<b>Wesley</b>	Friend	Romantic Partner	Male	Romantic Partner	Male	African-descended	African-descended	

<b>Wesley</b>	Neighbor	Community	Contacts of Romantic Partner							
<b>Xavion</b>	Kin	Relative	Uncle	Uncle	Male	African-descended	African-descended			
<b>Xavion</b>	Friend	Friend	Female	Friend	Female	European-descended	European-descended			
<b>Xavion</b>	Co-member	High School	General			Diverse				
<b>Xavion</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			Diverse				
<b>Zaire</b>	Kin	Parent	Mother	Mother	Female	African-descended	African-descended			
<b>Zaire</b>	Kin	Parent	Father	Father	Male	African-descended	African-descended			
<b>Zaire</b>	Friend	Platonic Friend	Male	Platonic Friend	Male	European-descended	European-descended			
<b>Zaire</b>	Co-member	University	General			Diverse				
<b>Zaire</b>	Co-worker	Work Contact	General			Diverse				

## ## 7.32 List of Figures


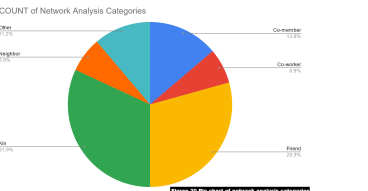
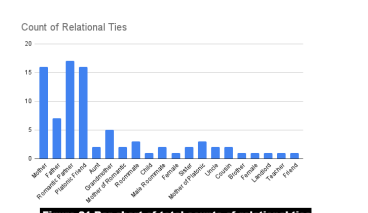
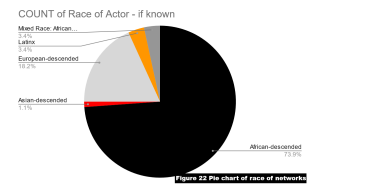
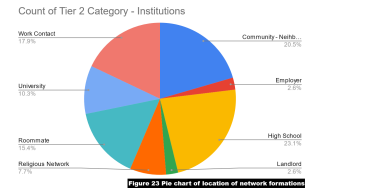
Figure	Label	Location	Description
 <p>Figure 1 Cambridge Public Housing artwork</p>	Figure 1: Cambridge Public Housing artwork	2. Literature Review 3. Housing Chapter 4.0.2. Public Housing in Cambridge	Artwork found in the CHA MTW Report FY22. The artist is Uzma Wahid, a deaf artist and a resident of Cambridge. Found at <a href="https://cambridge-housing.org/about/board-of-commissioners/">https://cambridge-housing.org/about/board-of-commissioners/</a> (April 2022).

 <p><b>Figure 2 Boston New York Streets Neighborhood circa 1960</b></p>	<p>Figure 2: Boston New York Streets Neighborhood circa 1960</p>	<p>##### 2. Literature Review 3. Housing Chapter 5.1.0.1. Slum Clearance and the Development of Section 8 Vouchers</p>	<p>New York Street Neighborhood of Boston, MA circa 1960 before slum clearance as described by Mel King.</p>												
<p><b>TABLE 1</b> Implicit Theorization of the Prevailing Typology of Homelessness</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Duration</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Frequency</th> <th>Short</th> <th>Long</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>High</td> <td>Episodic</td> <td>...<sup>a</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td>Transient</td> <td>Chronic</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><sup>a</sup>Not described in the typology.</p> <p><b>Figure 3 Table 1 - Implicit Theorization of the Prevailing Typology of Homelessness</b></p>	Duration			Frequency	Short	Long	High	Episodic	... <sup>a</sup>	Low	Transient	Chronic	<p>Figure 3: Table 1 - Implicit Theorization of the Prevailing Typology of Homelessness</p>	<p>### 2. Literature Review 4. Transience Chapter 2. Contact</p>	<p>Kuhn and Culhane (1998) Typology of Homelessness depicting frequency and duration of shelter use</p>
Duration															
Frequency	Short	Long													
High	Episodic	... <sup>a</sup>													
Low	Transient	Chronic													
 <p><b>Figure 4 Consent</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Activities</th> <th>Initials</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have received answers that are satisfactory.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project after 31 December 2021. I agree to take part on this basis.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 I agree to the interview being audio recorded. I also understand that I may stop the audio recording at any point without any explanation needed.</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals and disseminated in other research outputs.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the Goldsmiths, University of London or regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Activities	Initials	1 I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have received answers that are satisfactory.		2 I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project after 31 December 2021. I agree to take part on this basis.		3 I agree to the interview being audio recorded. I also understand that I may stop the audio recording at any point without any explanation needed.	X	5 I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals and disseminated in other research outputs.		6 I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the Goldsmiths, University of London or regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.		<p>Figure 4: Consent form</p>	<p>##### 3. Methodology 0.6.1.1. The Missing Participants</p>	<p>X'ed out audio recording in consent form.</p>
Activities	Initials														
1 I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have received answers that are satisfactory.															
2 I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project after 31 December 2021. I agree to take part on this basis.															
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 <p><b>Figure 5 Count of Salaries</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Salary Range</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$30,000 - \$50,000 annually</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$50,000 - \$75,000 annually</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$100,000 -</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than \$30,000 annually</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Salary Range	Count	\$30,000 - \$50,000 annually	10	\$50,000 - \$75,000 annually	7	\$100,000 -	1	Less than \$30,000 annually	5	<p>Figure 5: Count of Salaries</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 2.3. Employment</p>	<p>A graph of research participant salaries</p>		
Salary Range	Count														
\$30,000 - \$50,000 annually	10														
\$50,000 - \$75,000 annually	7														
\$100,000 -	1														
Less than \$30,000 annually	5														


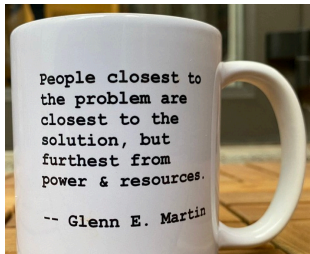
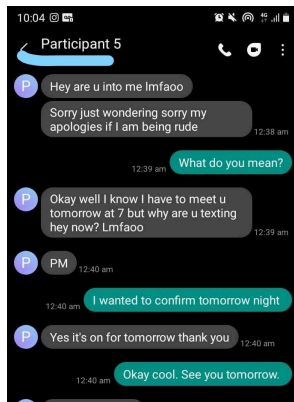
 <p>Figure 6 Count of Current Housing Situation</p>	<p>Figure 6: Count of Current Housing Situation</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.1. Current Housing Situation</p>	<p>Bar chart of survey responses to current housing situation</p>
 <p>Figure 7 Pie of Housing Transience</p>	<p>Figure 7: Pie of Housing Transience</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.2. Housing Transience</p>	<p>Pie chart of survey responses to "Have you ever been housing transient?"</p>
 <p>Figure 8 Image of handwritten survey note</p>	<p>Figure 8: Image of handwritten survey note</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.2. Housing Transience</p>	<p>Survey respondent note to contextualise response to survey question.</p>
 <p>Figure 9 Pie Chart of Precipitating Incidents</p>	<p>Figure 9: Pie Chart of Precipitating incidents</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.6. Precipitating Incidents and How They Figure</p>	<p>Pie chart of precipitating incidents</p>
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 <p>Figure 11 ShotSpotter gunfire detection illustration</p>	<p>Figure 11: ShotSpotter gunfire detection illustration</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.9. Technology and How It Figures</p>	<p>ShotSpotter gunfire detection illustration. This image was sourced from the ShotSpotter website (<a href="https://www.soundthink.com/">https://www.soundthink.com/</a>) in July 2023.</p>
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	type for Institutions	Live? 3.10. Government Entities and Non-profit Organisations and How They Figure	
<p>Figure 13 Pie Chart of Service Provided</p>	Figure 13: Pie Chart of Service Provided	#### 4. Findings 1. Where Black do Live? 3.10. Government Entities and Non-profit Organisations and How They Figure	Pie chart of uses of institutions through contact
<p>Figure 14 Pie chart of use of prison industrial complex</p>	Figure 14: Pie chart of use of prison industrial complex	#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.12. The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and How It Figures	Pie chart of mentions of prison, jail and/ or police in narratives.
<p>Figure 15 Image of co-construction correction</p>	Figure 15: Image of co-construction correction	#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.12. The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and How It Figures	Image of Jamal editing the narrative. Specifically correcting the shelter use from plural to singular.
<p>Figure 16 Number of people shot to death by police by race</p>	Figure 16: # of people shot to death by police by race	#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.12. The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and How It Figures	Number of people shot to death by police by race
<p>Figure 17 Pie chart of mentions of childhood sexual violence</p>	Figure 17: Pie chart of mentions of childhood sexual violence	#### 4. Findings 1. Where Do Black Men Live? 3.12. The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and How It Figures	Pie chart of mentions of childhood sexual violence among the 25 research participants

<p><b>FIGURE 1</b> Social Constructions and Political Power: Types of Target Populations</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2">Constructions</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th>Positive</th> <th>Negative</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Power</th> <th>Strong</th> <td> <b>Advantaged</b>  The elderly  Business  Veterans  Scientists </td> <td> <b>Contenders</b>  The rich  Big unions  Minorities  Cultural elites  Moral majority </td> </tr> <tr> <th>Weak</th> <td> <b>Dependents</b>  Children  Mothers  Disabled </td> <td> <b>Deviants</b>  Criminals  Drug addicts  Communists  Flag burners  Gangs </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Figure 18 Table of social constructions and political power types of Target populations</b></p>			Constructions				Positive	Negative	Power	Strong	<b>Advantaged</b> The elderly Business Veterans Scientists	<b>Contenders</b> The rich Big unions Minorities Cultural elites Moral majority	Weak	<b>Dependents</b> Children Mothers Disabled	<b>Deviants</b> Criminals Drug addicts Communists Flag burners Gangs	<p>Figure 18: Table of social constructions and political power: types of Target populations</p>	<p>#### 4. Findings 2. Burden on Community 6. Analysis of the CHJC Discussion</p>	<p>Table of social constructions and political power: types of Target populations from Schneider and Ingram (1993)</p>
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 <p><b>Figure 21 Bar chart of total counts of relational ties</b></p>	<p>Figure 21: Bar chart of total counts of relational ties</p>	<p>##### 4. Findings 3. Burden on Networks 4.1. What are the relational ties of the networks that house these men?</p>	<p>Bar chart of total counts of relational ties with sub-categories</p>															
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<p>COUNT of Biological Sex</p> <p>Figure 25 Pie chart of gender makeup of network members</p>	<p>Figure 25: Pie chart of gender makeup of network members</p>	<p>### 4. Findings 3. Burden on Networks 5. How gender figures in housing narratives</p>	<p>Pie chart of gender makeup of network members</p>
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# ## 7.33 Template Cambridge Health Authority (CHA) Lease Agreement

CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
LEASE 2014



362 Green Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 | P: 617.864.3020 F: 617.868.5372 | [www.cambridge-housing.org](http://www.cambridge-housing.org)



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<b>CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE</b>	

**INTRODUCTION**

This lease is entered into between the Cambridge Housing Authority and Tenant. The development will have a new Owner after conversion under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program of HUD. The new owner will be the successor in interest of the Cambridge Housing Authority and will assume the obligations of the Landlord under the lease. Cambridge Housing Authority is under a long-term contract with the new Owner and will continue to manage the development as the agent of the new Owner. The tenancy of the Tenant is not terminated or interrupted by virtue of the conversion of the property from public housing to RAD.

**SECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTIES AND THE LEASED PREMISES**

The Cambridge Housing Authority (referred to herein as CHA) leases to "Tenant" and household as composed below:

NAME OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD* (HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS TENANT)

\*The individual designated as head of household shall be responsible for decision-making that affects the household, including receipt of notices, requests for maintenance, and decisions in the event of relocation, or other action as required by the lease. Two adults may sign the lease as "co-heads" of the household, in which case, either adult is responsible as a Head of Household and is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the household.

The following persons, together with Tenant, are the members of Tenant's household (household members) authorized to occupy the leased premises with Tenant:

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

CHA leases the premises at:

ADDRESS	# OF BEDROOMS

DATE OF START OF LEASE	ANNIVERSARY DATE

The lease shall continue unless terminated in accordance with Section 12 (Termination or Voiding of Lease). The "anniversary date" is the first day of the month in which the Tenant first enters into a lease with CHA.



## SECTION 2: RENT

### A. Amount and Payment of Rent

Tenant shall pay the monthly rent of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in advance, on, or before the 1st day of each month beginning \_\_\_\_\_. Rent may include utilities as described in Section 3 (Utilities). Rent for any fraction of a month of occupancy at the beginning or end of the term will be charged on a pro rata basis. The monthly rent will remain in effect until a new monthly rent is determined and put into effect by CHA in accordance with Section 4 (Rent Redeterminations/Recertifications) of this lease.

The acceptance of rental payments by CHA shall not constitute a waiver of payment for any other amounts due or of any other past, present, or future obligation under this lease. Following termination of this lease, if Tenant fails to vacate forthwith, Tenant shall pay monthly in advance the fair value of use and occupancy but no less than an amount equivalent to the rent in effect at the time of termination. Payments for such use and occupancy shall be made in advance and shall continue until Tenant and household members vacate or are otherwise dispossessed.

### B. Security Deposit

CHA has received a Security Deposit in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ from the Tenant. This amount will be refunded to the Tenant within 30 days of the termination of tenancy, provided that no rent is owed and that the unit is left in good condition (excepting normal wear and tear). Interest on the Security Deposit will be paid by CHA to Tenant every year on the anniversary date of initial tenancy. All Security Deposits shall be deposited at Bank of America. Tenant is to provide CHA with a forwarding address to facilitate the return of Security Deposit.

### C. Nonpayment of Rent - Delinquency and Notice to Quit.

In the event that Tenant shall fail to pay all or any part of the rent within 7 days of its due date, CHA may declare the unpaid rent delinquent and issue a Notice to Quit. Prior to issuing said Notice, CHA shall provide the Tenant with an opportunity to discuss the reason for the late payment by sending the Tenant a Notice of Possible Lease Violation.

## SECTION 3: UTILITIES

UTILITY	CHA PAYS	TENANT PAYS	SPECIAL NOTES
HEAT & HOT WATER	[ ]	[ ]	
WATER & SEWER	[ ]	[ ]	
ELECTRICITY	[ ]	[ ]	
ELECTRICITY (STOVE)	[ ]	[ ]	
GAS (STOVE)	[ ]	[ ]	
AIR CONDITIONING	[ ]	[ ]	
OTHER	[ ]	[ ]	

## SECTION 4: RENT REDETERMINATIONS/RECERTIFICATIONS

### A. Regular Recertification

1. CHA shall re-determine the Tenant's rent, dwelling size and eligibility at least every 2 years, starting from the anniversary date, unless the lease or CHA Rent Policy provides for a different date for circumstances such as but not limited to recalculation of minimum rent.

2. The rent determination shall be made in accordance with CHA's Admission and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan as applicable, as it is amended from time to time by the Board of Commissioners.
3. CHA shall mail, at least 60 days but no more than 120 days prior to the beginning of the month that contains the anniversary, an information packet, reminding Tenant of the need to complete the annual redetermination process. Said packet shall contain wage and welfare verification forms to assist Tenant in gathering the information needed to complete the recertification.
4. It is anticipated that within 30 days of receiving this packet Tenant will have gathered the necessary information and meet with their manager so that the rent can be re-determined. It is anticipated Tenant will thus have 30 days notice of the new rent prior to its effective date. However, absent gross negligence by CHA or failure to mail the packet 60 days in advance, the new rent will become effective on the first rent payment day of the anniversary month, regardless of whether the recertification is completed before or after that date.
5. Tenant agrees to furnish CHA all information, verification of information, and certifications concerning present and anticipated household income and composition necessary to complete the recertification. Household income to be reported includes all types of income and benefits of each member of the household, including minors.
6. CHA shall give Tenant reasonable notice of what actions Tenant must take, and of the date by which any such action must be taken for compliance under this section. This information will be used by CHA to decide whether the amount of the rent should be changed, and whether the dwelling size is still appropriate for Tenant's needs. This determination will be made in accordance with CHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP), or Administrative Plan, as applicable. The Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) and Administrative Plan will be available in the manager's office of each development and posted on CHA website. A copy of the policies can be furnished on request without charge.
7. Tenant agrees to pay to CHA any rent which should have been paid and would have been billed but for (a) Tenant's misrepresentation or concealment of any information which should have been furnished to CHA in Tenant's application for housing or in any subsequent redetermination; (b) Tenant's failure to supply recertification information requested by CHA; (c) Tenant's failure to report an addition to the household; or (d) Tenant's failure to report any increase at any time required under the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP), or Administrative Plan as applicable. Tenant agrees to abide by CHA's rules for rapid and accurate rent redetermination.
8. Tax Credit Recertification. Tenant who lives in units that are part of or become part of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) ("Tax Credit Unit") are required to recertify their income and other eligibility factors, on an annual basis. Rent will be re-determined only every two years, in accordance with Paragraph (A)(1) above.
  - a. Tenant who occupies or will occupy a Tax Credit Unit who has recertified their income more than 60 days prior to the initial date that the unit becomes a Tax Credit Unit is required to recertify within the 60-day period.
  - b. Tenant who occupies or will occupy a Tax Credit Unit is required to sign a Lease Addendum for LIHTC Properties.
  - c. Failure to recertify for tax credit eligibility or sign a Lease Addendum for LIHTC Properties in a timely manner is grounds for termination of tenancy in accordance with Section 12 (Termination or Voiding of the Lease) of the Lease.

## **B. Interim Recertification**

Rent will not change during the period between biennial recertification except in the following circumstances:

1. Tenant-initiated Interim Recertification: Upon request, the Tenant may have their rent re-determined twice between scheduled biennial recertification. Seniors at least age 58 and/or disabled households have no limit on interim redeterminations.
  - a. If the Household has opted for an interim rent reduction, it must report the first increase to income and/ or decreased childcare or medical expenses – whatever previously caused the rent reduction – to CHA within 14 days of its occurrence. Failure to report such an increase within 14 days results in retroactive rent changes and possible lease termination.
  - b. CHA will process an interim decrease in rent only if the household's loss of income or increased childcare or medical costs is expected to last longer than 60 days except in cases of serious medical conditions expected to last longer than 30 days, and the loss of income must result in the household moving at least one band on the Rent Schedule.
2. CHA-initiated Interim Recertification: CHA may process an increase in rent between biennial recertification if:
  - a. There is a change in the circumstances that initially required an interim reduced rent; or
  - b. The Household is paying the minimum rent and receives new income, or the household has been paying minimum rent for 12 months and is required under Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP), or Administrative Plan, as applicable, to pay at the second or third income band on the rent schedule depending on development; or
  - c. The Household misrepresented or failed to report facts that CHA used or would have used to determine the household's rent, with the result that the household was paying less rent than it would have otherwise paid.
3. Rents may be changed between biennial recertification if rent formulas or procedures are changed by the Board of Commissioners or by applicable Federal law or regulation.
4. Rents may change if there are changes in family composition that add or decrease income to the family. Tenants must receive permission to add or delete any members to the household. This is not deemed to be an Interim Recertification.

## **C. Notice and Effective Dates of Interim Rent Adjustments**

1. When a tenant reports an income decrease and/or an increase in unreimbursed medical or childcare costs (as verified by CHA), the rent decrease will go into effect the first day of the month following verification of the change of income or unreimbursed medical or childcare expense.
2. Tenant showing good cause for delay in reporting a change will have their rent decreases go into effect the first month following the effective date of the verified change of income or unreimbursed medical or childcare expenses.
3. Rent increases (except those due to misrepresentation) require 30 days notice and become effective the first day of the month after the 30-day notice period.

4. Rent increases due to misrepresentation or failure to provide necessary documentation take effect the first of the month following the event that was misrepresented and income not reported.
5. Each notice of a re-determined rent shall be in writing and contain the following information:
  - a. The rental amount and the date when it will be effective;
  - b. The reason for the rent adjustment;
  - c. CHA's Hardship Policy;
  - d. The Rent Calculation Worksheet and household members and income (and, upon request, the verifications used for the rent calculation);
  - e. Tenant's right to, and the method of obtaining a hearing under the grievance procedure.

**D. Consequences of Nondisclosure or Misrepresentation of Income**

1. If the household has received an interim rent reduction, it must report the first increase in income and/or decreased childcare or medical expenses – whatever previously caused the rent reduction- to CHA within 14 days of its occurrence. Failure to report such an increase within 14 days results in retroactive rent changes and possible lease termination.
2. If Tenant misrepresents, fails to disclose, or fails to disclose in a timely manner pertinent information affecting the Tenant's net household income, Tenant shall pay to CHA any rent which should have been paid but for Tenant's misrepresentation or nondisclosure.
3. In addition to the amount owed due to non-disclosure or misrepresentation, Tenant must agree to pay CHA the higher of either a \$250 administrative fee or an additional 10% of the arrears that are due to the nondisclosure or misrepresentation of income.

**SECTION 5: OCCUPANCY AND USE OF LEASED PREMISES**

**A. Tenant and Household Members**

1. Tenant shall not use or permit use of the leased premises for any purpose other than as a private dwelling solely for Tenant and the other members of Tenant's household, who are listed in Section 1 (Description of the Parties and the Leased Premises) of this lease or who are listed on the most recent written lease addendum. Tenant shall not assign this lease and shall not sublet or transfer possession of the leased premises. Tenant shall not take in boarders or lodgers.
2. Tenant and each other household member must physically occupy the leased premises as his or her principal place of residence for at least 9 months during any 12-month period unless good cause is shown for a longer absence. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, short term hospitalization or rehabilitation, absence of a household member who is a full-time student or in military service, but does not include household members who are incarcerated. If Tenant or a household member without such cause shall fail to occupy the leased premises for the minimum of 9 months during any 12-month period, Tenant shall request that the manager remove such person from the lease within 30 days of the failure to occupy.

**B. Guests**

1. Tenant shall be responsible for the conduct of any guest while on CHA property in accordance with the lease. No guest may stay overnight for more than a total of 30 nights in any 12-month period. Tenant must notify management of any guest who stays more than 14

consecutive nights. Any stay beyond 30 nights in a 12-month period requires CHA's written approval. Tenant shall not accept any compensation from an overnight guest for his or her stay in the leased premises, and acceptance of such compensation shall be cause for termination of the Tenant's lease.

2. If a guest behaves in a manner which violates any of the obligations set out in Section 11 (Tenant's Obligations), among its remedies, without waiving its rights in Section 10 (Termination or Voiding of Lease) to terminate the lease, CHA may require that Tenant take steps to insure that the individual involved shall not be a guest of Tenant or of any household member again in the future. In addition, if a guest damages or destroys CHA property, among its remedies CHA may require that Tenant shall pay the cost of repair or replacement. CHA may bar resident's guests from the property in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 121B§32C.
3. After 14 consecutive nights, or upon request by the manager, Tenant shall notify CHA of the length of stay of an overnight guest. The tenant notice to CHA of an overnight guest (of more than 14 consecutive nights) shall be confidential. Provided that the guest has not been barred from the premises and has not committed lease violations during his or her stay, the notice shall only be used by CHA for enforcement of the foregoing provision as to the permissible stay of a guest in the leased premises.
4. In the instance of shared custody of children for less than 50% of time, and therefore not eligible to be added to the lease, CHA shall automatically provide an exception to the 30 day limitation on guests, with written approval of CHA, and subject to reasonable limitations based on occupancy standards.

#### **C. Live-in Aide**

1. In the event Tenant or a household member has a disability and as a consequence of that disability requires the services of a full-time, Live-in Aide, any such Live-in Aide shall be screened in the same manner as any other household member.
2. In addition to this screening, the proposed Live-In Aide must document the following:
  - a. The live-in aide is qualified to provide the needed care.
  - b. The live-in aide was not part of the household prior to receiving program assistance.
  - c. There is no other reason for the aide to reside in the unit (e.g. the individual can demonstrate they have a previous residence they left in good standing).
  - d. The aide and Tenant will maintain separate finances.
3. If the proposed Live-in Aide is found to be qualified, he or she may be assigned a bedroom, but will not be added to the lease. The Live-in Aide shall have no right to remain in the unit after the person cared for leaves or no longer requires the services of a Live-in Aide. If a Live-in Aide violates the standards of conduct required under Tenant's lease, Tenant must remove the Live-in Aide from the premises. Failure to remove the Live-in Aide under such circumstances shall be deemed a lease violation.

#### **D. Remaining Members of a Household**

1. If at any time, the head of household vacates the apartment for any reasons including, but not limited to divorce, separation or death, but not including vacating upon termination of a tenancy by CHA, the remaining household members will be notified by CHA that a remaining member of the household may apply to become the new Head of Household provided that:
  - a. Tenant is not transferring to public or assisted housing elsewhere at CHA and is not subject to eviction proceedings;
  - b. the remaining members of the household are eligible and qualified for applicable assisted housing and (excepting a newborn of a household member) have resided in the leased

consecutive nights. Any stay beyond 30 nights in a 12-month period requires CHA's written approval. Tenant shall not accept any compensation from an overnight guest for his or her stay in the leased premises, and acceptance of such compensation shall be cause for termination of the Tenant's lease.

2. If a guest behaves in a manner which violates any of the obligations set out in Section 11 (Tenant's Obligations), among its remedies, without waiving its rights in Section 10 (Termination or Voiding of Lease) to terminate the lease, CHA may require that Tenant take steps to insure that the individual involved shall not be a guest of Tenant or of any household member again in the future. In addition, if a guest damages or destroys CHA property, among its remedies CHA may require that Tenant shall pay the cost of repair or replacement. CHA may bar resident's guests from the property in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 121B§32C.
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  - a. Tenant is not transferring to public or assisted housing elsewhere at CHA and is not subject to eviction proceedings;
  - b. the remaining members of the household are eligible and qualified for applicable assisted housing and (excepting a newborn of a household member) have resided in the leased

premises for at least 2 years or since the admission of the household, if less than 2 years, and;

- c. at least one adult member (or emancipated minor member) of the household or an approved guardian if the remaining members of the household are under age, applies for and signs a new lease with CHA, and agrees to pay any arrears owed to CHA by the prior head of household.
2. In the event that any such remaining members of Tenant's household are approved for continued occupancy, if the size of the leased premises is no longer appropriate for the household, such remaining members shall transfer to a smaller unit if and when offered by CHA.
3. In the event of divorce or separation between household members, one of whom is Tenant, or entry of a protective order for one household member against another, a Massachusetts court with jurisdiction may determine who shall be eligible for continued occupancy, and if those persons do not include Tenant named in this lease, Tenant shall vacate the leased premises, if he or she has not already done so, and the remaining family members shall qualify for continued occupancy in accordance with this Section.

**E. Other Legal Use of the Leased Premises**

1. With CHA prior written approval, Tenant and household members may engage in legal profit-making activities that are incidental to the primary use of the unit as a private dwelling if proof of suitable general liability insurance coverage is provided insofar as CHA shall deem it necessary, and if the activities will: (a) not be likely to cause any disturbance or inconvenience to neighbors; (b) comply with any applicable zoning and any applicable federal, state or local licensing requirements; (c) not significantly increase utility or water consumption (unless Tenant separately pays for utilities); (d) not result in any other additional expense to CHA, and (e) if Tenant signs an agreement that holds CHA harmless from all risks associated with the profit making activity. At any time CHA may withdraw permission if any of these conditions are violated.
2. In family developments only, Tenant may use the premises to provide daycare services if, in addition to the requirements listed in the previous paragraph, written permission is obtained from CHA. Said permission is to be granted only if: (a) the tenancy is in good standing as defined in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan; and (b) Tenant obtains and keeps current a license for such purpose from the Office for Children or its successor agency or Department.

**F. Appropriate Unit Size: Maximum Persons**

1. Generally 2 people are expected to share a bedroom.
2. Children of the same sex, 18 years of age and below, whose birth dates are more than 10 years apart, will not be required to share a bedroom.
3. Children of opposite sexes will not be required to share a bedroom.
4. Adults (18 and over) who are spouses are required to share a bedroom.
5. Adults (18 and over) who are co-heads are not required to share a bedroom, but may do so at their request.
6. Adults (18 and over) who are neither spouses nor co-heads are not required to share a bedroom although they may do so at their request.
7. A single head of household parent will not be required to share a bedroom with his/her child, although they may do so at their request.
8. An unborn child will not be counted as a household member in determining apartment size.
9. Apartment size will be determined by the household members present (including custody arrangements) at the time of application with exception made for household members

premises for at least 2 years or since the admission of the household, if less than 2 years, and;

- c. at least one adult member (or emancipated minor member) of the household or an approved guardian if the remaining members of the household are under age, applies for and signs a new lease with CHA, and agrees to pay any arrears owed to CHA by the prior head of household.
2. In the event that any such remaining members of Tenant's household are approved for continued occupancy, if the size of the leased premises is no longer appropriate for the household, such remaining members shall transfer to a smaller unit if and when offered by CHA.
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9. Apartment size will be determined by the household members present (including custody arrangements) at the time of application with exception made for household members



temporarily away for school or military service or children in temporary custody of an agency, provided that there is expected reunification within 12 month period.

10. In cases of joint legal or physical custody, the household will be awarded a bedroom only if, over the past 12 months, the child has spent more than 50% of their time living with the household, or other reasonable evidence of a change in custody.
11. A live-in aide may be assigned a bedroom but will not be added to the lease. Single elderly or disabled households with live-in aides will be assigned a 1 or 2 bedroom apartment.
12. CHA does not permit a live-in aide's household members to reside in the apartment.
13. Foster children or foster adults who are listed on the application or lease will be housed in accordance with the guidelines above.
14. One-bedroom apartments in designated elderly/disabled properties will be to: leased (a) couples or single persons with live-in aides, (b) single person households.
15. Occupancy standards are subject to the State Sanitary Code.
16. Living rooms may be used as a bedroom at a household's discretion, subject to the State Sanitary Code.

#### **SECTION 6: DELETION OF A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER DUE TO CONDUCT**

1. Tenant may delete a household member named in Section 1 (Description of the Parties and the Leased Premises) of this lease or in a lease addendum by a written lease addendum signed by Tenant and CHA. The Head of Household must provide documentation of the new address of the deleted household member or other documentation as contained in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, as applicable.
2. In the event that the conduct of a household member is such as to constitute cause for termination of the lease under Section 12 (Termination or Voiding of Lease), but CHA in its sole discretion determines that eviction of Tenant is not required so long as the misbehaving household member ceases occupancy in the leased premises, CHA may request that Tenant delete the household member as a person authorized to live in the leased premises. A request by CHA for deletion shall specify the reason why deletion is requested.
3. Notwithstanding a request to delete a household member, CHA may issue a Notice of Possible Lease Violation on account of the same conduct of the household member about which a request for deletion is made, and such request will not constitute a waiver of the right to proceed with the eviction. In the event a household member has been deleted at the request of CHA, Tenant shall not permit such person to be a guest thereafter unless agreed to in writing and at CHA's sole discretion.

#### **SECTION 7: ADDITIONS AND OTHER DELETIONS OF A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER TO LEASE**

##### **A. Approval of an Additional Member Required Prior to Occupancy**

1. Only persons listed on the most recent certification form and lease, or added in accordance with CHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, as applicable, shall be permitted to occupy an apartment.
2. Households cannot add a new household member if they have been notified that they are at or near the top of the transfer list for a smaller apartment, unless the addition of the new household member would not result in a change in bedroom size. Exceptions are permitted to meet Reasonable Accommodation requests. No household members may be added to the household for one year after initial admission except by birth or adoption, or as otherwise provided by the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan,

as applicable. No household member who has been removed from the lease may be added to the household for a one-year period from the date of removal from the lease.

3. Households that permit unauthorized individuals to occupy their apartments are subject to lease termination and eviction.

#### **B. Interim Changes in Household Composition**

1. All changes in household composition must be reported within 30 days of the change. These changes include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Someone listed on the lease is permanently vacating the apartment; or
  - b. Birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child to someone listed on the lease.
2. Additions of the following household member types or live-in aides must be requested in writing and require written permission from the property manager before the potential household member or live-in aide can move into the apartment: Adult household member (including a new spouse); foster child or children; foster adult; Live-in Aide.
3. All adults wishing to be added to a household and Live-in Aides must be screened and cannot overcrowd the apartment in violation of CHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, as applicable, or the State Sanitary Code.
4. If deletion of a household member results in minimum rent, CHA will verify all household members' income, not just the loss of income due to the removal or departure of a household member.

### **SECTION 8: TRANSFERS**

#### **A. Transfer Policy**

CHA will consider any request for transfers in accordance with the transfer priorities and policies established in its Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan. Households must be in "good standing" as defined in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, (as applicable) to be eligible for a transfer. Exceptions to this policy may be made solely by the Executive Director or designee in the following circumstances:

- a. In "emergency" circumstances; or
- b. For other "mandatory" transfers where CHA has determined that it is in the agency's interest to proceed with the transfer.

#### **B. Transfers Due to Decreases in Household Size**

1. In the event that the size of Tenant's household decreases by one or more members and as a consequence the leased premises are no longer of appropriate unit size, upon availability of a smaller unit of appropriate unit size, CHA shall offer to lease such unit to Tenant who shall have 30 days within which to sign a new lease and to move to the unit of appropriate unit size.
2. Following expiration of 30 days, Tenant shall vacate the leased premises.
3. Additions to household composition after notification of transfer are governed by Section 7 (Additions to and Other Deletions of a Household Member to Lease) of this lease.

#### **C. Transfer Due to Increases in Household Size**

In the event that one or more household members are added to this lease as provided in Section 7 (Additions to and Other Deletions of a Household Member to Lease) and as a consequence the

appropriate unit size for the household increases, CHA shall approve an application to transfer the household to a larger unit of appropriate unit size upon availability provided that:

1. the tenant is in good standing; and
2. there are and have been no serious violations of the lease within the preceding 24 months, and
3. Tenant is not subject to eviction proceedings.

**D. Transfers for Modernization Work**

1. In the event modernization work is to be undertaken involving the leased premises, CHA shall give written notice about the work and offer to transfer Tenant's household to another unit of appropriate unit size upon availability. Upon notice of availability of such a unit, Tenant shall have 30 days within which to sign a lease and to move to the other unit. Unless otherwise required by law or a relocation plan, upon notification that the modernized unit is ready for occupancy, the tenant shall return to the modernized unit or to such other unit as may be designated in an approved relocation plan.

**E. Transfers From a Unit with Special Features**

1. A household that is housed in a unit with features for an individual with disabilities that are not required by any household member must transfer to a unit without such features should a Tenant with disabilities need the unit.

**SECTION 9: HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS**

**A. Report and Repair of Hazardous Conditions**

1. If, as a consequence of damage to the leased premises or the building of which it is part, conditions are created which are imminently hazardous to the life, health, or safety of the Tenant's household, Tenant shall immediately report the conditions to CHA. CHA shall make its best efforts to repair the damage within a reasonable time and shall prioritize such repairs in its repair schedule. If Tenant, other household member or guest caused the damage, the cost of repairs shall be charged to and paid by Tenant.

**B. Temporary Alternative Accommodations During Prolonged Repairs**

1. If such imminently hazardous conditions exist, CHA shall offer alternative temporary accommodations (with reasonable moving costs at CHA's expense) in an appropriately sized vacant unit, if available, in the event that repairs necessary to correct the hazardous conditions cannot be made within a reasonable time, provided that the damage was not caused by Tenant, other household member or guest. Tenant shall have the same obligations, including the same rental obligation, for these temporary accommodations as for the leased premises but shall move back to the leased premises forthwith upon notice that necessary repairs have been made.

**C. Abatement of Rent During Prolonged Repairs**

1. If such imminently hazardous conditions exist, CHA shall abate Tenant's rent for the leased premises by a percentage commensurate with the percentage loss in its value as a dwelling provided that:
  - a. repairs necessary to correct the hazardous conditions cannot be made within a reasonable time;
  - b. Tenant has not been notified that alternative temporary accommodations are available; and,
  - c. the damage was not caused by Tenant, other household member or guest.

## SECTION 10: CHA OBLIGATIONS

### CHA has the following obligations:

- A. Quiet Enjoyment:** To permit the Tenant to quietly and peaceably enjoy the apartment and to respect the Tenant's right to privacy.
- B. Condition of Leased Premises:** To deliver at initial occupancy and maintain the leased premises in decent, safe and sanitary condition in compliance with the requirements of applicable housing codes, building codes, and regulations of HUD.
- C. Heat:** To provide and maintain in good condition a heating system and to supply legally requisite heat during the period from September 15 through June 15 of each year.
- D. Hot Water:** To provide and maintain in good condition a hot water heater and to supply legally requisite hot water in sufficient quantity and pressure for ordinary use.
- E. Extermination:** To provide extermination services as necessary. Tenant may be charged for special extermination services required as a consequence of Tenant's failure to keep the leased premises in a clean and sanitary condition or failure to properly prepare the leased premises for scheduled extermination services.
- F. Maintenance of Structural Elements:** To maintain the structural elements of the building containing the leased premises.
- G. Maintenance of Common Areas:** To maintain the common areas of the building except as provided in Section 11 (Tenant Obligations) of the lease.
- H. Appliances:** To provide a stove and a refrigerator and additional appliances if any, in safe condition and working order at initial occupancy. CHA has no obligation to repair or replace any tenant-owned appliances. See Section 11(P) (Tenant's Obligations – Major Appliances and Heavy Items) below.
- I. Locks:**
1. To provide new door locks or re-keyed door lock cylinders at the beginning of the tenancy, and thereafter to re-key door lock cylinders within a reasonable time of Tenant's request and at Tenant's expense.
  2. To re-key locks promptly upon request of a household member on account of documented domestic violence and to waive charges for the cost where circumstances warrant.
- J. Notice of Tenant's Right to Grieve:** To notify Tenant in writing of the specific grounds for any proposed adverse action against Tenant by CHA and to notify Tenant of Tenant's right to request a grievance hearing and the process to be used in circumstances where the Tenant has a right to such a hearing if requested.
- K. Emergency Repairs:** To use best efforts to make emergency repairs or otherwise abate conditions which are imminently hazardous to the life, health or safety of Tenant or other household members within a reasonable time after receiving notice and to take other measures specified in Section 9 (Hazardous Conditions).
- L. Non-emergency Repairs:** To use best efforts to complete all reasonably required non-emergency repairs of the leased premises within a reasonable time after receiving notice.
- M. Confidentiality of Records:** To preserve the confidentiality of records of Tenant and other household members in accordance with and to the extent provided by applicable law.
- N. Respect of Tenant's Right to Join a Tenant Organization:** To respect Tenant's right to organize and/or join a tenant association and/or a tenant organization, and not to interfere with the tenant's rights to freedom of speech and association.

- O. Copies of Rules:** Notify Tenant of changes in pertinent rules, policies and regulations affecting the Tenant's tenancy and provide, after a request by Tenant, copies of any such rules, policies and regulations, provided that there may be a charge for such copies if the Tenant has previously been provided with the material.
- P. Schedule of Special Charges:** Schedules of special charges for services and repairs, which are incorporated in this lease by reference shall be publicly posted in a conspicuous manner in the development management office and shall be furnished to Tenant upon execution of this lease.
- Q. Prompt Redetermination of Rent:** To promptly re-determine rent at the time of biennial redetermination and at the time of any interim redetermination as provided in Section 4 (Rent Redetermination/Recertification) of this lease, and to promptly take appropriate steps to obtain verification of increases or decreases in income.
- R. Prompt Processing of Applications for Transfer:** To promptly process applications for transfer.
- S. Prompt Processing of Applications to Add a Household Member:** To promptly process applications which seek to add a household member and to determine the qualification of each such proposed household member.
- T. Prompt processing of Reasonable Accommodation Requests:** To promptly process requests for Reasonable Accommodation promptly in accordance with CHA's Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

## SECTION 11: TENANT OBLIGATIONS

The Tenant has the following obligations, which are material conditions of Tenant's tenancy:

- A. Payment of Rent:** To pay rent as provided in Section 2 (Rent) and Section 4 (A) (Regular Recertification).
- B. Payment for Utilities:** To pay the cost of any utilities specified in Section 3 (Utilities).
- C. Transfer:** To transfer to and execute a lease for a unit of appropriate unit size because of decreases in household size as provided in Section 8 (A)(Transfer Policy) to transfer to another unit when it is necessary because of modernization work as provided in Section 8(C)(Transfer Due to Increase in Household Size) or under any other circumstances set out in CHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP), or Administrative Plan, as applicable
- D. Proper Conduct on Housing Authority Property:** To conduct himself/herself, and to cause each other household member, any guest of the Tenant or of another household member or any person under the Tenant's control to conduct themselves in a peaceful manner and in a manner that 1) will not injure, endanger, harass or disturb other tenants, CHA employees, or other persons lawfully on CHA property; and 2) will be conducive to maintaining in all CHA developments in a decent, safe and sanitary condition.
- E. No Threats, Harassment or Nuisance:** To refrain from (and to cause each household member, and guest, to refrain from) unlawful threats or harassment directed against CHA officers or employees, other Tenant s and others lawfully on the leased premises or on CHA property. To refrain from creating or maintaining a nuisance (and to cause each household member and guest to create or maintain no nuisance) in the leased premises or on CHA property.
- F. No Criminal Activity:**
  - 1. To assure that no Tenant or member of Tenant's household engages in:
    - a. Any criminal activity, on or off the premises, that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other Tenants; or

- b. Any drug related criminal activity on or off the premises
- 2. To assure that no guest or other person under the Tenant's control engages in:
  - a. Any criminal activity, on or adjacent to the premises, that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of CHA's housing premises by other Tenants; or
  - b. Any drug related criminal activity on or adjacent to the premises;
- 3. To assure that no member of the household engages in an abuse or pattern of abuse of alcohol that affects the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other Tenants.
- 4. Any criminal activity that adversely affects or threatens to adversely affect the security of property owned by others, including CHA, its officers and employees, Tenants and others lawfully on the property or in its vicinity. Such criminal conduct shall also include but not be limited to the criminal conduct specified in M.G.L. c. 139 s. 19.

**G. No Disturbances or Loud Noise:**

- 1. To refrain from (and to cause each household member and guest to refrain from) making or creating loud noise or noises, which unreasonably disturb or are likely to unreasonably disturb neighbors, including CHA employees.
- 2. As part of this obligation, Tenant shall refrain (and shall cause each household member and guest to refrain) from playing televisions, radios, audio devices, musical instruments, and the like at a high volume which unreasonably disturbs or is likely to unreasonably disturb neighbors including CHA employees. Tenant shall refrain from and shall cause household members and guests to refrain from holding parties or group gatherings in the leased premises that unreasonably disturb or are likely to unreasonably disturb neighbors.
- 3. Tenant shall refrain from and shall cause household members and guests to refrain from making loud noise in common areas, roadways, parking areas or elsewhere on or in the vicinity of CHA property which unreasonably disturbs or is likely to unreasonably disturb neighbors, including but not limited to:
  - a. unnecessarily noisy operation of any motor vehicle including the operation of any motor vehicle without a working muffler,
  - b. unreasonably loud indoor or out-of-door parties or gatherings,
  - c. unreasonably loud or raucous individual behavior, and
  - d. other activities or behavior that create disturbance or unreasonably loud noise.
- 4. Tenant shall immediately take effective measures to bring his or her own behavior and the behavior of household members and guests into compliance with this subsection upon request of an officer or employee of CHA or any other person.

**H. Maintaining Clean and Sanitary Condition of Leased Premises:**

- 1. To keep (and to cause each household member and guest to keep) the leased premises in a clean and sanitary condition and promptly to remedy any lack of cleanliness or lack of sanitary condition. Tenant shall not create any condition that is likely to attract rodents or insects, including bedbugs, to cause offensive odors, or to endanger the health of any person. Tenant and household members shall comply with all applicable obligations imposed upon them by the State Sanitary Code
- 2. Pest Infestation: Tenant acknowledges that while CHA may be responsible for making reasonable provisions for the extermination of insects and rodents, the cooperation of the Tenant is required in order to successfully carry out pest control procedures. Tenant agrees to comply with instructions provided by CHA management in relation to Tenant's responsibility in

preparing for pest control treatments in Tenant's unit, and in avoiding practices that foster pest infestation.

3. With the exception of elderly or disabled tenants (where the sole household member or all adult household members are elderly or disabled), Tenant shall be responsible for cleaning the common hallways on a rotating basis with other tenants living in the doorway, in accordance with the rules and regulations of CHA. However, in family developments, the Tenant Council, in conjunction with CHA, may establish alternative methods of cleaning hallways and common ways.

**I. Disposal of Garbage and Trash:** To dispose (and to cause each household member and guest to dispose) of all garbage, trash and refuse properly in accordance with rules established by CHA and in compliance with City of Cambridge disposal and recycling requirements and other state and local law. Prior to disposal Tenant shall keep garbage, trash and refuse in secure bags in covered trash containers in a manner that will not attract rodents or insects or cause offensive odors.

**J. Maintaining Safe Condition of Leased Premises:**

1. To keep (and cause each household member and guest to keep) the leased premises in safe condition.
2. There shall be no storage of flammable liquids, gas, or charcoal or other hazardous substances in the leased premises or elsewhere on CHA property, unless such liquids or substances are normal household items and are properly stored.
3. No hazardous waste of any sort shall be stored in the leased premises, and the Tenant shall properly dispose of all hazardous waste, including used motor oil.
4. Unless the Tenant's leased premises include a space that is restricted to the exclusive use of the Tenant, such as a yard for the unit's exclusive use, no barbecue grills are permitted. Any use of a grill must comply with CHA's Resident Manual.

**K. Use and Care of Plumbing and Other Utility Services:**

1. To use (and to cause each household member and guest to use) the plumbing fixtures and plumbing and all other utility services properly and solely for their intended uses; not to dispose (and to cause each household member and guest not to dispose) of any oil, hazardous wastes, garbage (excepting garbage processed through a garbage disposal), or trash through the drains or the toilet.
2. Tenant, household members and guests shall not tamper with or attempt repairs to the wiring, gas lines or plumbing and shall not overload electrical circuits or extension cords. All lamps and electrical appliances belonging to Tenant or a household member shall be properly wired.
3. In the event electrical, gas or plumbing repairs to the leased premises shall be necessary; Tenant shall not attempt such repairs but shall immediately notify CHA about the need for repairs. Tenant, household members, and guests shall use any elevator and any common appliance properly.
4. To cooperate with CHA in any energy conservation, recycling, or other environmental initiatives.

**L. Damage:** To refrain from damaging (and to cause each household member and guest to refrain from damaging) the leased premises or any other property of CHA. In the event damage occurs Tenant shall promptly notify CHA about the damage and the cause of the damage.

**M. Payment for Damage:** To pay the cost of labor and materials reasonably necessary to repair or replace property of CHA lost, removed, damaged or destroyed by the negligence or the

intentional act of Tenant, other household member or guest; to pay all costs resulting from misuse of the plumbing or other utility service or from misuse of an elevator or a common appliance; and to make such payment within 30 days following Tenant's receipt of an itemized bill from CHA, which shall post a list of reasonable standard charges for repair of damage. If the charges are more than minimal, the Tenant may request and CHA agrees, to negotiate a payment plan to cover the charges.

**N. Pet Policy:**

1. Except for elderly/disabled developments, and except for comfort or service animals, not to keep any pets or other animals and not to permit pets or other animals to be kept in the leased premises or elsewhere on CHA property on a temporary or permanent basis, excepting reasonably quiet birds in cages or fish in tanks, without the written permission of CHA in accordance with its rules or policies.
2. Persons with comfort or service animals shall comply with CHA rules or policies, to the extent that such rules or policies do not limit or impair the rights of said persons.
3. Tenants shall not permit a guest or other visitor to bring an animal onto the premises (with the exception of assistance animals, and may not keep a pet belonging to another person on a temporary basis on the premises.

**O. Major Appliances and Heavy Items:**

1. Not to install or operate any major appliances (such as washers, dryers, air conditioners or freezers) or any heavy items (such as waterbeds) without the prior written approval of CHA in accordance with any applicable rules or policies. Tenants may not install their own appliances except for washers and dryers where appropriate hook-ups are available, and CHA has given written approval.
2. All tenant installations shall conform to CHA standards and requirements. CHA has the right but not the obligation to maintain and determine the placement of any tenant-owned appliance. The Tenant is responsible for any charges incurred by CHA for maintenance. Gas appliances must be installed only by a qualified licensed professional or by CHA plumbers or contractors. Tenant will reimburse CHA at cost for the cost of installation by a licensed CHA plumber or contractor.

**P. Rules, Policies and Regulations:** To comply with the rules and policies (and to cause each household member and each guest to comply with the rules and policies) established by CHA for the housing development of which the leased premises are a part.

**Q. Alterations to the Leased Premises:**

1. To make (and to cause each household member or guest to make) no alterations or additions to the interior of the leased premises including but not limited to painting or wallpapering, installation of wall-to-wall carpeting, floor or wall tile, or to the exterior of the building containing the leased premises or to the grounds without the prior written approval of CHA.
2. No satellite dishes may be installed unless otherwise provided by law, and in accordance with CHA standards.
3. An approved alteration or addition which cannot be removed without damage to the leased premises, building or grounds shall not be removed and shall become the property of CHA at the time when Tenant vacates, unless Tenant shall first have deposited with CHA sufficient funds to pay for any damage resulting from removal and shall have received the written consent of CHA to the removal.
4. Any wall installations, including but not limited to flat-screen TV's, require written approval.



- R. Guests:** To oversee and supervise the conduct of all guests of Tenant and other household members and to assure that they comply with the lease and rules of CHA and to permit overnight guests only in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Section 5 (B) (Guests).
- S. Use and Occupancy of the Leased Premises:** To use and occupy the leased premises only in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 5 (Occupancy and Use of Leased Premises).
- T. Vacating the Leased Premises:** To vacate promptly upon termination of the lease or transfer to another apartment within CHA within 5 days of receipt of keys to the new apartment, and to leave the leased premises clean, free of garbage and trash and in as good a condition as existed at the time of commencement of the lease or at the time of a subsequent modernization, normal wear and tear, excluded.
- U. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** To keep all smoke detectors and carbon dioxide detectors in the leased premises unobstructed at all times; not to tamper with or render inoperable any smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector, heat detector, sprinkler, or any part of a fire detection or fire prevention system on CHA property; and to notify CHA immediately of the malfunction or inoperability of any carbon monoxide or smoke detector in the leased premises.
- V. Access to the Leased Premises:** To permit access to the leased premises by CHA as provided in Section 15 (Access to the Leased Premises by CHA) of this lease, and not to replace, add or rekey any locks.
- W. Payment of Constable Costs and Court Filing Fees:** To pay the expenses incurred by CHA as a result of Tenant's breach of any term of this lease, including filing fees, constable costs, and moving and storage costs in eviction actions commenced on account of any such breach, provided that CHA has received a judgment for possession after trial, by default, or by agreement for judgment.
- X. Wage, Tax and Bank Match; Social Security Numbers:**
1. To participate and cause household members to participate in any wage, tax, and/or bank match system required by HUD and permissible under state and federal law and to provide upon request the information and authorizations necessary for such a wage, tax, and/or bank match.
  2. Subject to any applicable law, to provide and to cause each other household member to provide CHA with his or her social security number, or HUD-issued Alternative Identification numbers for household members who do not have Social Security numbers; and to authorize use of such numbers for use by CHA for verification of income and assets of the household through the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system, or other integrated tax, wage reporting, and bank match systems or similar means of verification.
- Y. No-Smoking Policy:** To comply with the provisions of the Smoke-Free Policy of CHA as set forth in the ACOP. See attached Smoke-Free Lease Addendum.
- Z. Condominium Unit:** For tenants occupying scattered-site units located in condominiums, to comply with the rules and regulations of the condominium association, and for tenants who are part of a special program operated in CHA assisted housing, to comply with house rules of the program, provided that, in both instances, CHA has provided the Tenant with a copy of such rules and/or regulations at or prior to the inception of the tenancy and a copy of any subsequent changes.

## SECTION 12: TERMINATION OR VOIDING OF LEASE

- A. Termination by Tenant:** Tenant may terminate this lease at any time by giving 30 days advance written notice to CHA, commencing on any day of the month.
- B. Voiding by CHA:** The lease and occupancy of the leased premises by Tenant and Tenant's household members may be annulled and made void by CHA for any of the reasons set out in M.G.L. c. 139 § 19. In the event that grounds shall exist for so voiding the lease and in the event CHA shall determine to use the procedure set out in M.G.L. c. 139 § 19, CHA shall give to Tenant a written notice of voiding lease, which shall state the reason for voiding the lease, prior to CHA seeking an injunction or execution for possession in court. There shall be no informal conference or grievance hearing required prior to the court proceeding, but CHA may elect to hold an informal conference.
- C. Termination by CHA:** Subject to the provisions of the Violence Against Women's Act ("VAWA") and CHA's VAWA policy, and also subject to the rights of a disabled tenant to a Reasonable Accommodation in accordance with the law and CHA Reasonable Accommodation policy, this lease and occupancy of the leased premises by Tenant and Tenant's household members may be terminated by CHA for serious or repeated violation of a material term of the lease or other good, including but not limited to:
1. Tenant's failure to make timely payment of rent in violation of Section 2 (Rent) and Section 4 (A) (Regular Recertification).
  2. Habitual or Persistent Late Payment of Rent. If a Tenant has fallen into arrears on rent and has received 4 or more Notices to Quit within a 12-month period which have subsequently been cured, or in the event the Tenant has fallen into arrears on rent and had two or more Summary Process cases for non-payment of rent entered within a 12-month period which were subsequently cured.
  3. Serious or repeated breach or violation by Tenant or a household member of any material terms of the occupancy obligations and restrictions set out in Sections 5 (Occupancy and Use of Leased Premises) and Section 11 (Tenant's Obligations) of this lease, or other good cause.
  4. Criminal conduct, threats, harassment, or nuisance by Tenant or a household member, on or off CHA property, in violation of Section 11 (E) (No Threats, Harassment or Nuisance). This criminal conduct includes but is not limited to the criminal conduct described in M.G.L. c. 139 s. 19.
  5. Commission of a serious crime involving violence against another person by Tenant, or a household member, on or off of CHA property, at any time while the lease is in effect, in violation of Section 11 (F) (No Criminal Activity).
  6. The conduct of a guest or other person under Tenant's control, if the conduct on or adjacent to CHA property violates the provisions of this lease and the conduct would be grounds for termination of the lease if committed by Tenant.
  7. Methamphetamine conviction. CHA must immediately terminate the tenancy if CHA determines that any member of the household has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.
  8. Fugitive felon or parole violator. CHA may terminate the tenancy if a tenant is fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for a crime, or attempt to commit a crime, that is a felony under the laws of the place from which the individual flees, or that, in the case of the State of New Jersey, is a high misdemeanor; or violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.

9. In the event that Tenant has knowledge of a court order barring a person from the leased premises or from CHA property, or in the event a household member has been deleted from the lease by Tenant at the request of CHA, the Tenant's failure to take all necessary steps to exclude the person from the leased premises
10. Assets that exceed the maximum allowable for a household pursuant to the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, as applicable.
11. Failure by the Tenant or a household member to supply complete and accurate information necessary for a rent determination or for a determination of eligibility for continued occupancy.
12. Failure by Tenant or a household member to give requisite authorization for verification of eligibility, income, employment and household composition. Failure to provide a social security number or Alternative Identification number as required in Section 11(X)(2.) (Wage, Tax and Bank Match; Social Security Numbers), or to participate in a wage, tax or bank match as required in Section 11(X)(1.) (Wage, Tax and Bank Match; Social Security Numbers)
13. Failure to supply complete and accurate information in Tenant's application for CHA assisted housing or in a request for a priority or preference status or in the documentation submitted in support of Tenant's application for CHA assisted housing, or request for a priority or preference status, if complete and accurate information would have provided: (a) cause for finding Tenant ineligible or unqualified for CHA assisted housing; (b) cause for determining Tenant not entitled to the priority or preference status which Tenant received; (c) cause for housing Tenant in a smaller unit; or (d) cause for establishing a materially higher rent.
14. Failure to sign a lease, lease amendment or lease addendum containing lease provisions required by applicable CHA policies and applicable HUD regulations or by applicable law. Failure to sign lease provisions required by changes in size or income of Tenant's household.
15. Failure to vacate in the event of a decrease in household size, as provided in Section 8(A) (Transfer Policy), or in the event of modernization work, as provided in Section 8(D) (Transfers for Modernization Work).
16. Failure by Tenant or by a household member to physically occupy the leased premises as his or her primary residence for at least 9 months in any 12-month period except as provided in Section 5(A)(Tenants and Household Members).
17. Guest(s) staying overnight for more than a total of 30 nights in a 12-month period without CHA written approval.
18. Repeated failure by Tenant to report the length of the stay of an overnight guest within a reasonable time following a stay, that exceeds 14 consecutive nights.
19. Breach or violation by Tenant, a household member or guest of any one of the other obligations set out in Section 11(Tenant's Obligations) of this lease.
20. Other good cause.

**D. Evidence:** CHA may evict the tenant by judicial action for criminal activity in accordance with this section if the PHA determines that the tenant, member of household, guest or other person under the control of the tenant has engaged in the criminal activity, regardless of whether that person has been arrested or convicted for such activity and without satisfying the standard of proof used for a criminal conviction

**E. Notice of Possible Lease Violation:** Prior to issuing a Notice to Quit, except in cases subject to Section 12 (B)(Voiding by CHA) above, CHA shall provide the tenant with a 'Notice of Possible Lease Violation' and provide the tenant with an opportunity to discuss alleged violations of the lease at an informal conference. The Notice of Possible Lease Violation shall include the details of

the alleged violation, including facts in sufficient detail to prepare a defense, scheduling or requesting the Tenant to schedule an informal conference to discuss the possible lease violation, informing the Tenant of available sources of advice, including the name and contact information of legal aid agencies, Alliance of Cambridge Tenants, and the local tenant council president.

**F. Summary of Informal Conference:** Following this informal conference, CHA shall send the tenant a written 'Summary of Informal Conference' regarding the action CHA intends to take regarding the alleged violations of the lease. The 'Summary of Informal Conference' shall include the date of the meeting, who attended, a summary of the discussion, and what action CHA intends to take. If the tenant is entitled to a grievance under subsection (H) below, the 'Summary of Informal Conference' shall specify that within 7 business days following the date on which 'Summary of Informal Conference' is given, Tenant has the right to request such a hearing and shall specify the process to be used in making the request.

**G. Notice to Quit:**

1. CHA shall give the Tenant a written Notice to Quit which precedes the date of termination of the lease:
  - a. at least 14 days in the case of failure to pay rent;
  - b. a reasonable time considering the seriousness of the grounds for termination when the grounds (other than non-payment of rent) are such that no grievance hearing is required, or
  - c. no less than 30 days in any other cases.
2. When CHA is not required to afford the tenant the opportunity for hearing under its administrative grievance procedure for a grievance concerning the lease termination the Notice to Quit shall:
  - a. State that the tenant is not entitled to a grievance hearing on the termination.
  - b. Specify the judicial eviction procedure to be used by the PHA for eviction of the tenant, and state that HUD has determined that this eviction procedure provides the opportunity for a hearing in court that contains the basic elements of due process as defined in HUD regulations.
  - c. State whether the eviction is for a criminal activity or for a drug-related criminal activity.

**H. Grievance in Certain Circumstances:** The tenant may request a grievance hearing regarding whether good cause exists for terminating the lease, except that no grievance hearing shall be required:

1. Where the tenancy is terminated for breach of the Tenant's obligations under Section 11(F)(No Criminal Activity on or off the Premises) of the lease to the extent allowed by M.G.L. c. 121B, Section 32 or,
2. Tenant has engaged in behavior, which would be cause for voiding this lease pursuant to the provisions of M.G. L. c. 139, Section 19. or,
3. Tenant has engaged in behavior, pursuant to the provisions of 24 CFR 966.51.

Where CHA has determined that no grievance hearing is required, Tenant shall be notified that the grievance hearing is waived and the reasons for that determination.

**I. Request for a Grievance Hearing on Lease Termination:**

1. Tenant shall make a written request for a grievance hearing to CHA within 7 business days after the Summary of Informal Conference has been sent to the tenant. The grievance hearing shall be held pursuant to CHA's grievance procedure, attached to this lease. CHA shall make every effort to schedule a grievance hearing within 30 days of receipt of the request for a hearing.
2. In cases where Tenant has properly requested a grievance hearing, CHA shall not institute an action for summary process pending the hearing and a decision in CHA's favor.

**J. Violence Against Women Act (VAWA):**

1. CHA may not consider incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking as serious or repeated violations of the lease or other "good cause" for tenancy or occupancy rights of the victim of abuse.
2. CHA may not consider criminal activity directly relating to abuse, engaged in by a member of a tenant's household or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, cause for termination of assistance, tenancy, or occupancy rights if the tenant or an immediate member of the tenant's family or an affiliated individual is the victim or threatened victim of that abuse.
3. CHA may request in writing that the victim, or a family member on the victim's behalf, certify that the individual is a victim of abuse and that the Certification of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking, Form HUD-91066, or other documentation as noted on the certification form, be completed and submitted within 14 business days, or an agreed upon extension date, to receive protection under the VAWA. Failure to provide the certification or other supporting documentation within the specified timeframe may result in eviction.
4. CHA may terminate a tenancy if the domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking pose "an actual and imminent threat" to other tenants or to persons employed at or providing services to the development.
5. CHA may bifurcate a lease to evict any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant and who engages in criminal acts of physical violence against family members or others without evicting, or otherwise penalizing the victim of the violence who is also a tenant or affiliated individual.
6. If a tenant who is evicted in accordance with subsection (C) above was the sole tenant eligible to receive assistance, any remaining tenant or affiliated individual will be provided an opportunity to establish eligibility, in accordance with the requirements of the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) or Administrative Plan, as applicable, pertaining to eligibility for continued occupancy. If no tenant or affiliated individual is eligible for CHA assisted housing, a reasonable time, as defined by HUD, to find new housing or to establish eligibility for another covered housing program (as defined in VAWA) will be provided to the remaining tenant or affiliated individual.

**K. Court Actions:** If a grievance hearing is not required or is not requested, then after the expiration of the deadline in the notice to quit, if Tenant and Tenant's household members have failed to vacate, CHA may institute an action for summary process or other appropriate judicial action. If the decision following a grievance hearing is in CHA's favor and the deadline in the Notice to Quit has expired but Tenant or any of Tenant's household members has failed to vacate, CHA may institute an action for summary process or other appropriate judicial action.

### SECTION 13: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OR MODIFICATION ON ACCOUNT OF A DISABILITY

1. If Tenant or a household member has a disability and, on account of this disability, in order to have equal access to CHA's premises, amenities, services and programs needs a reasonable accommodation in CHA rules, practices or procedures, or needs a reasonable modification of the leased premises or a common area, the Tenant or household member may request a reasonable accommodation or a reasonable modification on account of the disability pursuant to CHA's Reasonable Accommodation Policy. The request may be addressed to the site manager or the Reasonable Accommodation Officer. The need for the request must be reliably documented.

### SECTION 14: INSPECTIONS

- A. Pre-occupancy Inspection:** Prior to occupancy CHA and Tenant (or Tenant's designated representative) shall inspect the leased premises; following the inspection CHA shall provide Tenant with a written statement of condition describing the condition of the leased premises. The statement of condition shall be signed by both CHA and Tenant (or Tenant's designated representative) prior to occupancy.
- B. Periodic Inspections:** CHA may conduct periodic inspections of the leased premises. Tenant shall receive advance as provided in Section 17 (Notices) of this lease.
- C. Termination Inspection:** Upon termination of occupancy, CHA and Tenant (unless Tenant vacates without notice or refuses to participate or to designate a representative) shall inspect the leased premises and CHA shall provide Tenant with a written statement of condition, which shall list any damage or destruction, apart from reasonable wear and tear. CHA shall at such time or thereafter submit a bill to Tenant for the reasonable charges for repairs and replacements required to put the leased premises in as good condition as the condition reflected by the original statement of condition (as it may have been modified as a result of modernization), reasonable wear and tear during occupancy by Tenant excepted. Following receipt of the bill, Tenant shall forthwith pay such charges.

### SECTION 15: ACCESS TO THE LEASED PREMISES BY CHA

- A. Access for Non-Emergency Repairs, Maintenance or an Inspection:** CHA may enter the leased premises at reasonable times to perform non-emergency repairs, maintenance or modernization work or to conduct an inspection, when possible at a mutually agreed-upon time. In the absence of an agreed-upon time or other permission from the tenant to enter CHA shall give Tenant at least forty-eight (48) hours advance notice of the time and purpose of entry.
- B. Access for Requested Repairs or Maintenance:** In the event of repairs and maintenance in response to a request by Tenant, when possible at a mutually agreed-upon time, and in the absence of an agreed-upon time, or other permission from the tenant to enter, CHA shall give Tenant at least forty-eight (48) hours advance notice of the time and purpose of entry..
- C. Access for an Emergency:** If CHA has reasonable cause to believe that an emergency exists endangering life or property, which requires immediate action, CHA, shall give Tenant whatever reasonable notice which the circumstances may permit before accessing the leased premises to deal with the emergency.
- D. Access Where No Adult Present:** If at any time CHA shall have entered the leased premises and if no adult household member shall have been present, CHA shall leave a written notice specifying the time and reason for access and any work performed or measures taken.

## SECTION 16: PERSONAL PROPERTY

- A. Insurance and Personal Property of the Tenant:** All personal property in any part of the building within the control of the Tenant or the common areas and parking lots shall be at the sole risk of the Tenant. CHA is not liable for damages to or loss of property of any kind which may be lost or stolen, damaged or destroyed by natural disaster, weather events, fire, water, steam, defective refrigeration or elevators, while in the leased unit or in any storage space in the building, the common areas, or parking lots which is not caused by the negligence of CHA, its employees, or agents. Tenant may purchase at their option insurance covering personal property belonging to Tenant, other household members and guests against theft or other casualty.
- B. Removal of Personal Property:** Upon termination of this lease and the departure of Tenant, Tenant shall immediately remove all personal property belonging to Tenant and to other household members or guests from the leased premises and from CHA property.
- C. Personal Property Left on Termination of Lease:** Subject to the requirements of M.G.L. c.239§4, any personal property belonging to Tenant, other household members or guests, which is not removed from the leased premises and from CHA property following the termination of the lease and departure of Tenant, shall be presumed to be abandoned unless circumstances indicate otherwise and may be disposed of by CHA 30 days after the Tenant vacates the premises. Tenant shall be responsible for and shall reimburse CHA for costs for moving, storage and disposal of personal property following termination of this lease.

## SECTION 17: NOTICES

- A. Notices to Tenant:** A 'Notice to Quit', notice of voiding lease or notice of apparent abandonment shall be given to Tenant as follows:
1. in writing; and
  2. Via one of the following methods:
    - a. given to Tenant in hand; or
    - b. sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Tenant at the address of the leased premises or such other mailing address provided by Tenant to CHA; or
    - c. given to any person answering the door to the leased premises with a copy mailed to Tenant by regular first class mail; or
    - d. placed under or through the door to the leased premises with a copy mailed to Tenant by regular first class mail in the event no person answers at the door to the leased premises; or
    - e. by service by a constable or a deputy sheriff in the manner provided for service of civil process.
  3. Other notices to Tenant shall be sufficient if in writing and sent by regular first class mail or hand delivered to the leased premises.
- B. Notices to CHA:** Any notice to CHA shall be sufficient if submitted:
1. in writing; and
  2. sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to CHA at its office; or
  3. hand delivered to CHA office during regular business hours; or
  4. faxed, or emailed with acknowledgement of receipt by CHA, or sent by first class mail.

**SECTION 18: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

1. HUD has promulgated and may promulgate regulations regarding the terms and conditions of CHA assisted housing. Insofar as applicable, and in light of CHA's Moving to Work (MTW) Agreement, CHA and Tenant shall comply with HUD's regulations and any authorizations or waivers issued pursuant thereto. CHA shall post and keep posted in a conspicuous place in its central office located at 362 Green Street, Cambridge, MA 02139 and, if practical, in each development a notice regarding availability of copies of applicable regulations.

**SECTION 19: COMPLIANCE WITH CHA RULES AND POLICIES**

1. CHA has adopted or may adopt reasonable rules and policies for the benefit and well being of the housing development, of which the leased premises are a part, and for the benefit of the tenants of the housing development. Compliance with CHA rules and policies is a material condition of tenancy. Tenant, other household members and guests shall comply with such rules and policies. Substantial violation of any rule or policy shall be cause for termination of this lease and eviction. A rule or regulation may not be inconsistent with this lease. CHA shall post and keep posted in a conspicuous place in its central office and, if practical in each development a copy of all rules and policies which affect the rights, status, duties or welfare of Tenant and other household members. Upon request Tenant shall without charge, be provided one copy of applicable rules, policies or regulations. CHA may charge for additional copies.

**SECTION 20: CHANGES**

1. This lease represents the entire agreement between CHA and Tenant. Changes of rent shall be made in accordance with Section 4 (Rent Redetermination/Recertification) of the lease. Changes, additions or deletions from this lease shall be made by a written amendment or addendum signed by CHA and Tenant, provided that changes, additions or deletions required by state or federal law, including state or federal regulations, shall be effective following at least 30 days advance written notice to Tenant of the changes, additions or deletions. CHA will provide at least 60 days written notice to Tenants of any other lease, rule, or policy changes, including in the notice the proposed modification, the reasons therefore, and provide the Tenant an opportunity to present written comments which shall be taken into consideration by CHA prior to the proposed modifications becoming effective. CHA shall consult with all local tenant councils and any citywide tenant organization as to all changes to this lease and the rules and regulations incorporated herein, at a meaningful time, prior to approval by CHA's Board of Commissioners.





This lease is executed in two counterparts, one of which shall be retained by CHA and one of which shall be retained by Tenant. The headings are for convenience of reference and do not constitute part of the lease. Additional provisions (if any) shall be set out in amendment(s) or addenda, which shall specifically make reference to this lease.

By the signature(s) below I/we also acknowledge that, I/we have read and understand the terms of this Lease. I/We agree by signing this Lease to the terms and conditions of this lease and all additional documents made a part of the lease by reference.

**TENANT:**

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (SIGNATURE)	DATE

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (PRINT NAME)	DATE

ADULT CO-HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD/SPOUSE (SIGNATURE)	DATE

**CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY:**

FOR CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY (SIGNATURE)	DATE

FOR CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY (PRINT NAME)	TITLE

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:**

- SMOKE-FREE ADDENDUM
- RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION (RAD) RIDER
- LOW-INCOME TAX CREDIT (LIHTC) RIDER

**LEASE ADDENDUM  
LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC) RIDER**

This property has received an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) under section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code. The program requires that only "Qualified Households" that meet certain income limitations based upon household size and composition may occupy a unit in the property.

The Landlord is responsible for compliance with the Internal Revenue Code. In order to accomplish this:

1. Tenant agrees to notify the Landlord of any changes in household composition and/or changes in household student status (within 14 days of the change).
2. Tenant agrees to complete annually or at any other such time requested by Landlord the Recertification Questionnaire disclosing current household composition, household student status and all household income and assets.
3. Tenant agrees to cooperate fully during the recertification process by signing all third party verifications and providing all requested names and addresses.
4. Tenant agrees to respond promptly to recertification notices to ensure a timely completion of the process. Tenant understands that failure to comply with Paragraphs 2 and 3 above within 30 days of the initial recertification notice is considered material non-compliance with this lease and therefore grounds for termination of the lease and eviction.
5. Tenant understands that the initial term of the lease is six months.
6. Tenant agrees that if all household members become full-time students, the household will accept a transfer to the next available non-LIHTC unit of the same bedroom size in the CHA portfolio unless the household meets one of the student exemptions under the LIHTC program or a waiver is obtained from the Internal Revenue Service. Tenant understands and certifies that, at present, the household either has (1) one or more members who are not full time students or (2) meets one of the student exemptions described below:
  - a. A single parent with children, none of which are declared as dependents on another Person's tax return.
  - b. Married and filing a joint federal tax return.
  - c. Receiving TAFDC payments (or other assistance under Title VI of the Social Security Act, 42 USC § 601 et seq.) on behalf of her/himself or his/her minor children.

- d. Enrolled in a job-training program receiving assistance under the Job Training Partnership Act or funded by another federal, state or local government agency.
  - e. Students who were previously under the care and placement of a foster care program.
7. Tenant understands that no additions in household composition are permitted during the first year of occupancy unless prior approval in writing is obtained from the Landlord. For any person to be added to the lease, (s)he must fill out an application and meet the Landlord's "Tenant Selection Criteria". The lone exception to this policy is the birth, adoption, or court appointed custody of a minor.
  8. Whenever the Tenant is or becomes ineligible for residency at the Leased Premises due solely to the LIHTC rules, the Landlord will offer the Tenant a transfer to a non-LIHTC unit or, if such unit is not available, will provide another form of rental assistance, subject to availability.
  9. Tenant understands and agrees that the Landlord will verify in writing through a third party when necessary, the information provided on the application and recertification questionnaire in order to ensure IRC section 42 compliance. Failure of the Tenant to provide satisfactory, complete and accurate information, when requested, may be considered material non-compliance with the lease. Misrepresentation of any information required to determine tenant eligibility will entitle Landlord to terminate this lease and pursue eviction.

<b>HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>CO-HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>FOR CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>



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CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



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362 GREEN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139 | [WWW.CAMBRIDGE-HOUSING.ORG](http://WWW.CAMBRIDGE-HOUSING.ORG)

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## **A. GRIEVANCE PANEL: APPLICABILITY AND PROCEDURE**

1. The Grievance Procedure, which is part of the CHA Lease and Grievance Procedure, is applicable to all individual grievances between a resident and the Cambridge Housing Authority. A grievance is any dispute which a resident may have with respect to CHA action or failure to act in accordance with the individual resident's lease or CHA rules and regulations which adversely affects the individual resident's rights, duties, welfare or status.
2. The Grievance Procedure shall not apply to disputes between residents not involving CHA or to class grievances. The Grievance Procedure is not intended as a forum for initiating or negotiating policy changes. Establishing policy is the responsibility of the CHA Board of Commissioners, and at its direction, CHA staff in cooperation with local tenant councils and citywide tenant organizations.
3. The Grievance Procedure, as it relates to evictions, shall not apply in the following circumstances:
  - a. In the event CHA has a reason to believe that a resident, household member, guest or other person under resident's control has:
    - Unlawfully caused serious physical harm to another tenant or an employee of CHA or any other person lawfully on CHA property.
    - Unlawfully threatened to seriously physically harm another tenant or an employee of the CHA or an employee or any other person lawfully on CHA property.
    - Unlawfully destroyed, vandalized or stolen property of a tenant or employee of CHA or of any person lawfully on CHA property, if such conduct creates or maintains a serious threat to the health and safety of a tenant, a CHA employee, or any other person lawfully on CHA property.
    - Unlawfully possessed, carried, or kept a weapon on or adjacent to CHA property in violation of MGL c. 269 s. 10.
    - Unlawfully possessed or used an explosive or incendiary device on or adjacent to CHA property or otherwise violated MGL c. 266 ss. 101, 2012, 102A, or 102B.
    - Unlawfully possessed, sold, or possessed with intent to distribute a Class A, B, or C controlled substance as defined in MGL c. 94C s. 31 on or adjacent to CHA property.
    - Engaged in behavior which behavior that would be cause for voiding their lease pursuant to the provisions of MGL c. 139 s. 19.
    - Engaged in any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises of other residents or employees of the CHA.
    - Engaged in any violent or drug-related criminal activity on or off CHA property.
    - Engaged in any criminal activity that resulted in a felony conviction of a household member.
4. Any grievance shall be presented in writing, to CHA's Operations Department, or to CHA's Legal Department. The grievance shall first be discussed informally and may be

settled without a grievance panel hearing. Residents who are unable to come to CHA's office without difficulty may request that a CHA representative come to their apartment.

5. Following the informal discussion, a summary shall be prepared within a reasonable time and one copy shall be given to the resident and one retained in CHA's resident file.
  - a. The summary shall specify:
    - The names of the participants;
    - Date of meeting;
    - The nature of the proposed disposition of the grievance by the CHA and the specific reasons therefore; and
    - The procedures by which a grievance panel hearing may be obtained if the resident is not satisfied with the proposed disposition.
6. A request for a grievance panel hearing must be made in writing and delivered in person to CHA's Legal Department or by fax, or email with acknowledgement of receipt by CHA, or sent by first class mail for evictions, within seven (7) business days after the Summary of Informal Conference (as detailed above) is sent. For non-eviction related grievances, the request must be made within 30 calendar days of CHA's action or failure to act.
  - a. The written request shall specify:
    - The reason(s) for the grievance; and
    - The action or relief sought.
7. If the matter is not resolved through pre-grievance, a hearing shall be scheduled (scheduling is subject to availability of the panel).
8. A written notification specifying the time, place and the procedure governing the hearing shall be delivered to the resident no less than five (5) business days prior to the time the hearing is scheduled.
  - a. The notice must inform the household that they have the right to discovery, meaning that they will:
    - Be given the opportunity to examine any and all documents that CHA will rely

upon at the hearing; and

- Be given access to the entire household file if requested; and
  - Be allowed to make copies of any and all documents related to the hearing (at their own expense); and
  - Be supplied with an overview of any proposed testimony from CHA witnesses; and
  - Discovery requests must be initiated by the household and access will not be unreasonably delayed by the CHA.
9. Once the hearing is scheduled and the notice has been sent, the household may only request to reschedule a hearing for good cause or as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disabilities.
- a. Good cause is defined as an unavoidable conflict that seriously affects the health, safety or welfare of the household. Requests to reschedule a hearing must be made orally or in writing prior to the hearing date. CHA may request documentation of the good cause.
  - b. Failure to obtain counsel is not considered good cause. Written requests by an attorney for postponement due to unavailability will be considered grounds to reschedule.
  - c. Failure to attend a scheduled hearing without prior notice is considered a default.
    - In cases where the resident has good cause for the default and contacts CHA within two (2) business days, the CHA will reschedule the hearing.
    - In cases where the resident does not have good cause or fails to contact CHA within two (2) business days, the CHA will determine that the resident has waived the right to a hearing and the CHA's disposition of the grievance shall be final.
10. Households have the right to seek and retain counsel at their own expense or may have another representative accompany them.
11. The determination that the resident has waived the right to a hearing shall not constitute a waiver of any right the complainant may have to contest CHA's disposition of the grievance in an appropriate judicial proceeding.

## **B. ORGANIZATION OF GRIEVANCE PANEL**

1. The Grievance Panel is made up of five individuals as follows:
  - Two representatives of CHA, from a department with no direct involvement or contact with the case;
  - Two public housing residents or participants of the Housing Choice Voucher Program;
  - and one impartial person.
2. CHA together with the citywide tenant organization and local tenant councils shall recruit and maintain a pool of public housing residents and voucher participants to serve on the grievance panel. The impartial person shall serve as the Chairperson of the Hearing Panel.
3. All grievance panel hearings heard at CHA are recorded and stored for a period of twelve (12) months after the hearing. The recordings shall be kept by CHA in a confidential manner. If requested, CHA will make a copy for the resident or the resident's representative at their request and expense.
4. At the start of every grievance panel, the Chairperson will introduce the members of the panel and then elicit introductions from other individuals in the room. Any member of the panel that has prior knowledge of the case or the household must disclose said knowledge, as soon as practicable.
  - a. No member of the Hearing Panel shall hear a grievance if s/he resides in the same development as the complainant, is a relative of the complainant, is personally involved in the grievance at issue, is a CHA employee of the affected department, or if it is otherwise inappropriate for s/he to adjudicate the pending grievance.
  - b. All matters relating to disqualification of a member shall be decided by the Chairperson. If the qualifications of the Chairperson are at issue, s/he may be disqualified solely by unanimous vote of the remaining four members.
  - c. Depending upon the situation:
    - The panel member may recuse himself/herself from the hearing and the resident and CHA both consent to a panel of only four members; or
    - The resident or CHA may request that the panel member recuse himself/herself and consent to a panel of only four members; or
    - Both parties may agree that the panel member participate; or



- Both parties agree that the hearing will be continued to another date.
  - In the instance that a panelist is recused and the parties are unable to agree on whether or not to proceed or reschedule, the default will be to continue the hearing to another date.
- d. If the decision is to proceed with less than five panel members or with the panel member in question, it is the Chairperson's responsibility to assure that the household understands the implications of proceeding and agrees to do so while on the record. In the event that the hearing proceeds with four panel members, and the result is a split panel, then CHA's decision will be upheld.

### **C. CONDUCT OF THE HEARING**

1. Once the parties have been introduced, it is CHA's responsibility to present the case to the panel and explain its position or action toward the household. CHA has the burden of justifying its action or failure to act against which resulted in the grievance. In doing so, CHA must rely on documents and witnesses that were previously disclosed to the resident or the resident representative(s). Once CHA has completed its presentation, the resident is given the opportunity to present evidence and argument in support of their grievance, to contradict evidence relied on by CHA, and to confront and cross-examine all witnesses on whose testimony or information CHA relies, unless doing so would trigger a substantial threat to his/her safety or property.
2. In general, pre-disclosed evidence is admissible in an informal hearing. Evidence may be considered without regard to admissibility under the rules of evidence that are applicable to judicial proceedings.
3. While panel members are free to ask questions at any point in the presentation, both the household and CHA may only direct questions to the other party at the end of their respective presentation.
4. At the end of both presentations, either party may make a closing statement.
5. Prior to and after the Grievance Hearing, CHA and the tenant representative shall not discuss the grievance with the panelists or in the presence of the panelists. The hearing shall be private unless the tenant requests a public hearing.

### **D. GRIEVANCE PANEL DECISION**

1. CHA shall take no administrative or court action against any resident involving any pending matter before the grievance panel until the resident has received notification of the grievance panel's final decision on the matter.
2. The decision of the grievance panel is final. There are no further in-house remedies available to the resident.

3. The grievance panel shall prepare a written decision with the reasons therefore within a reasonable time after the hearing.
4. The decision shall be based solely and exclusively upon the facts presented at the hearing. Any information obtained thereby shall be set forth in the decision. A copy of the decision shall be sent to the CHA, the resident, and placed in CHA's resident file.
5. The decision of the grievance panel shall be binding on CHA which shall take all actions, or refrain from any actions, necessary to carry out the decision unless the CHA Board of Commissioners determines to the contrary within a reasonable time, and promptly notifies the resident of its determination that: (a) a grievance does not concern CHA's action or failure to act in accordance with or involving the complainant's lease or CHA rules or regulations, which adversely affects the complainant's rights, duties, welfare, or status; or (b) the decision of the grievance panel is contrary to applicable federal, state or local law, HUD (for federally-aided developments) or DHCD (for state-aided developments) regulations, or requirements of the Annual Contributions Contract between HUD (for federally-aided developments) and the CHA or the Contract for Financial Assistance between DHCD (for state-aided developments) and the CHA.
6. A decision by the Panel or CHA Board of Commissioners in favor of CHA or which denies the relief requested by the resident in whole or in part shall not constitute a waiver of, nor affect in any manner whatever, any rights the resident may have to a trial de novo or judicial review in any judicial proceedings, which may thereafter be brought in the matter.

#### **E. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION APPEALS**

1. Appeals of decisions of the 504/ADA Coordinator of Requests for Reasonable Accommodation are governed by the Reasonable Accommodation Policy of CHA in Chapter 11 of the ACOP or Administrative Plan, as applicable. They are heard by the Reasonable Accommodations Appeals Officer.

**CHA Schedule of Maintenance Charges\*/Legal Fees**

<b>Keys:</b>	
Apartment Door (Duplicate/Replacement Key)	\$ 5.00
Secure/Safety Door (Duplicate/Replacement Key)	\$ 15.00
Borrowed key from office (deposit)	\$ 5.00
Mailbox key	\$ 5.00
Electronic	\$ 10.00

<b>Doors:</b>	
Apartment Entry door replacement	\$ 300.00
Interior door replacement (bathroom, etc.)	\$ 100.00
Interior door repair	\$50-\$100

<b>Doorknobs:</b>	
Interior passage set replacement	\$ 50.00

<b>Shades:</b>	
Standard window	\$ 20.00
Sliding window	\$ 50.00

<b>Bathroom:</b>	
Toilet seat replacement	\$ 15.00
Bowl or tank replacement	\$ 125.00
Toilet (compete)	\$ 300.00
Unclog toilet (tenant fault)	\$ 50.00
Shower rod replacement	\$ 20.00
Faucet replacement	\$ 100.00
Towel bar replacement	\$ 20.00
Medicine or base cabinet	\$ 75.00

<b>Kitchen:</b>	
Faucet replacement	\$ 150.00
Refrigerator replacement	\$ 300.00
Refrigerator repair	\$50-\$200
Stove - Gas	\$ 400.00
Stove - Electric	\$ 300.00
Stove repair	\$50-\$200
Cabinets (each)	\$ 100.00
Drawers (each)	\$ 100.00
Countertop	\$20/foot
Garbage disposal	\$ 150.00
Dishwasher (CHA provided)	\$ 250.00
Washer or dryer (CHA provided)	\$ 300.00
Air conditioner unit (CHA provided)	Actual cost + labor
Range hood	\$ 50.00
Range hood filter	\$ 20.00
Drip pan	\$ 10.00
Basket strainer	\$ 5.00

<b>Legal Fees:</b>	
Truck Cancellation (less than 24 hours)	\$ 595.00
Eviction proceeding court costs (where CHA received a judgement for possession after trial, by default, or be agreement for judgement)	\$ 240.00

<b>Lockouts:</b>	
During business hours	\$ 10.00
5th occurrence and thereafter (within 12 months)	\$ 20.00
After hours	\$ 30.00
5th occurrence after hours and thereafter (within 12 months)	\$ 50.00

<b>Locks:</b>	
Apartment entry lock change (cylinder only at resident's request)	\$ 50.00

<b>Extermination:</b>	
Failure to prepare for exterminator	\$ 150.00

<b>Lighting:</b>	
Globe replacement	\$ 50.00
Fixture	Actual cost + labor

<b>Windows:</b>	
Double glazed	Actual cost + labor
Wire pane	Actual cost + labor

<b>Screens:</b>	
Replace existing frame	\$ 25.00
Replace frame and screen	\$ 40.00

<b>Other Maintenance Charges:</b>	
Water damage/flooding (tenant fault)	Actual cost + labor
Mold remediation (tenant fault)	Actual cost + labor
Wall damage (tenant fault)	Actual cost + labor
Fire/smoke damage (tenant fault)	Actual cost + labor
Pet Waste (1st/2nd/3rd offense)	\$10/\$25/\$50
Resident tasks (hallway cleaning, snow removal)	\$ 35.00
4th occurrence thereafter	\$ 50.00
Heater Covers (fin tube replacement)	\$20/linear foot
Heater Covers (fin tube and heating element)	\$40/linear foot
Trash placed in Recycling Containers	\$50/bag
Improper trash storage (incl.early curbside placement)	\$25/bag
3rd occurrence of improper trash storage and thereafter	\$ 50.00
Trash receptacle left in street/on curbside (after 24 hours)	\$15/day
Trash left in unit after move-out	Actual cost + labor
Illegal use of dumpsters (tires, TVs, etc.)	\$ 50.00
Trash in common areas (tenant fault)	\$50/bag
Graffiti removal	\$ 500.00
Disconnected/damaged smoke detectors	\$ 100.00
Removing batteries from/damaging CO detectors	\$ 100.00
Sprinkler head damage	\$ 200.00
Heater Covers	Cost/foot
Any alterations, interior or exterior without CHA approval	Actual cost + labor
HP Parking without Sticker	\$ 50.00
Damaged Security Camera	\$ 200.00
Replace Security Camera	Actual cost + labor

\*Maintenance fees will only be assessed in the case of tenant fault. No fees will be charged for normal wear and tear. Wear and tear is defined as "loss, damage, or depreciation resulting from ordinary use, age, and/or exposure and not resulting from tenant misuse, mistreatment, damage, or neglect. Resident may dispute a charge through CHA's established Grievance Procedure.



## ## 7.34 ABCD Internship Confirmation Letter 2019



Ms Stephanie Guirand  
Goldsmiths, University of London  
8 Lewisham Way  
New Cross  
London  
SE14 6NW

November 12, 2019

Dear Stephanie,

### Internship Confirmation

I am writing to confirm Action for Boston Community Development's Housing Department's offer of an internship to conduct a research project investigating the link between census undercounting of African-descended men to localized housing policy (and programs).

The primary method of research would be ethnographic interviews verified with primary documentation with a report on your findings presented to ABCD at the end of the project. The internship would be based out of ABCD's housing department.

This offer is dependent upon you passing a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check run by ABCD.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information I can provide.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Palmer  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Action for Boston Community Development

178 Tremont Street, Boston MA 02111 | P: 617.348.6000 | TTY: 617.423.9215 | F: 617.357.6041 | [bostonabcd.org](http://bostonabcd.org)

Yvonne Jones, Chair; Sean Daughtry, Vice Chair; Marie Greig, Vice Chair; Edward Katz, Vice Chair;  
Rev. Dr. Florence King, Vice Chair; James Owens, Jr., Vice Chair; Patricia Washington, Treasurer; Andres Molina, Assistant Treasurer;  
Julia Hardy Cofield, Esq., Clerk; Eleanor Evans, Esq., Assistant Clerk; John J. Drew, President/CEO

## ## 7.35 Extended Acknowledgments

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